



Local Government Association

Governance Framework

LGA Governance Framework – Approved 7 March 2018

Amended 6 June 2018, 18 July 2018

CONTENTS

| PART 1 – Governance arrangements | Paragraphs | Page |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
| General | 1-4 | 5 |
| Roles and conduct | 5-6 | 5 |
| General Assembly | 7 | 6 |
| LGA Board | 8-9 | 6 |
| Executive Advisory Board | 10-12 | 6-7 |
| Policy Boards | 13-20 | 7 |
| Fire Commission/Fire Services Management Committee | 21-24 | 7-8 |
| Audit Committee | 25-26 | 8 |
| Councillors’ Forum | 27-28 | 8 |
| Company Boards | 29 | 8 |
| Commercial Advisory Board | 30 | 9 |
| Task and Finish Groups | 31-34 | 9 |
| Lead Members | 35-37 | 9 |
| Substitutes | 38-39 | 9 |
| LGA Associate schemes | 40-44 | 10 |
| Part 2 - Standing Orders | | |
| Meetings of the General Assembly of the LGA | | |
| Order of Business | 1-2 | 11 |
| Notices of Motion | 3-5 | 11 |
| Special Meetings | 6-9 | 11 |
| Motions and Amendments without Notice | 10 | 12 |
| Minutes | 11 | 12 |
| Rescission of Earlier Resolution | 12 | 12 |
| Rules of Debate | 13-29 | 12-14 |

| | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| Voting | 30-33 | 14 |
| Notices | 34 | 15 |
| Suspension of Standing Orders | 35 | 15 |
| Meetings of the LGA Board, Executive Advisory Board and Boards of the Association | | |
| Attendance at meetings | 36-39 | 15 |
| Order of Business | 40-41 | 15 |
| Minutes | 42 | 16 |
| Rescission of Earlier Resolution | 43 | 16 |
| Voting | 44-46 | 16 |
| Suspension of Standing Orders | 47 | 16 |
| Part 3 - Political Conventions | | |
| General | 1-3 | 17 |
| Political Administration of the LGA | 4-12 | 17-18 |
| Support for Political groups | 13-20 | 18-19 |
| Impartiality of Staff | 21-23 | 19 |
| Representation on Outside Bodies and Delegations | 24-31 | 19-20 |
| Public Statements on behalf of the Association | 32-40 | 20-21 |
| Conferences | 41-48 | 21-22 |

