

25th February 2022

WLGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022 UPDATE

Purpose

- 1 To update member on plans for this year's WLGA Annual Conference.

Background

- 2 The WLGA Annual Conference is traditionally one of the biggest events in the public sector calendar in Wales. It offers an opportunity for councillors to connect with each other, and with other colleagues in the public, private and third sectors. It also serves to help promote the priorities and interests of local government.
- 3 Given that this is a local elections year, and as we start to emerge from the COVID 19 crisis, the conference will have even greater value to bring together newly elected and returning members, and to reflect and share on the experiences of recent extraordinary years.

WLGA Annual Conference 2022

- 4 The last WLGA Annual Conference was held in June 2018, at Venue Cymru (Llandudno). The event did not go ahead in 2019 due to councils were preparing for Brexit. The pandemic has since prevented a WLGA conference from taking place.
- 5 Group Leaders have agreed that the preference is for the Annual Conference to be held in person this year, but with fall back arrangements in place to hold the event remotely if necessary due to circumstances. The LGA is returning to a full face-to-face Annual Conference in July 2022.
- 6 The response to the pandemic has shown how technology can be used to work in different ways. We will explore opportunities to incorporate digital elements and the possible advantages or otherwise of hosting a hybrid conference.
- 7 Careful planning will be undertaken to ensure compliance with any public health guidance in force at the time of the conference.

Proposed Date

- 8 It is proposed that the Annual Conference takes place on Thursday 22 September 2022, four months after the election and three months after the formation of the new WLGA at the Annual General Meeting.

- 9 Holding the Annual Conference any later in the year would increase the potential risk of the event being disrupted by Covid due to the virus thriving in Winter months, as well with wider clashes around political party conferences.

Location

- 10 The WLGA Annual Conference has in recent years moved between Llandudno (Venue Cymru), Cardiff (City Hall and the Principality Stadium) and Swansea (Brangwyn Hall and the Swansea.com Stadium).
- 11 At a Management Sub Committee meeting in 2019, members requested officers to consider potential other venues to possibly take the conference to different parts of Wales.
- 12 Usual requirements for the Annual Conference include:
- Space for up to 300 delegates
 - At least four breakout rooms for fringe sessions
 - A room to accommodate an exhibition area
 - Accessibility via public transport (where possible), located near suitable hotels for delegates' convenience (preferably with capacity to host a conference dinner if the main conference venue cannot)
- 13 These requirements inevitably limit the potential venue options. Below is a list of possible alternative venues (in addition to the previously used venues) for consideration. Costs of venues and availability of suitable hotels will also need to be factored in:

North Wales

- **Llangollen Pavilion** [Pafiliwn Llangollen Pavilion](#)
 - The Pavilion's Hall seats up to 400
 - The Bridge End Hotel is nearest to the venue (0.6 miles). Other options include the Riverbanc (0.7 miles) or the Wild Pheasant (1.4 miles).
- **Galeri, Caernarfon** [Galeri Caernarfon Cyf, Caernarfon, Gwynedd](#)
 - Max capacity 395
 - The nearest hotel to the venue is Premier Inn (325 ft). Other options include Travelodge (495 ft) or the Celtic Royal Hotel (0.3 miles)
- **Glyndwr University, Wrexham** [Glyndwr University - Conference Venues](#)
 - Capacity up to 890

- Premier Inn is the nearest hotel to the venue (0.3 miles). Other options include the Ramada Plaza (0.6 miles) or the Wynnstay Arms (1.4 miles).

Mid Wales

- Aberystwyth Arts Centre [Aberystwyth Arts Centre](#)
- The theatre seats up to 300 people (Great Hall seats 900)
- The nearest hotel to the venue is the Premier Inn on the seafront (1.7 miles). Other options include Gwesty Cymru or the Marine Hotel also on the seafront, or the Park Lodge Hotel (2.2 miles)

South Wales

- The Riverfront Theatre and Arts Centre, [The Riverfront Theatre & Arts Centre | The heart of Newport's arts scene \(newportlive.co.uk\)](#)
- Capacity just under 500
- The Mercure Hotel is 0.4 miles from the venue. Other options include the Silurian Hotel and Travelodge Newport Central, both 0.8 miles from the venue.

Recommendations

14 Members are asked to:

14.1 Note the contents of this report; and

14.2 Share any views or preferences regarding arrangements for this year's WLGA Annual Conference.

Author: Dilwyn Jones
Tel: 07554056520
E-mail: Dilwyn.jones@wlga.gov.uk