

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	FULL AUTHORITY		
DATE:	20TH MAY 2021	REPORT NO:	CFO/019/21
PRESENTING OFFICER	ACTING MONITORING OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	RIA GROVES	REPORT AUTHOR:	KELLY KELLAWAY
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	CFO PHIL GARRIGAN		
TITLE OF REPORT:	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SUBSCRIPTION 2021/22		

APPENDICES:

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's continued membership of the Local Government Association (LGA) for 2021/22.

Recommendation

2. That Members;
 - a. Note the Authority's continued membership of the LGA, for 2021/22;
 - b. Note that a 2.5% loyalty discount is applied to all Fire and Rescue Authorities;
 - c. Note that the Authority have signed up to the LGA's direct debit payment scheme from 2020/21 onwards, in order to receive an additional 2.5% discount.
 - d. Note the content of the report.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will be aware that the Authority has been a long standing member of the LGA, which is a national membership body for local authorities, that works on behalf of members to support, promote and improve local government.
4. The core membership of the LGA comprises of 335 of the 339 councils in England. They also operate an Associate Scheme, for organisations whose purpose and objectives are aligned with their own, which includes fire and rescue authorities.

5. The LGA are a politically-led, cross-party organisation that works on behalf of local authorities to ensure that local government has a strong, credible voice with national Government. They also aim to influence and set the political agenda on issues that matter to local authorities.
6. The LGA provides a range of practical support on a free of charge or subsidised basis, which includes leadership programmes, peer challenge, the LGA's benchmarking service "LG Inform"; and programmes tailored to specific areas, such as fire and rescue.
7. The LGA has a Fire Services Management Committee, which represents the views and concerns of the fire sector, working on the future direction of the fire and rescue service.
8. In addition, the LGA produce a range of publications, responses, briefing documents and guides, relevant to the fire sector.
9. The LGA also provide the secretariat to the Employers' side of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, the Middle Managers Negotiating Body, and the NJC for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services.
10. The LGA has provided guidance and has acted as a single voice for local government when responding to significant events, including during this current climate of Covid-19 and in response to Grenfell Tower.
11. The LGA have previously stated that they are committed to keeping the cost of membership as low as possible; and membership subscriptions had been frozen for several years. However, due to increasing costs, a 2% increase in subscriptions was applied for 2020/21, with a further 2% increase applied for 2021/22, taking the cost of subscription for MFRA for 2021/22 to £11,455.08.
12. However, the LGA have confirmed that they will continue to apply a 2.5% loyalty discount for fire and rescue authorities, therefore with this discount applied, the total for MFRA for 2021/22, is £11,230.47.
13. In 2020/21 the LGA introduced a new direct debit scheme. For all authorities joining the direct debit scheme, a 2.5% discount was applied, replacing the previous 2.5% early payment discount. On the 21st May 2020 Members were advised in order for MFRA to receive the discount applicable MFRA would need to agree to join the ongoing direct debit scheme, of which MFRA did. The ongoing discount would take the total subscription fee for 2021/22 down to £10,882.32.
14. Although the current subscription is contained within existing budgets the Chair of the Authority confirmed approval of the continued membership to the LGA within their delegated powers prior to the next direct debit payment being made as approved in paragraph 13 above further to receipt of the invoice.

Equality and Diversity Implications

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15. The LGA has requested that each of its member authorities appoints a dedicated Equality and Inclusion Champion. For 2020/21, Cllr Jan Grace was appointed as MFRA's Equality and Inclusion Champion.
 16. The LGA have also formed an Equality and Inclusion Champion national network for fire and rescue authorities. This national network enables the sharing of views, best practice and discussion of issues, with other similar organisations, which can also assist with the influencing of national policy.

Staff Implications

17. There are no direct staff implications relating to this report.

Legal Implications

18. The National Fire Lawyers Group receives regular updates from the LGA; and therefore continued membership would assist this valuable service.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

19. By taking advantage of the direct debit payment scheme, the total cost of LGA membership for MFRA for 2021/22 is £10,882.32. This cost can be met from within existing budgets.
20. It is important to note that additional costs are likely to be incurred for travel and accommodation (if required) when attending LGA Conferences, however these costs can be contained within existing budgets and are covered by the Members Allowance Scheme.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

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

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

22. Membership of the LGA allows the Authority to contribute to, and benefit from the work of the LGA in championing the local government sector.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

LGA **Local Government Association**