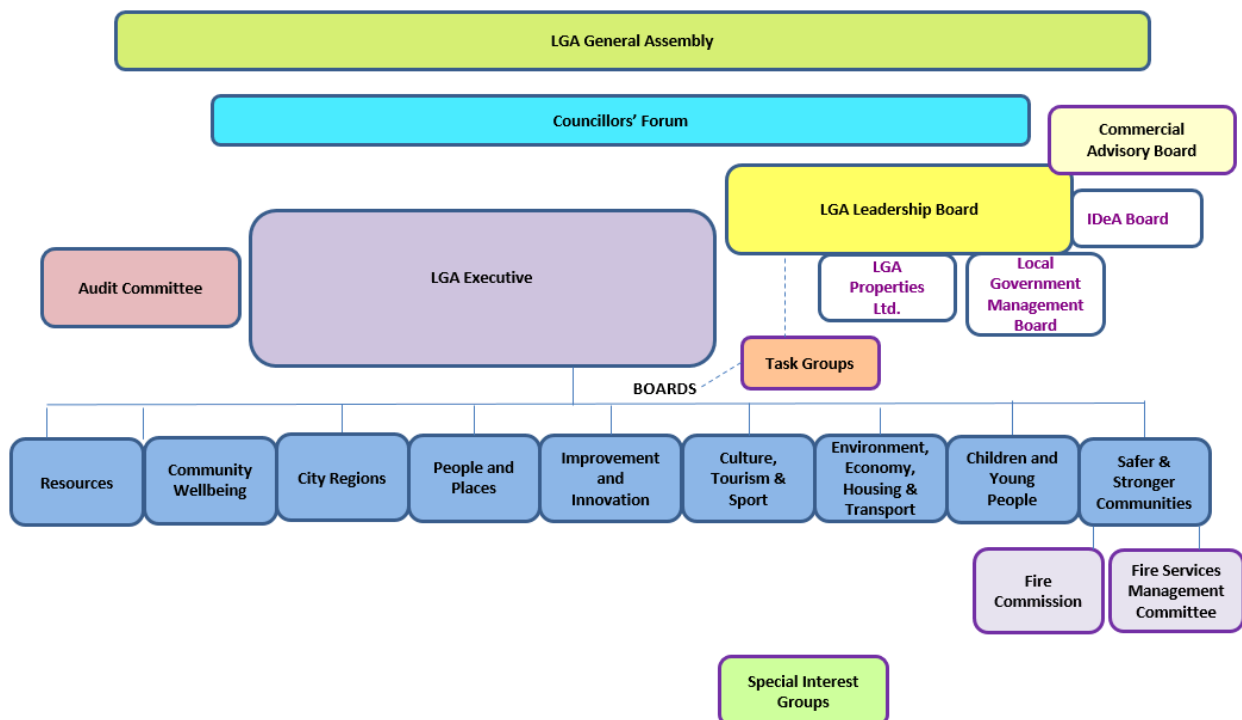
Part 1: Governance arrangements

General

1. This governance framework should be read in conjunction with the Articles of Association of the Local Government Association (LGA).
2. The political balance of the LGA's governance arrangements is calculated in accordance with **Article 7** of the Articles of Association.
3. The quorum at meetings shall consist of one third of voting members, provided that representatives of at least 2 political groups represented on the body are present.
4. The Chair of the LGA's governance structures shall have a casting vote. The casting vote will not be used to establish or change LGA policy.

Roles and conduct

5. All democratically elected local representatives serving on the LGA's member structures, or otherwise representing or undertaking business on behalf of the LGA, are required to operate in accordance with the member code of conduct of the local authority they are representing.
6. Job descriptions set out the respective accountabilities all roles on the LGA's governance structure. These accountabilities are linked to Special Responsibility Allowances, are refreshed annually and are reviewed alongside the Scheme of Allowances (**Article 23** of the Articles of Association).



General Assembly

7. The General Assembly is made up of all the Association's members in general meeting. Its powers, responsibilities and procedures are set out in **Part 4** of the Articles of Association.

LGA Board

8. The LGA Board is the Board of Directors of the Association. It is politically balanced and is made up of the chairman, vice and deputy chairs, who are elected annually by the General Assembly. The LGA Board powers and responsibilities are set out in **Part 5** of the Articles of Association.
9. The LGA Board:
 - 9.1 sets the strategic direction of the Association in consultation with the Executive Advisory Board;
 - 9.2 directs the activities and business of the Association and ensures its proper management;
 - 9.3 is responsible for the management of internal resources and for policies on resource management;
 - 9.4 agrees the annual budget and business plan;
 - 9.5 considers applications to join the LGA's Associate schemes;
 - 9.6 receives reports of the Audit Committee and the Commercial Advisory Board;
 - 9.7 receives annual reports of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and joint venture companies;
 - 9.8 receives and recommends to the General Assembly the LGA's consolidated financial statements and annual report of the Audit Committee;
 - 9.9 recommends amendments the Articles of Association to the LGA General Assembly; and
 - 9.10 recommends Motions to the General Assembly for consideration.

Executive Advisory Board

10. The Executive Advisory Board is politically balanced and is made up of the following:
 - 10.1 **Voting members**
 - 10.1.1 The Office Holders of the Association;
 - 10.1.2 The Chairs of the Policy Boards (as defined in paragraph 8);
 - 10.1.3 One representative of each of the regional groupings and of the Welsh LGA; and
 - 10.1.4 Additional members to maintain political balance.

10.2 Non-voting members

10.2.1 Representatives of the County Councils Network, District Councils Network and Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities; and

10.2.2 Representative of Local Partnerships.

11. The Executive Advisory Board:

11.1 contributes to the development of LGA policy, representing the views of local government;

11.2 supports the LGA Board to set the strategic direction of the LGA; and

11.3 holds the Policy Boards, Fire Commission and Fire Services Management to account.

12. To maintain political balance, in the event that the Chair of a Board is unable to attend a meeting of the Executive Advisory Board, a substitute from the same political party will be permitted. Alternatively the Vice Chair will be permitted to attend to speak, but not vote, on items within that Board's remit.

Policy Boards

13. The purpose of the Policy Boards is to develop, steer and oversee all policy and improvement activity, in line with the LGA priorities. There are nine Policy Boards:

- Children & Young People
- Community Wellbeing
- Culture, Tourism & Sport
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport
- Resources
- Improvement & Innovation
- City Regions
- People & Places

14. The Children & Young People, Community Wellbeing, Culture, Tourism & Sport, Safer and Stronger Communities, Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport, Resources and Improvement & Innovation boards are each made up of 18 members and are politically balanced in accordance with Article 8 of the Articles of Association.

