

Statement on Special Interest Groups

Introduction

1. The LGA Constitution provides for member authorities with common characteristics to be able to form groupings of authorities to express a sectional interest. It was envisaged that the LGA would provide some secretarial support for such groups, which they could supplement from resources from their own membership.
2. The LGA's review of member structures confirmed the principle of Special Interest Groups (SIGs), but asked for a review of the LGA resources which were used to support them. This paper sets out the basis on which the LGA will enable SIGs to exist within it.

Establishing a SIG

3. It will be open to any **ten** or more potential members of a SIG, being full member authorities of the LGA, with common features, interests or concerns to ask the LGA to establish a SIG for them. Under exceptional circumstances the LGA Leadership Board may agree to the establishment of SIGs for smaller groups of authorities. Grouping of classes of authority (unitary authorities, county councils and district councils) will be regarded as SIGs and covered by the provisions of this paper.
4. Prospective SIGs will need to define the nature of their common interest, and to undertake that all authorities who can identify with that interest will be admitted to membership. In case of dispute as to whether an authority is eligible for membership of a particular SIG, the LGA Leadership Board will decide.
5. LGA approval to the establishment of a SIG will be given by the LGA Leadership Board following consideration of a written proposal.

Rules of Operation of SIGs

6. The LGA will provide:
 - ✓ secretarial support to Special Interest Groups (if requested) for up to a maximum of 3 meetings per year in London;
 - ✓ accommodation in Local Government House, free of charge, subject to availability of rooms;
 - ✓ commissioned third-party Web design and consultancy from the LGA at a special rate;
 - ✓ printing, mailing, catering and other services at normal LGA rates.

7. SIGs will be encouraged to raise whatever resources they wish from their members, and will administer such resources themselves.
8. SIGs will be able to make representations direct to Government and elsewhere on matters arising directly from their special interest, and to obtain LGA assistance in doing so. The LGA will expect that such representations will not conflict with or undermine LGA policy as a whole or damage the interests of other member authorities. The LGA has agreed protocols relating to local government finance and other distributional issues.
9. All SIGs will be required to submit a full report at the end of April each year to the LGA Leadership Board covering such matters as their dealings with Government Departments. The Leadership Board will be able to invite the Chairman of a SIG to discuss an Annual Report or issues arising from it. They will also be required to report to Programme Boards as appropriate. SIGs will also have to adopt rules of procedure dealing with, for example, terms of reference, office holders, frequency of meetings etc which will require formal LGA approval.

Other issues

10. The LGA will review support for SIGs annually.
11. The LGA will not pay attendance allowances, SRAs, subsistence or other payments to members attending SIG meetings. These expenses remain the responsibility of member authorities.