
Relationship with Welsh Local Government

Summary

1. This report updates the Assembly on developments since the changes to the Constitution regarding membership of Welsh authorities were agreed by the Assembly at its last meeting on 15 December 2004.

Background

2. On 15 December 2004, the General Assembly agreed constitutional changes. In summary, the changes provided for a new category of membership for Welsh authorities, with reduced representational rights, coupled with a range of services provided by the LGA, agreed and paid for under a service level agreement. This approach recognised the devolution settlement, while continuing to provide local government in Wales with a service on non devolved matters, and the benefits of access to a wider base of information and experience. Welsh authorities would have the option of the new form of membership, or of continuing as full members of the LGA.
3. Welsh authorities were given the option of full membership, entitling them to participate fully in all the activities of the Association, or corporate membership with limited voting and representational rights. Welsh corporate membership would be available at a lower subscription, to be collected by the WLGA and paid over to the LGA.
4. The Assembly agreed the constitutional changes and that :-

consideration of voting rights, subscription levels and inclusion within political balance calculation be delegated to the LGA Executive, following further consultation with the Welsh Local Government Association and local authorities in Wales.
5. A meeting took place on 8 March between LGA and WLGA Group Leaders, and the LGA Executive gave further consideration to the outstanding issues on 24 February and 7 April 2005.
6. The decisions of the LGA Executive were as follows:-
 - (a) Subscriptions for Welsh corporate membership will be set at the rate which applies to other corporate members, and district councils. For 2005/06, this would be £13,220. It should be noted however that WLGA will levy a differential subscription on a formula based on population and voting strength on the WLGA Council.

- (b) LGA political balance will be calculated on the basis of welsh authorities in corporate membership having 50% weighting - this formula was applied for the first time following the May elections.
7. Regular bilateral meetings of LGA/ WLGA group meetings would be established and reported back to the LGA Executive. Welsh members will continue to be eligible for nomination on Boards, Panels and Task Groups, and appointments are reserved on the EO, LGIB, LACORS and IDeA Boards, where a financial contribution is made by the Welsh Assembly on behalf of welsh local government.

Implications for Wales

8. All welsh authorities will become Welsh Corporate members of the LGA.

Financial/Resource Implications

9. This year's budget approved by the Resources Panel, incorporates a net drop in income from Welsh local government of some £100K.

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