15. The City Regions and People & Places Boards are each made up of 22 members, representing metropolitan and non-metropolitan councils respectively. Their political balance reflects the political balance of their constituent councils.
16. The Policy Boards are responsible for determining their own terms of reference and work programmes. They fulfil their purpose by:
 - 16.1 engaging with and developing a thorough understanding of councils' priorities in relation to their particular area;
 - 16.2 contributing to the development and delivery of the LGA Business Plan;
 - 16.3 overseeing programmes of work to deliver, through extensive engagement with councils, the strategic priorities set by the LGA Board; and
 - 16.4 reporting to the Executive Advisory Board and to the Councillors' Forum on their activities.
17. In addition, the Improvement & Innovation Board oversees delivery of the LGA's improvement activities in line with the memorandum of understanding with the Department of Communities and Local Government.
18. The political balance of each Board may be maintained by the attendance of substitutes.
19. All questions arising at a Board shall be decided by a majority of the voting members present and voting thereon. Each member shall have one vote. In the case of an equality of votes the Chair shall have the casting vote in addition to any vote(s) that he or she may be entitled to cast as a Member of the Board.
20. The allocation of chairs and vice chairs across the nine Policy Boards and Fire Services Management Committee is in line with the LGA's political balance.

Fire Commission/Fire Services Management Committee

21. The Fire Commission provides a forum for all authorities in voting membership/associate membership of the LGA with responsibility for fire and rescue to come together to:
 - 21.1 discuss matters of common interest and concern;
 - 21.2 represent the views and concerns of the fire community in relation to fire service modernization;
 - 21.3 take the lead on day-to-day policy issues affecting fire authorities;
 - 21.4 exchange good practice; and
 - 21.5 influence the priorities and activities of the LGA.
22. Representation and voting on the Fire Commission is reviewed annually against population figures and other relevant changes and updated accordingly. Figures are published on the LGA website.

23. The Commission is led by the Fire Services Management Committee which reports to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board. The Fire Services Management Committee comprises 14 members from authorities with responsibility for fire and rescue and is politically proportionate.
24. The political balance of the Fire Services Management Committee may be maintained by the attendance of substitutes.

Audit Committee

25. The Audit Committee is made up of four members nominated by each of the four political groups. It is not politically balanced.
26. The Audit Committee
 - 26.1 monitors the integrity of the financial statements of the LGA and its associated companies;
 - 26.2 oversees their internal control and risk management systems;
 - 26.3 considers issues of probity and conduct; and
 - 26.4 reports to the General Assembly on the Committee's activities and the LGA's consolidated financial statements.

Councillors' Forum

27. Councillors Forum has a core membership of 100 members and is politically balanced. However it is open to any elected member of an LGA member council to attend.
28. Councillors' Forum offers a programme of topical external/internal speakers and discussions and receives reports from the Chairman of the LGA and the chairs of the Policy Boards.

Company Boards of the IDeA, LGA (Properties) Ltd and Local Government Management Board.

29. The Company Boards of the IDeA, LGA (Properties) Ltd and Local Government Management Board are set up to:
 - 29.1 direct the activities and business of the respective bodies and ensure their proper management in accordance with their Memoranda and Articles of Association and with the strategic priorities and direction of the LGA;
 - 29.2 contribute to the development of the LGA business plan;
 - 29.3 oversee delivery of projects commissioned outside the LGA; and
 - 29.4 report to the LGA Board on their activities.

Commercial Advisory Board

30. The Commercial Advisory Board is made up of four members appointed by each of the four political groups. The Board:
 - 30.1 oversees and advises the LGA Board on all aspects of the LGA's commercial strategy; and
 - 30.2 reports to the LGA Board on its activities.

Task and Finish Groups

31. Task and Finish Groups may be appointed by the LGA Board, Executive Advisory Board or a Policy Board to oversee a specific project, or issue or business plan priority. Task and Finish Groups have a defined life cycle, linked to their output, and are accountable to the body that commissioned them.
32. Task and Finish groups should include members with relevant experience or expertise. They should be small enough (normally no more than 8 members) to enable effective working. Task and Finish groups need not achieve precise political balance, although the overall principles of proportionality should be reflected across all Task and Finish groups.
33. Task and Finish groups should normally include a Board member, but that person need not chair the group. Chairs of Task and Finish groups may be appointed from any political group. Proportionality will be observed in the appointment of Task and Finish Group chairs, but not so strictly as to inhibit the appointment of the chair most appropriate to the role and purpose of any particular task group. Substitutes will not be allowed.
34. Task and Finish groups will generally have delegated authority to oversee a project, within a remit approved by the sponsoring Board or Executive Advisory Board. Normally, there should be no need for the Task and Finish group to seek further approval from a sponsoring Board or Executive Advisory Board unless they propose a significant departure from the original objectives or design of the project.

