

Meeting: Fire Services Management Committee

Date: 9 December 2022



LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition 2023

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This paper outlines a draft programme for the Annual LGA Fire Conference and Exhibition, on 7-8 March 2023.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation

That members note the theme and draft programme for the Annual LGA Fire Conference and Exhibition 2023.

That members share views or session ideas with officers via email.

Contact details

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LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition 2023



Background

1. The LGA Annual Fire Conference is held each year in early March. The event is an important part of the annual fire industry calendar. It is one of the showcase events organised by the LGA and an important income-generator. In recent years, the conference attracts an average of 230 delegates and a range of exhibitors and sponsors.
2. The 2022 LGA Fire Conference was in Gateshead with the theme of 'Improvement in the Fire and Rescue Sector'. The conference included both plenary sessions and workshops.
3. We are aware that the Fire Brigades Union will be balloting its members in respect of strike action between 5 December and 23 January. Whilst it remains to be determined whether there will be industrial action in 2023, there is the potential for the Fire Conference to be seen as an opportunity for protest by union members. This has happened in previous years, though the scale might be different.

Proposal

Fire Conference 2023

4. At the FSMC meeting on 23 September 2022, Members agreed that the 2023 LGA Fire Conference should be held at the Crowne Plaza in Nottingham between 7 and 8 March 2023.
5. The format includes:
 - Monday, 6 March – Conference set-up and FSMC meeting from 16:00-18:00.
 - Tuesday, 7 March – Conference sessions and the Fire Conference Dinner.
 - Wednesday, 8 March – Conference sessions and closing with lunch.
6. The delegate fees, which also include the cost of the dinner, will be held at the same rate as they have been since 2016:
 - LGA Members – £395 +VAT
 - Non-members – £495 +VAT

7. The conference will not be offering hybrid engagement options, due to the cost associated with technology and resources required to facilitate this delivery method. Further, the LGA Events Team have advised that a hybrid option may deter delegates from attending in-person, which could have a significant financial impact on the LGA. We will explore options for providing a hybrid option with the events team ahead of the Fire conference 2024.
8. The LGA has launched the [Fire Conference website](#), which includes an overview of dates, cost, and registration details.

Proposed conference programme

9. The sector is facing a number of challenges from cost of living and workforce to the impact of climate change and extreme weather events.
10. It is proposed that the theme for the 2023 LGA Fire Conference should be on 'Resilience and the future of the fire service' which will help to focus plenary sessions and workshop activity. This is a forward-looking theme which encompasses a range of work looking at risks, mitigation and response to climate change as well as broader work around finance and workforce. The final conference title will be determined subject to agreement and discussion with the LGA Events Team.
11. The proposed topics for conference plenaries and workshops, and the format and structure in which conference activity will be delivered is outlined below.
12. Previous Fire Minister Jeremy Quin MP had committed to delivering the opening plenary session and we have written to the new Minister, Chris Philp MP to ask him to carry forward that commitment.
13. Proposed plenary topics include:
 - Opening plenary session with the Minister of State for Policing and Fire.
 - Overview session focusing on current & future risks. Suggested speaker would be a climate change expert for example from the Met Office, or the Environment Agency. We could also look at water companies.
 - Understanding risks and prevention panel session. – focusing on risks and what can be done to help educate public about the role they can play. Suggested speakers could include Phil Clark, NFCC who leads on risks of new technologies & an academic looking specifically at that issue and then an examples of any behavioural insights work/ local campaigns eg around disposable BBQs
 - Preparing the Fire Service for future challenges and demands – focus of this session would be on looking at what has been done abroad and what we can do here. Speakers could include an international lead from Southern Europe and Paul Hedley, NFCC lead on Wildfire or Ben Brook, NFCC Climate change lead.

