



meeting Administration Committee

date 11 January 2005

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF MEMBERS' SERVICES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION HARROGATE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE 4 – 8 JULY 2005

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for attendance at the Local Government Association's Annual Conference and Exhibition 4 – 8 July 2005.

2. Background

- 2.1 The County Council is a member of the LGA, which aims at improving life in local communities. Each year, the LGA holds a number of conferences on a range of issues of interest to local authorities. The annual conference, which is the main conference event in the business year, is open to representatives of all member authorities. It aims to provide the opportunity to hear from local and central government figures on issues which affect the whole community. It also enables information-sharing, promotion of local and national initiatives, learning opportunities for those who attend, through conference sessions and the ability to network effectively with representatives across the whole spectrum of local authority public service.

- 2.2 Next year, conference will address improving life around three strands:

- Safer communities
- Living communities
- Supporting communities

The LGA's promotional material for the conference states 'Small or large areas, villages, neighbourhoods, cities and counties – the best communities have citizens who share more than a postcode, who can connect with a common pride in their community; places with thriving local economies, good transport links, a liveable environment free of crime and anti-social behaviour, where people are better educated and in better health, where children and older people enjoy a better quality of life.' These will be the issues discussed in formal conference sessions and workshops.

2. Information & Advice

- 2.1 It has been the Council's practice to permit attendance at this important conference by its representatives on the LGA, the Leader of the main minority group and the Chief Executive.
- 2.2 Previously, that attendance was considered under the former Travel and Conference policy. On 7 October 2004, the full Council approved new arrangements for approving these issues. The Committee will need to consider the reasons for attendance and determine whether the Council should be represented and by whom. In addition, there is a requirement under the new Travel and Accommodation Policy, for the Committee to approve the costs, method/class of travel, accommodation and other expenses.

3 MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 As will be seen from the information about the content of the conference, the themes are closely related to many of the Council's aims as outlined in the strategic plan.
- 3.2 Attendance at the conference has been considered within the context of the strategic plan, policy and corporate development opportunities. It is appropriate for Nottinghamshire to be represented.
- 3.3 If attendance is agreed, the likely costs per person are:-

Conference fees	485.00	Members Conferences Budget
Accommodation	380.00	“ “
Travel	90.00	“ “
Subsistence	82.00	“ “

- 3.4 If previous practice regarding numbers attending were followed, the total costs would be:-

	£	To be met from
Conference fees	2910.00	Members Conferences Budget
Accommodation	2280.00	“ “
Travel	540.00	“ “
Subsistence	492.00	“ “

- 3.5 The following comments are offered to meet the terms of the new Travel and Accommodation Policy:-

It is the Council's practice to approve use of the Conference hotel for the LGA Annual Conference. It is considered that the benefits outweigh the additional costs involved. Those benefits include being co-located with other leading

figures associated with the conference, convenience (in terms of reduced travelling time and costs during the conference itself). The County Council's arrangements usually provide for expenditure of £115 per night for accommodation (exc breakfast).

The travel costs shown are for travel by private car and are the maximum costs likely to be incurred by lone drivers. For this particular destination, car travel may be the most convenient and cost effective option, taking into account rail fares (£348.00) and the times of trains against likely County Council and possible personal commitments of the representatives.

4. Statutory and Policy Implications

- 4.1 As required by the Travel and Accommodation Policy and a recent decision of the full Council, it is necessary for Members' attendance at this conference to be considered and approved in advance by this Committee. The necessary information is included in the report to enable the Committee to reach a considered decision.
- 4.2 Normally, the Committee would be asked to agree the number of representatives to be appointed to attend by one or more of the political groups. However, the forthcoming County Council Elections mean that it would not be appropriate to approach this matter in this way. An appropriate recommendation has therefore been included below.
- 4.3 Details of the Committee's decision in relation to this Conference will be included alongside the costs incurred in the Travel Register which the County Council publishes.

Finally, it will be necessary for any representatives nominated to attend the conference to report back to the Council on the outcomes. This Committee is the appropriate body to receive those reports, which will also be lodged in the Local Government Library for use by others within the Council

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 That approval be given for the attendance of five councillors plus one officer at the L.G.A. Annual Conference and Exhibition to be held from 4- 8 July 2005 in Harrogate.
- 5.2 (a) That the councillor attendance be such Council representatives as may be appointed to the LGA at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2005, together with the Leader of the then main minority group.

(b) That in the event of unavailability to attend by one or more of the councillors referred to above, the Head of Members' Services be authorised to

cancel or arrange for substitutes to attend where appropriate, in consultation with the Business Manager/Chief Whip of the appropriate Group.

**P. A. HOLT-MURPHY
HEAD OF MEMBERS' SERVICES**

Legal Services' Comments

The Administration Committee has the delegated authority to approve expenditure to be incurred for Member attendance at conferences and seminars. The proposal in this report relating to the attendance by a Member is therefore within the remit of this Committee. The attendance by an officer is a Departmental matter.

Director of Resources Financial Comments (MB)

The cost of the conference will be taken into account when preparing the 2005/06 Budget for Members Conference Expenses.

Background Papers Available for Public Inspection

Conference leaflet.

Electoral Divisions Affected

All.