Lead Members

35. The Lead Members of the Policy Boards and the Fire Services Management Committee shall comprise the respective Chair, Vice-Chair and Deputy Chair.
36. The Lead Members will be consulted on administrative arrangements for business and meetings of all governance structures, including dates and times of meetings and appointment of advisers.
37. The Lead Members will have the right to call for relevant items to be placed on an agenda.

Substitutes

38. Substitutes from the same political party are permitted to attend meetings of the Policy Boards, Fire Services Management Committee, Audit Committee and Commercial Advisory Boards. Arrangements for substitutes at the Executive Advisory Board are set out in **paragraph 12**.
39. Substitutes are not permitted to attend LGA Board, Task and Finish Groups or the Company Boards of the IDeA, LGA (Properties) Ltd and Local Government Management Board.

LGA Associate schemes

40. The LGA may establish Associate schemes for local, regional and national public bodies, on such terms as shall be determined by the LGA Board.
41. Associate schemes may be generic or tailored to reflect the particular nature, priorities and relationship with the LGA of different groupings.

Combined Authorities and Elected Mayors

42. Combined authorities and elected mayors of combined authorities whose component councils are all in full membership of the LGA shall receive the same membership benefits as those component councils.
43. Where one or more councils that make up a Combined Authority are not in membership of the LGA, a separate subscription will be charged to that Combined Authority.

Voting at General Assembly

44. Some Associate schemes and elected mayors of combined authorities have the right to vote at General Assembly on issues in which they have a legitimate interest. A scheme of voting is published on the website setting out the voting rights in these cases.

Part 2 - Standing Orders

Meetings of the General Assembly of the LGA

Order of Business

1. The order of business at each annual meeting of the General Assembly shall be:

1.1 Appointments and Business

- Election of President
- Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen
- Note appointment of Vice-Presidents
- Amendments to the LGA Constitution
- Audited Accounts
- Annual Report of the Audit Committee
- Approval of Minutes of previous General Assembly

1.2 General Assembly Motions

2. The Chair may, at his/her discretion, alter the order in which business is taken.

Notices of Motion

3. At any meeting of the General Assembly motions may be moved of which notice is given as set out below.
4. Notice of a motion to be moved at the Annual Meeting, shall be given in writing to the Chief Executive Advisory Board of the LGA not less than forty-two clear days before the meeting. In the case of special meetings notice shall be given not less than twenty-one clear days before the meeting.
5. The LGA Board shall determine whether notices of motion, other than those to be submitted to a special meeting, to be moved at any meeting of the General Assembly shall instead receive consideration by the Executive Advisory Board or by a Policy Board. Members submitting notices of motion shall be informed of the LGA Board's decision in such cases.

Special Meetings

6. A special meeting of the General Assembly may be called at any time by the LGA Board subject to ten clear days' notice being given to member authorities stating the agenda.
7. A special meeting of the General Assembly, of which twenty-one clear days' notice shall be given, shall also be called by the Chief Executive within seven clear days of receiving a requisition signed by the Chief Executive or other appropriate officer of a member authority on behalf of not less than one-quarter of authorities in full membership of the Association and stating the terms of the motion or motions proposed to be moved at such a meeting.

8. At special meetings called under this rule, no business other than that mentioned in the agenda shall be transacted.
9. A valid requisition under this rule may consist of a single letter or of two or more letters in the same form on which the member authorities signifying the request amount in total to the requisite numbers.

Motions and Amendments without Notice

10. The following motions may be moved without notice:
 - 10.1 To appoint a Chair for that Meeting or the remainder of the meeting;
 - 10.2 Motions relating to the accuracy of the minutes, closure, adjournment, order of business, or next business;
 - 10.3 Adoption of reports or recommendations of the LGA Board, Executive Advisory Board, Audit Committee or other approved governance structure and any subsequent resolutions;
 - 10.4 That a matter be referred or referred back to the LGA Board, Executive Advisory Board, Audit Committee or other approved governance structure;
 - 10.5 That representatives of the media be excluded from the meeting;
 - 10.6 That leave be given to withdraw motions;
 - 10.7 Amendments to motions; and
 - 10.8 Suspending standing orders.