- People - update from London Cultural Review
- Building Safety – session led by HSE outlining their new role as regulator
- HMICFRS – Andy Cooke, post his first State of Fire report as Chief HMI

14. For the 2023 Fire Conference, the LGA is proposing to hold a smaller number of workshops to ensure we can keep them consistent with the theme of the conference. There will therefore not be a workshop bidding process. Proposed topics include:

- Economic & Social Value work
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion – example of innovative practice
- Practice to progress (P2P): coaching and assessment support, Dave Etheridge / PFCC on police model
- On call (retained) firefighter work – NFCC and example or work from FRA
- Embedding Fire Standards for example Code of Ethics – Fire Standards Board, or example from FRA on impact
- Case study from an FRA that has improved – Avon or Bedfordshire on people

15. Members may wish to consider whether we ask Mark Hardingham to speak as Chair of the NFCC in one of the sessions, as well as any involvement of the Unions, depending on industrial relations at the time.

16. A draft structure for the conference programme is as follows:

Tuesday, 7 March 2022

09.00 Registration, refreshments and exhibition viewing

10.30 **Conference opening and Chair's welcome**

10.35 **Keynote session 1. Ministerial address**

11.20 **Keynote session 2**

12.05 Refreshments and exhibition viewing

12.30 **Workshops – session 1**

An opportunity to attend a workshop from the list below. These sessions will be repeated.

1. **Workshop 1**
2. **Workshop 2**
3. **Workshop 3**
4. **Workshop 4**
5. **Workshop 5**

1.15 Lunch, exhibition viewing and networking

[Lunchtime fringe sessions to be announced]

2.20 **Plenary session 3.**

3.15 **Workshops – session 2**

An opportunity to attend a workshop from the list below. These sessions will be repeated.

1. **Workshop 1**
2. **Workshop 2**
3. **Workshop 3**
4. **Workshop 4**
5. **Workshop 5**

4.05 Refreshments and exhibition viewing

4.35 **Workshops – session 3**

An opportunity to attend a workshop from the list below. These sessions will be repeated.

1. **Workshop 1**

2. Workshop 2

3. Workshop 3

4. Workshop 4

5. Workshop 5

5.30 **Political group meetings**

Conservative Group Meeting

Labour Group Meeting

Liberal Democrat Group Meeting

Independent Group Meeting

7.30 Drinks reception

8.00 Conference dinner

Wednesday, 8 March 2022

08.45 Registration for new delegates, refreshments and exhibition viewing

09.30 **Welcome to day two**

9.35 **Plenary Session 4.**

10.35 **Plenary Session 5.**

11.35 Refreshments and exhibition viewing

12.00 **Plenary Session 6.**

1.00 **Conference close**

1.15 **Lunch, exhibition viewing and networking**

17. The timings and order of plenaries and workshops is subject to speaker/facilitator availability. A draft conference programme will be provided for approval at the FSMC meeting on 9 December.

Conference publication

18. In previous years, the LGA has developed a conference publication that is distributed along with delegate packs at the conference.
19. The publication for the 2020 Fire Conference focussed on climate change. One option would be for the 2023 Fire Conference Publication to update the 2020 Paper with a focus on building resilience. This could include learning from recent wildfires and flooding events and updated case studies for example around local information campaigns. This would need to be done jointly with the work of the NFCC to make sure that we are not replicating the work that they are doing on providing a toolkit for the sector.
20. Given the resources required to develop the publication, work would need to commence imminently.
21. Members' views on the development of the conference publication are welcome.

Implications for Wales

22. None.

Financial Implications

23. All work will be carried out using existing LGA resources.

Equalities implications

24. The suggested programme outlined in this paper include providing information and support to FRAs around equality, diversity and inclusion.

Next steps

1. Members are asked to agree the theme and topics for conference plenary and workshop sessions.
2. Members are also asked to agree the approach to the development of a Fire Conference publication.
3. Please provide any comments over email to Rebecca Johnson. Officers will take forward any decisions as directed and proceed with conference planning.