

Minutes

WLGA Management Sub-Committee

25th February 2022

Via Zoom

PRESENT:

Cllr Huw David, WLGA Presiding Officer (Bridgend)
Cllr Andrew Morgan, WLGA Leader (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn (Denbighshire)
Cllr Hugh Evans OBE (Denbighshire)
Cllr Huw Thomas (Cardiff)
Cllr Jane Mudd (Newport)
Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill (Denbighshire)
Cllr Philippa Marsden (Caerphilly)
Cllr Ray Quant (Ceredigion)

APOLOGIES: Cllr Rob Stewart (Swansea)
Cllr Emlyn Dole (Carmarthenshire)
Cllr Ian Roberts (Flintshire)

SUBSTITUTES: Cllr David Jenkins (Carmarthenshire)

ALSO PRESENT: Chris Llewelyn Naomi Alleyne
Tim Peppin Daniel Hurford
Karen Higgins Lee Pitt

Item 1: Apologies

1. Noted as above.

Item 2: WLGA Draft Budget & Subscription for 2022-23

2. The Chief Executive introduced the report detailing the WLGA Draft Budget 2022-23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2025-26. Members considered whether a subscription increase of 4% next year should be recommended to the WLGA Council at its meeting on 16th March.
3. Chris noted that the Management Sub-Committee is responsible for setting the Association's budget which then has to be approved by the WLGA Council in March. It was noted over the past few years subscriptions had been capped at the lowest percentage Settlement increase received by authorities, which in this instance would result in an 8.4% increase (para 3). Chris noted that authorities faced extreme pressures in delivering services that did not affect the WLGA in the same way which

is why the paper proposes an increase of 4% in subscriptions, which was previously discussed with Group Leaders.

4. The major expenditure and income headings were highlighted and it was noted that the ICT contact is to be reviewed to identify if any savings can be made. Paragraph 7, Figure 1 summarises the proposed Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan assumptions 2023-2026. The full budget detail is at Annex 1 of the report. It was reported that a Reserves policy is being developed which will go before members for consideration at a later point.
5. The Leader noted that going forward, the WLGA budget needs to be set in accordance with what members want and need the Association to provide, support and deliver and resources should be aligned accordingly, not just be linked to the RSG.
6. Chris reported that the capacity of the Association (not including grant funded teams) is roughly the same as it was in 1996, which was pre devolution and pre the Senedd. It was noted that as a result increasing demands have been placed on the same relatively small number of WLGA staff and maybe following the election in May there will be an opportunity to reflect and consider the matter further.

7. Resolved:

- 7.1 Members approved the 2022-23 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan; and**
- 7.2 Members agreed to recommend to the WLGA Council a subscription increase of 4% next year.**

Item 3: Single Unified Safeguarding Review Coordination Hub Update

8. Naomi Alleyne, Director, Social Services and Housing introduced the report seeking members approval for the Wales Safer Communities Network to host a Single Unified Safeguarding Review Coordination Hub on behalf of Welsh Government.
9. The role of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Co-ordination Hub is to galvanise, support and progress reviews and ensure broader learning from reviews is shared and implemented to safeguard communities across Wales.
10. Members were asked to approve, in principle, the agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 1 of the report) between Welsh Government, the WLGA and the Safer Communities Network setting out roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. It was noted there is still some detail that needs to be finalised.
11. Cllr Mudd spoke in support of the Wales Safer Communities Network hosting the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Coordination Hub and said it was vital that lessons learned from such reviews are shared as widely as possible. Members noted how important it is that difficult lessons need to be learned in a structured way and will hopefully lead to improved practices and outcomes.

12. Resolved:

- 12.1 Members noted the content of the report:**
- 12.2 Members approved the hosting of the Coordination Hub by the Safer Communities Network on behalf of Welsh Government, subject to the provision of appropriate funding;**
- 12.3 Members approved the principle of agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding and tasked officers to seek a legal view on the draft Memorandum of Understanding from the perspective of the WLGA; and**
- 12.4 Members supported seeking WLGA approval of the Memorandum of Understanding at the Council meeting of 16th March 2022.**

Item 4: National Adoption Service

- 13. Naomi Alleyne, Director, Social Services and Housing updated members on progress being made in establishing a Joint Committee for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales, as well as the development of a formal agreement with Cardiff Council to host the central team of the national service on behalf of the other Welsh councils.
- 14. Naomi reminded members that In October 2021, the WLGA Executive Board agreed to the establishment of a Joint Committee to provide governance and accountability arrangements for the National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales. The proposed Joint Committee and the agreement underpinning it has been extended to include Foster Wales as has the capacity for national co-ordination and enabling through a combined Central Team. The link to the Joint Committee is critical for Foster Wales given the lack of a legislative basis for such co-operation for fostering services.
- 15. The intention has always been to develop a formal agreement with the host authority and the establishment of a Joint Committee enables this to now be taken forward. There has been a general acceptance by Cardiff Council that a formal agreement would be developed, including identifying financial implications of hosting NAS and ensuring any liabilities as a consequence of Cardiff employing the central team staff are shared with other councils.
- 16. Naomi highlighted to members that there would be an increase in costs for Cardiff to host the service and two options were suggested 1) building the additional funding is into the next topslice of the RSG or 2) invoicing local authorities individually for their contribution to the additional amount during the current financial year and members were invited to discuss.
- 17. Cllr David, in his role as WLGA Health and Social Care Spokesperson reflected on the progress made and the success of the model which provides a national framework but local service delivery is key with key decisions made at the local/regional level. He recognised that arrangements need updating and formalising