Minutes

11. No motion or discussion shall take place upon the minutes except upon their accuracy and any question of their accuracy shall be raised by motion. If no such question is raised, or if it is raised then as soon as it has been disposed of, the Chair shall sign the minutes.

Rescission of Earlier Resolution

12. No notice to rescind any resolution passed within the preceding twelve months, and no notice or amendment to the same effect as one which has been negated within the preceding twelve months, shall be proposed. This standing order shall not apply to motions moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of the LGA Board, Executive Advisory Board, Audit Committee or other approved governance structure.

Rules of Debate

Respect for Chair

13. A representative, when speaking, must stand and address the Chair. He/she shall direct his speech to the question under discussion. When the Chair rises during a debate any member then standing must immediately stop speaking and sit down. If two or more delegates rise the Chair shall call on one to speak. The Chair shall decide all questions of order and his/her ruling upon all such questions or upon matters arising in debate shall be final and shall not be open to discussion.

Motion or Amendment – Procedure

14. A motion or amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded by representatives of authorities in membership of the Association.
15. Representatives of authorities in corporate membership may propose and second motions or amendments only where these are of direct relevance to their statutory duties and responsibilities. They may not be seconded by a representative from the same authority as the mover of the motion or amendment.

Content of Amendment

16. An amendment must relate to the motion and either:
 - 16.1 Leave out words;
 - 16.2 Leave out words and insert or add others; or
 - 16.3 Insert or add words.
17. Any such amendment must not have the effect of negating directly the original motion.

When a Member may speak again on a Motion

18. No representative shall address the meeting more than once on any motion or amendment except:
 - 18.1 The mover of an original motion shall have the right to reply immediately before the motion, or any amendment to it, is put;
 - 18.2 If the seconder of an original motion or amendment formally seconds and sits down without speaking upon it, he/she may reserve the right of addressing the meeting later; and
 - 18.3 On a point of order or personal explanation.

Length of Speech

19. No speech shall exceed three minutes except the speech of the proposer on the original motion which shall not exceed five minutes.

Debate on Amendment

20. Every motion or amendment shall be reduced to writing, signed by the mover and delivered to the Chief Executive when it has been seconded.
21. After a motion or an amendment has been seconded, it shall not be withdrawn without the leave of the meeting.

22. A representative may, with the consent of his/her seconder and of the meeting, signified without discussion, alter a motion which has been proposed or of which notice has been given if the alteration is one which could have been moved as an amendment thereto.
23. A proposer of a motion or of any amendment may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the meeting, withdraw the motion or amendment which he/she has proposed and it shall not be competent for any representative to speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission for its withdrawal, unless such permission shall have been refused.
24. If an amendment is rejected, other amendments may be moved on the original motion. If an amendment is carried the motion, as amended, takes the place of the original motion and becomes the motion upon which any further amendments may be moved.
25. A further amendment shall not be moved until the meeting has disposed of every amendment previously moved. After all amendments have been disposed of, the motion before the meeting shall be put without further debate.

Motions which may be Moved During Debate

26. A representative who has not already spoken in the debate may at the conclusion of a speech of another representative move without comment: -
 - 26.1 “that the question be now put”;
 - 26.2 “that the debate be now adjourned”;
 - 26.3 “that the meeting proceed to the next business”; or
 - 26.4 “that the meeting do now adjourn”.
27. On the seconding of which the Chair, if in his/her opinion the motion before the meeting has been sufficiently discussed, shall, subject to the mover’s right of reply, put the question to the vote and, if it is carried, the motion before the meeting shall be put to the vote or the subject of debate shall be deemed to be disposed of for that day, or the meeting may stand adjourned as the case may be.

Personal Explanation and Points of Order

28. A representative may rise on a personal explanation or a point of order at any time and is entitled immediately to address the Chair on the matter; but
 - 28.1 A personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of an earlier speech by the representative and on which a misunderstanding has occurred;
 - 28.2 The representative who raises a point of order must specify immediately a Standing Order and say how it has been broken or infringed;
 - 28.3 In either case the representative’s speech must be confined to the personal explanation or point of order;
29. The ruling of the Chair on a personal explanation or point of order is not open to discussion.

