

Committee: Policy and Resources Committee	Date: 24 September 2015
Subject: Local Government Association (LGA)	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information

Summary

1. This report provides Members with information on the work of the LGA and the City of London Corporation's involvement with the Association. It has been produced at the request of the Outside Bodies Working Party which felt that it would be useful for the Committee to be reminded of the LGA's activities and the City Corporation's subscription to and involvement with it.
2. The City Corporation has been member of the LGA since its inception in 1997. It is the national membership body for over 400 local authorities in England and Wales. It is a politically led, cross-party organisation that works on behalf of councils and the City Corporation by, amongst other things, liaising with national government on matters of mutual interest. As we subscribe to the Association's membership (£13,333 for 2015/16), all Members have access to the services it has on offer, for example leadership training, publications, briefings, updates on key announcements and legislation, conferences and seminars and other free or discounted events.

Recommendation

3. Members are asked to note the content of this report.

Main Report

Background

1. At its meeting on 26 June the Outside Bodies Working Party requested that a report be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee to remind Members of the work of the LGA and the City Corporation's involvement with that body.
2. The LGA was formed in 1997 following a merger of a number of local government associations representing the County Councils, District Councils and Metropolitan Authorities. It is the national membership body for over 400 local authorities in England and Wales and is a politically led, cross-party organisation that works on behalf of councils and the City Corporation to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government.
3. The LGA liaises directly with Westminster. It aims to:-
 - influence critical financial and policy decisions

- press for more powers to be devolved from Whitehall to local government
 - pick up emerging government thinking, ensuring councils' that views are represented
 - shape and develop the policies that local government needs
 - influence draft EU laws to get the best deal for our councils
 - work with public, private, community and voluntary organisations to secure their support for local priorities
 - speak with one voice to the public through local, regional and national media, helping to promote local government and defend its reputation
 - support councils in driving innovation and improvement and sharing best practice, to help them become more efficient and effective, deliver savings and improve services
 - negotiate fair pay and pensions, and provide advice on workforce issues to councils.
4. The LGA has a number of priorities going forward from 2015/16 and are running several campaigns to support them. For example:-
- a “fairer funding” for local government campaign. This follows concerns that if spending reductions follow a similar pattern over the next five years, councils will be facing a £12.4bn funding gap by the end of the decade;
 - a campaign to bring devolution to local areas (DevoNxt), which LGA believes will bring economic, political and social benefits to communities across the country; and
 - the Show Us You Care campaign. This calls for the Government to commit to protecting social care funding councils, which the LGA believes will ease financial pressures in other areas of council budgets.

City Corporation's Relationship with the LGA

5. The City Corporation has been member of the LGA since its inception in 1997 and the cost of subscription for 2015/16 was £13,333. As the Corporation is a member of the Association, all Members have access to the services the Association has on offer, for example leadership training (the Leadership Academy) publications, updates on key announcements and legislation, briefings and seminars, and other free or discounted events. Up-to-the minute news and information can be found on the LGA's website www.local.gov.uk
6. The Corporation is also entitled to participate in the LGA's democratic structures. Alderman Ian Luder took over from Alderman Sir David Wootton as the City Corporation's representative informally in the lead-up to Sir David's mayoralty in 2011/12. Alderman Luder attends the LGA's General Assembly and is able to exercise voting rights on behalf of the City Corporation. He has previously served on the LGA's Audit Committee and Resources Panel and on the board of Local Partnerships (a joint venture between the LGA and the Treasury) as the nominee of the LGA Independent Group.

7. The level of involvement with the Association depends on the individual. For example, Alderman Sir David Wootton is chairman of the board of Local Partnerships and by virtue of this he is also a non-voting member of the LGA's Executive. Edward Lord also serves on the Local Partnerships Board as the LibDem Group's nominee and is a previous Chairman of that Board. He previously served on the LGA Executive, the Improvement and Innovation Board as well as being the LGA's national lead on equality and social inclusion.
8. It should be noted that should Members choose to become active within the LGA, this can be achieved through the LGA's various groups i.e. the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat party groups or the Independent Group. The Independent Group includes any elected member of a Local Authority in England and Wales who is not otherwise entitled to membership of the LGA Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrat party groups.
9. To ensure that Members are aware of the City Corporation's membership of the LGA arrangements have been made for relevant information to be made available as part of the new Member induction process.
10. The LGA is also a useful source for examples of best practice and is regularly used by officers. For example, the LGA is working in partnership with the Association of Directors and Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Department of Health to support local authorities to deliver wide ranging care and support reforms as part of its Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care work stream. The City Corporation's Director of Community and Children's Services has therefore accessed material to assist his work and the City Corporation's preparedness for the implementation of the Care Act, to deliver our Better Care Fund programme and more broadly to support the integration of health and social care.
11. The City Corporation has also been supportive of the LGA's moves to establish the Municipal Bonds Agency (MBA) the aim of which is to provide an alternative to the Public Works Loan Board and reduce the cost of borrowing to local authorities. Whilst it is not anticipated that the City Corporation will borrow from the MBA, which is consistent with its policy of not taking on debt, it invested £200k in the start-up phase of the Agency. The MBA is now being formally established and should be open for business in the near future.
12. Officers from the Town Clerk's department met very recently with the LGA's Principal Advisor for London and the South East. The purpose of this meeting was for both organisations, the LGA and the City Corporation, to have a better understanding of how each works, the priorities and to ascertain whether there were any gaps in the services offered by the LGA.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. The City Corporation does not work in isolation. It is committed to working in partnership to improve local communities, the quality of life, and increase the capacity, of the wider London community. Subscription to the LGA helps to supports this as well as the City Corporation's strategic aims to provide:-

- modern, efficient and high quality local services, including policing, within the Square Mile for workers, residents and visitors; and
- valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure, to London and the nation.

It also ensures that the organisation is kept up-to-date on emerging issues affecting local communities across the nation and allows the City Corporation to shape policies and be aware of best practice.

- Appendix – None

Background Papers

Report to the Court of Common Council on 20th July 2000.

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