

Evaluation of 2014 Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference

Purpose

To feedback to Members on the evaluation.

Summary

Over 170 delegates attended the LGA's annual culture, tourism and sport conference in Portsmouth on 3rd and 4th March 2014, organised in partnership with the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers' Association. The event attracted the highest number of delegates in recent years, and for the first time the Secretary of State for Culture and the chairs of VisitEngland, Arts Council England, Sport England and English Heritage all attended and gave plenary speeches. Key to its success was the very successful partnership between LGA and Portsmouth City Council, who were committed to using the conference as a platform to showcase their work and the city.

Recommendation

That Members note the feedback on the 2014 conference and provide any further comment.

Action/s

To be taken forward by officers as directed by Members.

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Evaluation of 2014 Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference

Summary

1. Over 170 delegates attended the LGA's annual culture, tourism and sport conference in Portsmouth on 3rd and 4th March 2014, organised in partnership with the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers' Association. The event attracted the highest number of delegates in recent years, which helped to achieve a significant increase in net income for the LGA.
2. The conference provided delegates and the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board with an unrivalled opportunity to strengthen further the relationship between local government and key partners.
3. The then Secretary of State for Culture, and the chairs of VisitEngland, Arts Council England, Sport England and English Heritage all attended and gave plenary speeches for the first time. The former Secretary of State was fulsome in her recognition of local government's investment in and leadership of culture, tourism and sport. All of the agency Chairs made open and positive offers to engage with councils who are facing very tough funding decisions.
4. Delegates also had the opportunity to attend workshops covering the latest policy issues and sharing leading edge practice, including on public health, economic growth and libraries.
5. Key to the event's success was the very successful partnership between the LGA and Portsmouth City Council, who hosted excellent study tours and secured an excellent sponsorship deal that offered a drinks reception at the new Mary Rose Museum and dinner at the top of the Spinnaker Tower at minimal cost to delegates.

Attendance

The table below summarises this year's conference attendance and compares it to 2013.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Total attendance:	171	154	+17
Paying delegates:			
Entire conf.	125	101	+24
One day	10	5	+5
Total	135	106	+29
Members:	124	97	+27
Non-members:	11	9	+2
Exhibition stands:	6	10	-4
Exhibitors/Sponsors:	17	20	-3
Speakers:	16	20	-4
Guests:	3	8	-5

6. It is very encouraging that total attendance increased by 11%, from 154 to 177 delegates. Despite the challenging financial context for promoting events, the increasing trend in delegate numbers, suggests that the conference remains not only viable, but stronger than it has been for a number of years.

Delegate online survey – summary of main points:

Respondents:

7. 31% of delegates completed the evaluation form, which is a good response rate and similar to previous years. Below is a summary of the feedback:

Overall satisfaction:

8. The overall satisfaction level was 73% with 13% dissatisfied and 14% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This is down on last year's satisfaction levels of 88%. The two main reasons given by delegates were the large size of the venue with workshops spread over three floors, and some felt there were too many national political speakers.
9. 50% of respondents were attending this conference for first time while 48% had attended it two or more times before. This is a departure from previous years when the majority of delegates had attended in previous years.
10. 61% of respondents said they would attend the conference again with 32% being unsure either way and 7% not planning to attend again. This is lower than previous years and perhaps reflects the fact that half of delegates were attending for the first time.

Venue and Drinks reception:

11. Portsmouth was very popular with delegates. 93% of respondents were satisfied with the city as a conference destination. 71% were satisfied with The Portsmouth Guildhall as a venue for the conference.
12. 67% of respondents attended the drinks reception at the Mary Rose Museum, with the majority very or fairly satisfied.

Plenary Speakers:

13. Sir Peter Bazalgette and Viscountess Penelope Cobham achieved the highest satisfaction ratings, but all plenary speakers scored well.

Study Tours:

14. Feedback was excellent from the vast majority of delegates.

Workshops:

15. Workshop feedback was positive with the sessions on sport and health and economic growth being particularly well received.

Conference content, organisation and exhibition:

16. 85% of respondents were satisfied with the organisation and running of the event, while 4% were dissatisfied.
17. 64% respondents were satisfied with the content and structure of the programme for the conference with 9% being dissatisfied, which is in line with last year.
18. 85% of respondents visited the exhibition stands and of these 48% were satisfied with the exhibition and 10% dissatisfied; again, similar to last year.

Officers will take into account this feedback when working with CLOA to draft the programme for next year's event. Members are invited to share any further reflections.

2015 Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference

19. Following a steer from Lead Members, we can confirm that the 2015 conference will be in Durham 3rd – 4th March at the centrally-located Radisson Blu hotel.
20. Given that next year is the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta, it is very fitting that the conference will be in Durham, home to three copies of the Great Charter. Durham can also offer a wide range of potential study tours covering all aspects of the Board's remit and we look forward to working with Durham County Council over the next few months.