

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

1 NOVEMBER 2017

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES – MR. HYWEL JENKINS

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected - All

LGA Subscription

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to re-join the Local Government Association (LGA) and pay their annual subscription via the Welsh Local Government Association.

Background

2. In 2013 the Council carried out a major review of all subscriptions and decided to withdraw from various subscription payments including a payment to the LGA General Subscription. The Council has not paid this subscription since 2012-13. The Council continued its membership of the WLGA and the National Pay Negotiation arrangements. At that time the annual subscription payable was £12,000.

Review of Subscription Benefits

3. Since 2013 the landscape for managing Council activities and Budgets has continued to be challenging. However this Council has benefited from activities managed and delivered by the LGA over many years before and since that time. These include:
 - The LGA respond and challenge UK Government policy and strategy
 - They lobby and pressurise the UK Government and their Departments on consequential funding issues that can also benefit Wales e.g. social care policy and total funding. The lobbying work on social care resulted in the UK Government allocating £2bn over

3 years with the Barnett formula consequential amounting to £110m for Wales.

- They have also pursued employment, redeployment and funding issues relating to the impact of the rollout of Universal Credit on Council resources.
- The lobbying also resulted in the LGA successfully obtaining a Local Government seat at the Brexit negotiating table and the Government funding commitment to continue fund already approved EU projects beyond 2019..
- They pursue non devolved matters such as welfare reform
- They coordinate legal action which individual Local Authorities can join to recover funds e.g. Iceland, Land Charges, HMRC VAT, Business Rates Relief, Purchase of Vehicles etc. This council has benefited from this work in recent years.
- Member training and mentoring
- They negotiate national pay arrangements and pay award settlements
- The LGA run many conferences some of which are free for member councils to attend.
- They also provide political support for councillors, promote local government and its reputation on national and other media
- Support councils to drive innovation and improvement, and share best practice to help them be more efficient and effective, negotiate fair pay and pensions and provide considerable advice on workforce issues to individual and groups of councils

4. The LGA can only act for those Welsh councils who are part of the WLGA's membership of the LGA. Councils out of membership are excluded from actions and our agreements with specialist legal advisers preclude them from acting for councils outside our collective actions.

5. The annual membership subscription for 2017-18 is £10,250.09. This is £1,750 less than the payment made in 2012-13.

Financial Impact

6. The cost of the annual membership can be absorbed within the Corporate Services budget in 2017-18 and will be provided for next year should members approve re-joining.

Equality Impact Assessment

7. There is no requirement for an equality impact assessment in respect of this item.

Workforce Impact

8. There are no workforce impacts in respect of this item.

Legal Impact

9. There are no legal impacts in respect of this item. The work of the LGA support pay negotiations and other legal action that may be pursued by Local Authorities.

Risk Management

10. There are no additional risk issues arising from this item

Consultation

11. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that Members consider re-joining the LGA at a cost of £10,250.09 per annum.

Reason for proposed decision

13. To decide on whether to pay the annual subscription to rejoin the LGA from 2017/18 financial year.

Implementation of decision

14. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

List of Background Papers

15. None

Officer Contact

Mr. H. J. Jenkins – Director of Finance & Corporate Services
(Tel. 01639 763251 - email: h.jenkins@neath-porttalbot.gov.uk)