

## Meetings of the General Assembly

### Summary

1. To agree an amendment to the Association's constitution to remove the requirement for a meeting of the General Assembly in December each year, and related matters.

### Background

2. The LGA Constitution specifies the following with regard to the General Assembly:

#### 4.0 The General Assembly.

4.1 There shall be a General Assembly of the Association.

4.2 The General Assembly will hold an annual meeting to elect the office holders set out in article 7.

4.3 In addition the General Assembly shall meet each year to agree the budget of the Association. Other meetings may be held as required and the Assembly shall deal with such other business as may be determined by the LGA Executive".

3. Since the inception of the Association in 1997 the practice has been for the annual meeting of the General Assembly to be held immediately preceding the LGA Annual Conference in the first week of July. A second Assembly has been held each year during December in Westminster. In December 2006 the Assembly altered the Constitution so that the power to set subscriptions was remitted to the LGA Executive. Therefore the only formal purpose for holding a second General Assembly is to agree the budget of the Association.

4. In recent years there has been a gradual decline in attendance at the winter Assembly. At the most recent event on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007, 335 Local Authorities registered representatives and 31 Corporate Authorities also did so. In all 744 representatives were registered to attend and catering and facilities were made available to them. In the event the on day attendance was 305, many of who only actually attended for the political group meetings in the morning.

5. There has been a great deal of discussion about the reasons for this decline in attendance, and various formats have been used in the past to encourage greater attendance., but none have been regarded as particularly effective.

6. In December the formal General Assembly session was reduced to 45 minutes and the only constitutional reason for holding it, approval of a budget, was agreed without comment in the Political Groups or the Assembly itself. The move to a three-year budget planning cycle means that details of the budget would be prepared by the Resources Panel each autumn and put under scrutiny by the LGA Executive before it makes its decision on the budget and the subsequent subscription levels.

7. Office Holders at their meeting on 16 January therefore agreed to recommend to the Annual meeting amendments to the constitution which would remove the requirement to hold a meeting of the General Assembly in December; whilst retaining the flexibility to call additional meetings if exceptionally required; and consequential amendments relating to the approval of the budget.

8. In making this recommendation, LGA Office Holders were clear that there should still be a winter event involving the whole membership. It was recognised that Group meetings are valued by members, the Chairman and Group Leaders could still report and address the membership and a range of activities could be organised. The only thing to be withdrawn would be the formal business of the Assembly but that could be adequately dealt with at the Annual Meeting in the summer.

9. The Annual Meeting is therefore asked to agree that Articles 4 and 22 be amended as shown in the attached appendix. The proposed revisions are shown in bold.

## **Implications for Wales**

10. There are no specific implications for Welsh member authorities.

## **Financial/Resource Implications**

11. There are no unbudgeted financial implications.

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