



Report – Policy and Resources Committee

Local Government Association

To be presented on Thursday, 3rd December 2015

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of
the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY

1. At its meeting on 23 September 2015 your Committee considered a report on the work of the Local Government Association (LGA) and the City of London Corporation's involvement with it. Given that local authorities who subscribe to the LGA are entitled to participate in its democratic process by appointing representatives to serve on its General Assembly (the body responsible for determining the LGA's governance structures) and had voting rights, your Committee has since reviewed the arrangements for appointing the City Corporation's representatives on a more formal basis as other authorities do.
2. This report provides Members with information on the work of the LGA and recommends the appointment two representatives to serve on the Association's General Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION

3. Members are asked to:-
 - note the content of this report;
 - appoint the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee (for the time being) or his or her representative and Alderman Sir David Wootton to serve as the City Corporation's representatives on the LGA's General Assembly; and
 - agree that a substitute be appointed to attend the LGA's General Assembly in the absence of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. 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 (the Leadership Academy) , publications, briefings, updates on key announcements and legislation, conferences 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
2. The LGA works to ensure that local government has a strong, credible voice with national government by liaising 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

5. Officers from the Town Clerk's department also 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.
6. The terms of reference, delegated powers, size, and political composition of all the LGA's governance structures are determined by its General Assembly. The Assembly usually convenes one annual meeting each year but other meetings can be held as required.
7. Each local authority in full, corporate or voting associate membership of the LGA is entitled to appoint a representative(s) to serve on the General Assembly. Authorities in full membership are entitled to vote on all matters at Assembly meetings. The total number of votes allocated to representatives of unitary authorities (metropolitan districts, London boroughs and English and Welsh unitary authorities) is based on the population bands determined by the LGA's Executive. The allocation of votes ranges from two votes for populations of between 1-100,000 to 17 votes for unitary authorities with a population of 800,001 and over. It is left to local authorities to determine how votes are allocated. For example, the London Borough Southwark has 5 votes, 3 of which are allocated to the Leader of the Council, one to the Deputy Leader and one to the majority opposition councillor. Lewisham allocates its 3 votes to its elected Mayor. These decisions are determined at full meetings of the council on an annual basis.
8. If for any reason a representative is unable to attend the Annual General Assembly another representative of an authority can be nominated to attend as a substitute and exercise voting rights. This is provided that written notice is given to the Chief Executive of the LGA before the start of the meeting by the Chief Executive of the member Authority, other appropriate officer, or by the named representative.
9. The appointment of the City Corporation's LGA representative is currently delegated to the Policy and Resources Committee. Based on the population band the City Corporation is entitled to two votes.
10. Alderman Sir David Wootton was appointed as the City's representative in June 2003. However in the lead up to Sir David's mayoralty in 2011/12, Alderman Ian Luder took over as the representative on an informal basis and this arrangement is still currently in place.
11. Given that local authorities who subscribe to the LGA are entitled to participate in its democratic process, with voting rights, your Committee has reviewed the arrangements for appointing the City Corporation's representatives on the General Assembly with a view to placing the appointment on a more formal footing as other authorities do.

12. Whilst your Committee was of the view the City Corporation's arrangement should be brought into line with practice operated by London boroughs and other local authorities, it also felt that it should make the most of its two votes by appointing two representatives and that the two appointments should be endorsed by the Court of Common Council. This would also reflect practice operated elsewhere.
13. Your Committee is of the view that the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee (for the time being) or his or her representative should be appointed as one of the City Corporation's two representatives. Given the level of Alderman Sir David Wootton's current involvement with the Association (he is chairman of the Association's board of Local Partnerships and by virtue of this he is also a non-voting member of the LGA's Executive), we also believe that he should be appointed as the City Corporation's second representative. In addition to this it was felt that it would also be prudent to have a substitute to attend the General Assembly in the absence of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. The City Corporation is committed to working in partnership to improve local communities and the quality of life in the wider London community. Continued engagement with 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.
15. Engagement with the LGA also ensures that the City 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.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 19th day of October 2015.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Mark John Boleat
Chairman, Policy and Resources Committee