

**AGENDA ITEM:**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE &amp; RESCUE BUDGET AUTHORITY MEETING</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2012</b>
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>CFO/024/12</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>JANET HENSHAW, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY, EXTN 4301</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>HELEN PEEK, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER, EXTN 4112</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SUBSCRIPTION 2012/13</b>

**A GLOSSARY OF TERMS HAS BEEN INCLUDED AT THE END OF THIS REPORT FOR YOUR INFORMATION.**

<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>LGA Letter from Chief Executive re LGA Subscription 2012/13</b>
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**ATTACHED – HARD COPY**

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members approve the recommendations of this report relating to the continued membership of the Local Government Association.

Recommendation

2. That Members:
  - a) Consider if they wish to continue with the Authority's membership of the Local Government Association;
  - b) Note that, as a direct result of lobbying by Metropolitan Fire Authorities, a reduced subscription rate of **£10,735** has been offered which includes a 2.5% prompt payment discount to Authorities who pay the annual subscription in full by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012, compared to £29338 in 2011/12, and;
  - c) Consider if the Authority wish to take up the offer of the discounted subscription for 2012/13, and instruct the Democratic Services Manager to make subscription payment.

## Introduction & Background

3. Members will be aware that the Authority is a long standing member of the Local Government Association (LGA) and that the Service has received notification of the fees required for 2012/13.
4. Last year The LGA carried out a review of its fee structure in response to the significant impact on its members of the Government's spending review and as a result the fees for MFRA were reduced from £38,574 in 2009/10 and £40,113.51 in 2010/11 to £29,338 for 2011/12, which included a 2.5% prompt payment discount which applies to all Authorities that paid in full by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011.
5. Members were concerned about apparent disparities in subscriptions between different Fire and Rescue Authorities and as a result this year subscriptions have been calculated according to type of Fire Authority and its population. In line with LGA members' commitment to continue to reduce the cost of membership, these have been reduced to reflect reductions in formula grant to local authorities of around 6.4% in 2012/13. This was a direct result of lobbying by the Metropolitan Fire Authorities group.
6. The LGA in common with its member fire authorities and councils faces financial challenges. They too have experienced significant reduction in Government funding and subscription income, and have now amalgamated the former LG Group into a single integrated LGA.
7. The LGA provides conferences, guidance, research and lobbying in relation to a wide variety of general local government issues and on matters affecting specific sectors. Over the years individual elected Members from MFRA have sat on LGA political groups, Fire Commission and the Fire Services Management Committee enabling them to influence national LGA policy and direction and contribute in relation to specific FRS issues.

## Equality & Diversity Implications

8. Membership with the LGA is a network for sharing views and discussing issues amongst similar organisations, to assist in the influencing of national LGA policy.
9. A network of this type allows equality and diversity considerations to be taken into account before national policies are set

## Staff Implications

10. There are no staff implications in relation to this report.

## Legal Implications

11. The National Fire Lawyers Group of which the Clerk is a member, receives regular updates from the LGA and therefore continued membership would assist this valuable service

## Financial Implications & Value for Money

12. The cost of this £10,735 subscription can be met from existing budgets and represents a reduction in cost on previous years' subscription of £18,603.
13. Additional costs are likely to be incurred for travel and accommodation (if required) when attending LGA Conferences, but these costs are contained within existing budgets and are covered by the Members Allowance Scheme.

## Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

14. There are no direct implications within this report relating to risk management, health and safety or the environment.

## Contribution to **\*\*Our Mission – To Achieve; Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters\*\***

15. Membership of the LGA allows MFRA Members to contribute to and benefit from the work of the LGA in championing the local government sector.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **\*Glossary of Terms**

LG – Local Government

LGA – Local Government Association

MFRA – Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Revised Report approved by SMG 4<sup>th</sup> October and by Authority at Executive Leadership Board 4<sup>th</sup> October 2011. (Mission considered by Community Protection Committee 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011)

\*\*Currently part of the IRMP 2012-2015 Consultation