

LGA Annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference: update

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

This paper provides an update on the LGA Annual Culture, Tourism and Sport conference. The Board is asked to note the paper and to share their views on the conference.

LGA Plan Theme: Communications and events

Recommendation(s)

That the Board Members note the contents of the report and share their views on the conference, including:

1. Confirmation of South Tyneside as the selected location
2. An in-person event as opposed to hybrid
3. The key theme of 'change' for the event
4. The funding of four places from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Contact details

Contact officer: Megan Kidd

Position: NGDP Graduate

Phone no: 07766 251752

Email: megan.kidd@local.gov.uk

LGA Annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference

Background

1. The LGA Annual Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) conference is the CTS Board's flagship event. It is an opportunity for elected members and officers with responsibility for and an interest in culture, tourism, and sport to come together and hear the latest policy thinking, share learning and network.
2. The theme of the CTS 2023 conference was levelling up and tackling inequalities. The conference discussed how culture, tourism and sport services are responding to the cost-of-living crisis, their own financial issues, and their role in levelling up. The conference was held as a hybrid event at 18 Smith Square. This allowed delegates to attend either in person or online, while minimising the LGA's costs for this experimental format. While the event was delivered successfully from a technical perspective, a number of delegates commented unfavourably on the hybrid approach, particularly where speakers were online.
3. Speakers for the event included keynotes from LGA President and Paralympian Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson and Baroness Lola Young, Chair of the LGA's Commission on Culture and Local Government. 66 delegates attended in person and 39 attended online.
4. The conference is part of the core LGA conference programme and events offer, which means it is a chargeable event, expected to generate income for the LGA. It is supplemented by a wide range of free webinars that the policy team deliver over the year.
5. The event is designed to tour the country, which allows us to showcase innovative or interesting practice in the host location. This makes an effective partnership with the council host a critical part of the decision making when choosing the location of the conference. Previous locations have included City of London, Portsmouth, Hull, Bristol, and Leicester.
6. Feedback from previous events has stressed the importance of network opportunities and the ability to discuss issues, rather than simply listen to presentations.

Proposal

7. The proposed theme for the conference this year is 'change' and will be exploring what devolution within cultural services looks like, sustainability within cultural, leisure and sports services, and how equality, diversity and inclusion can promote positive change in participation within culture, tourism, and sport.
8. The proposed location for the conference is [South Shields Town Hall](#) in South Tyneside. South Tyneside is rich with arts and cultural venues, and the area boasts impressive coastlines, parks, and green open spaces as well as hosting a variety of sports and leisure activities ranging from wall-climbing to canoeing. A hybrid event was considered but has not been recommended because of the high complexity and IT costs involved in running a hybrid event outside of Smith Square.
9. The proposed date for the board is Tuesday 5 March 2024

10. We have examined the transport links to South Tyneside and while there is not a direct rail link to the rest of the country, it is a 26 minute metro connection direct from Newcastle, which is a mainline station. The venue is then a short distance from the station. We believe this will be acceptable to delegates.
11. Previous exploratory work with Knowsley Council to take the conference to Shakespeare North was unsuccessful as the venue was booked during the key dates, and the alternative venue would have required delegates to take taxis to the venue. There was also no facility for suitable walking tours at the alternative venue.
12. Below is a draft agenda for the session – timings are subject to confirmation from the LGA's events team.

Session	Time
Registration and refreshments	09.15
Walking tours: 1. Culture and heritage (or) 2. Tourism (or) 3. Sport	10.00-11.00
Keynote speech: Welcome to South Tyneside – Speaker TBC	11.00-11.05
Ministerial speech – Speaker TBC	11.05-11.20
Facilitated discussion session: what changes can be made within national systems to support the delivery of culture, tourism and sport within local authorities?	11.20-12.20
Lunch, networking and exhibition	12.20-13.05
Group session: sustainability within culture, tourism and sport	13.05-13.55
Panel session: Equality, diversity and inclusion within culture, tourism and sport – Panel TBC	13.55-14.40
Coffee & networking	14.40-15.15
Workshops 1. Routemaps for sustainability within cultural and leisure services (or) 2. Inclusion within cultural and services (or) 3. Co-design and digital approaches within cultural services	15.15-15.50
Closing remarks and close	15.50-16.00

4. The event will be used to launch and promote discussion of the following pieces of work:
- 4.1. Devolution think pieces on culture – an exploration of what devolution means in the context of a service that is already locally led.
- 4.2. Routemaps for sustainability in culture and leisure – new guides to support councils to deliver and commission adaptation for their culture and leisure services.

5. Members are also asked to agree the addition of an exhibition space within the conference venue. This would include the opportunity for external bodies including charities and arms-length organisations to set up a stand for delegates. This exhibition space could also include the opportunity for delegate authorities to bring their own poster exploring the theme of 'change' within their local authority and would be open throughout the day and as an alternative option to the walking tours.

Implications for Wales

6. Welsh authorities are eligible to register for the conference at the same rate as English member councils.

Financial Implications

7. Costs for the event will need to be covered by delegate fees.
8. We are also proposing to fund the places of four attendees from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport from the heritage, tourism, sport and libraries team. This would be to encourage national government to engage with the event and to support the LGA's lobbying efforts. This would use £1000 from the Board budget and would remain within planned expenditure. Members are invited to share their views on this proposal.

Equalities implications

9. A diverse range of speakers will be identified, ensuring a variety of perspectives and experiences are heard, and demonstrating a range of leadership roles, from different geographies and political backgrounds.

Next steps

10. Board members are invited to suggest suitable speakers or areas of good practice in change including sustainability and inclusion within culture, tourism, or sport services.
11. Officers will develop the programme in line with Board members comments and present a proposed final programme at the next Board meeting.
12. Officers will implement any actions arising from the Board meeting and will begin to promote the event.