

Evaluation of the 2015 Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference and Looking Ahead to 2016 and 2017

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

Over 150 delegates attended the LGA's annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference in Durham on 3rd and 4th March 2015, organised in partnership with the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers' Association. This report summarises the delegate feedback and updates Members on plans for the 2016 Conference.

Recommendation

Members are invited to:

- a) Note the Conference evaluation and offer any other comments;
- b) Note that the 2016 Conference will be in Leicester 24 – 25 February; and
- c) Note that we are exploring Hull as the venue for 2017.

Action

Officers to take forward actions in line with Members' steer.

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Evaluation of the 2015 Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference and Looking Ahead to 2016 and 2017

Introduction and Background

1. Over 150 delegates attended the LGA's annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference in Durham on 3rd and 4th March 2015, organised in partnership with the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers' Association. It remains the definitive event for the political and managerial leaders of local culture, tourism and sport.
2. The conference provided delegates and the CTS Board with an unrivalled opportunity to strengthen further the relationship between local government and key partners. For the first time, the chairmen of VisitEngland, Arts Council England, Sport England and English Heritage all participated in a Panel debate with audience members.
3. The Conference attracted big names, including Steve Cram and Roly Keating, and was a platform to promote the LGA's campaigns and Board priorities. Workshops covered the latest policy issues and shared leading edge practice on public health, economic growth, digital, commissioning, transformation and libraries.
4. Key to the event's success was the very successful partnership between the LGA and Durham County Council, who supported the LGA team from the outset, hosted excellent study tours and helped organise a drinks reception and dinner at Durham Cathedral.
5. Despite the very positive delegate feedback, the financial context within which this event operates continues to be very challenging, both for councils and the LGA, and it is imperative that we reduce costs, while retaining the prestigious and popular elements of the event.

Evaluation of 2015 Conference

6. Once again, the delegate feedback was very positive. 35% of delegates completed the evaluation form, which is a good response rate, and higher than previous years. Overall, 82.5% were very or fairly satisfied with the conference. This is much higher than last year's satisfaction rating of 73%. 41% of respondents attended the conference for the first time, while 59% had attended it before. This is consistent with previous years and highlights the importance of repeat delegates for this conference. 80% of respondents said they would attend the conference again, which is significantly higher than last year's 61%. The study tours scored very high satisfaction ratings, as did Durham as a host city. The plenary speakers and workshops all scored well.
7. 156 delegates attended the conference, 15 fewer than last year (171). 99 delegates paid the full fee, compared to 125 last year. The conference also attracted more non-LGA Members (who pay a higher delegate fee), but there were nine fewer exhibitors and sponsors. Due to the wide range of workshop topics, we also had 14 more speakers than in previous years.

8. Further detail on the attendance figures and delegate feedback for the CTS Conference are attached at **Annex A**.

2016 Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference

9. More than any other LGA conference, the location is critical for the CTS Conference. We always hold the Conference at an iconic destination and liaise very closely with the host council to showcase their innovation and exciting work. To this end, Lead Members have agreed that the 2016 Conference will be in Leicester on Wednesday 24 February and Thursday 25 February. Leicester meets our criteria in the following ways:
 - 9.1 An iconic destination with plenty to inspire and learn from – the discovery of Richard III's remains under a council car park propelled Leicester into the national limelight and spurred a huge boost to the visitor economy and the award-winning new Richard III visitor centre. This success was on the back of many years of growing the cultural, sporting and visitor economy offer and engaging Leicester's diverse communities. For example, the ultra-modern Curve, one of the country's leading producing theatres, is the anchor facility for the city's vibrant cultural quarter. Leicester will host 2015 Rugby World Cup matches in October, a new basketball arena is being built to engage young people and the city is home to rugby's Leicester Tigers. The City Council is at the forefront of involving communities in libraries and is supporting Leicester's cluster of creative industries. The year-long festival programme includes the annual comedy festival, which is embedded in the City's public health plan.
 - 9.2 Good transport links – Leicester is very well connected in the middle of the country. The train journey from London is just over one hour.
 - 9.3 High quality city-centre conference venue and accommodation in close proximity to study tours and local sights – Leicester is a compact city that is easy to walk round on foot.
10. Lead Members have also agreed to tighten up the Conference format, so that it is in line with other similar LGA events, offers delegates more choice and enables us to keep costs down while retaining the popular and prestigious elements of the programme. The Conference will start with an evening networking event and dinner and be following the next day by a full programme, including study tours, plenary sessions and workshops on priority issues for the sector. The outline programme is attached at **Annex B**.
11. Lead Members have also agreed that it would be sensible to look at venues for 2017 in order to secure the best possible deal. Given that Hull is UK Capital of Culture in that year, Lead Members have asked officers to investigate options for hosting the CTS Conference in Hull.

