

REPORT TO:	MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY BUDGET AUTHORITY MEETING
DATE:	TUESDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2013
REPORT NO.	CFO/009/13
REPORTING OFFICER:	CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY
CONTACT OFFICER:	JANET HENSHAW, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY, EXTN 4301
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	HELEN PEEK, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER, EXTN 4112
SUBJECT:	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SUBSCRIPTION 2013/14

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

APPENDIX A	TITLE	LGA Letter from Chief Executive re LGA Subscription 2013/14
-------------------	--------------	--

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, a 2.5% loyalty discount is being offered by the Local Government Association for Members who are not on notice, alongside the existing 2.5% prompt payment discount to Authorities who pay the annual subscription in full by 30th June 2013, and;
 - c) Consider if the Authority wish to take up the offer of the discounted subscription, for 2013/14, of £10,460 plus vat, and instruct the Democratic Services Manager to raise purchase order and 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 2013/14.
4. The LGA have stated that they are committed to keeping the cost of membership as low as possible and have introduced a new 2.5% loyalty discount for all members who are not on notice. This is alongside the offer of 2.5% prompt payment to Authorities who pay subscription fee's before 30th June 2013.
5. Members will remember that last year the LGA, as a direct result of lobbying by Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities (AMFRA), offered a reduced subscription rate of £10,735, which included a 2.5% prompt payment discount to Authorities who paid the annual subscription in full by 30th June 2012. This was compared to £29338 subscription fee in 2011/12.
6. Prior to that 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 30th June 2011.
7. In the past Members had been concerned about apparent disparities in subscriptions between different Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) and as a result last year the subscriptions were calculated according to type of Authority and its population. In line with LGA members' commitment to continue to reduce the cost of membership, these were 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 AMFRA.
6. The attached letter from the LGA Chief Executive, (Appendix A) highlights some of the successful work which has been carried out, funding which has been secured, and the work and support they plan to do on behalf of FRA's over the coming year.
7. To ensure that the Fire Services Management Committee continues to effectively represent all FRA's, the new Chairman wrote to all FRA's asking for input about issues which were important to them. Those responses have determined the main priorities going forward and will feed into the LGA's wider business plan.

Equality & Diversity Implications

7. 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.
8. 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. If the Authority approve to take advantage of the discounted loyalty fee and prompt payment discount, the cost of this £10,460 subscription can be met from existing budgets and represents a 2.5% reduction in cost on previous years' subscription of £10,735, which was paid at the 2.5% prompt payment rate.
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 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority to contribute to, and benefit from the work of the LGA in championing the local government sector.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

***Glossary of Terms**

LG – Local Government

LGA – Local Government Association

FRA – Fire and Rescue Authority

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

**Currently part of the IRMP 2012-2015 Consultation