and felt a slight increase in topslice (to cover increase in costs) would be better than invoicing the 22 councils separately.

18. Resolved:

18.1 Members noted the contents of the report and the update provided; and

18.2 Members discussed how any additional costs for the National Adoption Service of a formal hosting agreement with Cardiff Council could be met (options detailed in paragraph 13 of the report) and supported an increase in the topslice of the RSG.

Item 5: WLGA Subsidiary Company: Establishment of a Joint Inspection Team **CONFIDENTIAL**

WLGA Constitution 20.6.3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

19. Resolved:

19.1 Members noted and commented on the contents of the report;

19.2 Members approved the proposed way forward as set out in paras 5 – 8 of the accompanying report, subject to confirmation of funding from Welsh Government, including:

- i. Engaging Local Partnerships to provide professional advice and support around the feasibility and process of establishing a company;**
- ii. Appointment of a lead officer by WLGA to coordinate this work; and**
- iii. The use of a specialist recruitment company to recruit to the post.**

19.3 Members agreed that a members' workshop to discuss governance implications of a company will be organised prior to any formal consideration of proposals at a future WLGA meeting;

19.4 Members agreed that local authorities and the WLGA should be fully indemnified against any potential legal or financial action, loss or risk as a result of a hosting the proposed Joint Inspection Team.

Item 6: WLGA Post Elections Engagement & Induction

20. Daniel Hurford, Head of Policy, introduced the report, which has been prepared following recent discussions with Group Leaders. The report updates and seeks members' views on preparations for post-election communication, engagement, induction and support for councillors and new WLGA members.

21. The report summarises (paragraphs 6 to 12) the support already planned by the WLGA in terms of induction and communication and communication support for new and returning councillors.
22. Daniel noted that previous elections have resulted in significant change in WLGA Council Members and Leaders and reported that WLGA officials will seek to ensure new leaders and WLGA members receive early advice and support about their new roles within the WLGA. He noted that support will be available for new Leaders and cabinets. Paragraph 15 details the proposed support and engagement with WLGA Members post the elections.
23. It was reported that the WLGA website being redesigned and will include information on support for members. Following the election communication with all councillors and lead members will increase, including regular e-bulletins to councillors and update from the WLGA Leader.
24. Daniel noted the WLGA is looking to provide each authority with an 'End of Term Report' of the support the WLGA has provided since 2017 demonstrating the value of the WLGA to all members.
25. The Deputy Presiding Officer, Cllr Mudd, thanked officers for all the work that has gone into preparing a comprehensive programme of development and support and noted it would be especially beneficial for new members. Cllr Mudd also wanted to put on record her thanks for all the support she has received from other Leaders and the WLGA, particularly over the last two years, which has seen local government and Leaders come together as never before. The Presiding Officer also noted how local government and the WLGA has come together as one family during the pandemic and noted that officers would appreciate the Deputy Presiding Officer's remarks and appreciation.
26. Members were informed that the WLGA is working with One Voice Wales to ensure that following the elections 'twin hatted' i.e., county and town and community councillors won't need to repeat the same training. Materials and resources have already been shared so there should be accuracy and consistency and duplication avoided.
- 27. Resolved:**
 - 27.1 Members discussed the proposed approach to engagement and induction support for new councillors and councils following the Local government elections in May 2022 and**
 - 27.2 Members considered WLGA organisational and member support issues to discuss at the Leaders' Away Day on 4th March 2022.**

Item 7: WLGA Annual Conference

28. Dilwyn Jones, Communications and Public Affairs Manager, introduced the report to update member on plans for this year's WLGA Annual Conference. Paragraph 12 of the report detailed the criteria that will be used to identify a suitable venue.

29. Members felt it important to hold the conference in early autumn should there be the same increases in coronavirus rates towards the end of the autumn/early winter as in the previous few years. Consideration should also be given to having a hybrid conference. Members suggested venues in parts of Wales where the WLGA has previously not hosted conferences and events would be the most preferable.

30. Resolved:

30.1 Members noted the contents of the report; and

30.2 Members agreed the WLGA Conference 2022 should be held on the 22nd of September with a final decision on location will be made once detailed costings and availability of suitable venues is collated.

Meeting close