Next Steps

12. Officers will develop the conference programme in line with Lead Members' steer and start to promote the event to our target audience. Suggestions for high profile plenary speakers and exhibitors are very welcome.

Annex A

Attendance

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Total attendance:	156	171	-15
Paying delegates:			
Entire conference	99	125	-26
One day/Dinner	13	10	+3
Total	112	135	-23
Member			
Organisations	93	124	-21
Non-member			
organisations	19	11	+8
Exhibition stands:	4	6	-2
Exhibitors/Sponsors:	8	17	-9
Speakers:	30	16	+14
Guests:	6	3	+3

Delegate online survey

35% of delegates completed the evaluation form, which is a good response rate and higher than previous years. Below is a summary of the feedback:

Overall satisfaction:

- The overall satisfaction level was 82.5% with only 2.5% dissatisfied and 15% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This is much better than last year's satisfaction levels of 73%.
- 41% of respondents were attending this conference for first time, while 59% had attended it before. This is consistent with previous years and the importance of repeat delegates for this conference.
- 80% of respondents said they would attend the conference again, with 20% being unsure and no one responded "no". This is a significant improvement over last year's 61% "yes, will attend next year" rate.

Venue and Drinks reception:

- Durham was very popular with delegates. 97% of respondents were satisfied with the city as a conference destination. 87.5% were satisfied with Radisson Hotel as the venue for the conference.
- 87% of respondents attended the drinks reception at the Durham Cathedral, with 91% of those who attended it being satisfied.

Plenary Speakers:

- Steve Cram and Fin Kennedy achieved the highest satisfaction ratings, but all of the plenary speakers scored well.

Study Tours:

- Feedback was excellent from the vast majority of delegates with Durham Cricket Ground scoring 100% satisfaction.

Workshops:

- Workshop feedback was positive with the sessions on revitalising democracy and commissioning receiving a 100% satisfaction rating.

Conference content, organisation and exhibition:

- 80% of respondents were satisfied with the organisation and running of the event, while 12% were dissatisfied.
- 87% respondents were satisfied with the content and structure of the programme for the conference with 5% being dissatisfied. This satisfaction level is much higher than last year's satisfaction level.
- 75% of respondents visited the exhibition stands and of these 43% were satisfied with the exhibition and 10% dissatisfied; almost similar to last year's.

Annex B

Outline Programme: LGA Annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference 2016

4:30pm – 6:00pm Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

Day 1: Wednesday 24 February:

5.00–7.00	Registration and refreshments
7.00 – 8.00	Drinks reception (with welcome and guest speaker)
8.00 onwards	Dinner

Day 2: Thursday 25 February

8.00–10.30	Registration (for new delegates) and refreshments
9.00–10.30	Walking study tours x 3
10.30–10.45	Refreshments
10.45–10.55	Chair's welcome Chair, LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board
10.55 – 11.05	Host Council welcome
11.05–11.50	Panel Debate. For example, the Chairmen of, VisitEngland, Arts Council England, English Heritage and Sport England
11.50–12.50	Workshop Sessions round 1 x 3
12.50–1.50	Lunch and networking
1.50–2.15	Plenary address 1: Ministerial
2.15–2.40	Plenary address 2
2.40–3.40	Workshop sessions round 2 x 3
3.40–4.05	Refreshments
4.05–4.30	Plenary address 3
4.30	Conference close