Voting

30. Questions shall wherever possible be determined by a show of hands.

31. A ballot may be held if:
 - 31.1 At any time the Chair considers it desirable; or
 - 31.2 Immediately after he/she has declared the result of voting, representatives from not less than one-third of voting councilors appointed by authorities in full membership of the Association rising in their places demand a ballot.
 - 31.3 If a ballot is requested in line with **paragraph 31** above, then the Chief Executive of the Association will arrange for voting cards to be distributed to and collected from the representatives present or an electronic vote to take place.
32. The actual votes cast, weighted in line with **Article 8** of the Articles of Association, will be determined retrospectively and the LGA will notify the Chief Executive of all member authorities of the result of the ballot within 3 working days of the meeting of the General Assembly.
33. Any voting card not completed in full and signed by the democratically elected local representative will be considered a spoiled vote and will not be counted.

Notices

34. All notices and communications required by these standing orders to be sent or delivered may be electronic or sent by post, and any such notices or communications shall be deemed to be received on the day on which in the ordinary course of first class post they would be received.

Suspension of Standing Orders

35. Any of the preceding standing orders may be suspended at any meeting, in respect of any business on the agenda for such meeting, provided that two-thirds of democratically elected local representatives appointed by authorities in full membership of the Association who are present and voting so decide.

Meetings of the LGA Board, Executive Advisory Board and Policy Boards of the Association

Attendance at meetings

36. Meetings of the LGA Board, Executive Advisory Board, Policy Boards and Fire Services Management Committee may be divided into part 1 (non-confidential) and part 2 (confidential). Part 1 is open to representatives of any member authority to attend in an observatory capacity.
37. Meetings are not open to the wider public, however representatives from partner organisations or the media may attend in an observatory capacity with the permission of the Chair.
38. Observers shall not take part in discussions without the consent of the Chair. Observers shall not vote. Observers may be requested to leave the meeting if a confidential item is to be discussed.

39. At every meeting, each representative of a member authority shall enter his/her name on an attendance record provided by the Chief Executive from which attendance of such member authorities will be recorded.

Order of Business

40. The order of business at all governance structures meetings shall be:
 - 40.1 Declarations of Interest.
 - 40.2 Chair's announcements.
 - 40.3 To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting.
 - 40.4 To dispose of business (if any) remaining from the last meeting.
 - 40.5 To transact business in the order stated on the agenda paper.
 - 40.6 To receive and consider reports/minutes of Task and Finish groups.
41. The Chair may at his/her discretion alter the order in which business is taken.

Minutes

42. No motion or discussion shall take place upon the minutes except upon their accuracy and any question of their accuracy shall be raised by motion. If no such question is raised, or if it is raised then as soon as it has been disposed of, the minutes shall be agreed as a true and accurate record.

Rescission of Earlier Resolution

43. No notice to rescind any resolution passed within the preceding twelve months, and no notice or amendment to the same effect as one which has been negated within the preceding twelve months, shall be proposed. This standing order shall not apply to motions moved in pursuance of the report or recommendations of task groups.

Voting

44. Questions shall wherever possible be determined by a show of hands.
45. A ballot may be held if:
 - 45.1 at any time the Chair considers it desirable, or
 - 45.2 immediately after he/she has declared the result of voting, representatives from not less than one-third of the voting members present at the meeting rising in their places demand a ballot.
46. If a ballot is requested, then the names of the democratically elected representatives, the authorities represented and the votes of their representatives shall be taken by the Chief Executive and recorded in the minutes.

Suspension of Standing Orders

47. Any of the preceding standing orders may be suspended at any meeting, in respect of any business on the agenda for such meeting, provided that the majority of the representatives who are present and voting so decide.

Part 3 - LGA Political Conventions

General

1. The LGA operates on a cross-party consensual basis as the single voice of local government.
2. The LGA supports diversity; there is more than one correct response to society's problems and member authorities must have the right to respond to their communities in different ways. Differences must be respected and minority views must be able to be heard. It follows that member authorities of the LGA and their democratically elected representatives will not criticise publicly other member authorities of the LGA.
3. The LGA will seek to find solutions to problems of conflict by discussion; it will endeavour to avoid adversarial styles of political debate which assume that opposition views are incorrect because of their source; it will seek mechanisms designed to find new solutions rather than reiterating conventional wisdom.

Political Administration of the LGA

Political Structures/Cross Party Working

4. In the event of no group having an overall majority within the Association (that is over 50 per cent of the total weighted electorate), the principle of each political group playing a part in the Association will be respected. In line with Article 8 of the Articles of Association, immediately after principal elections each year, the revised political balance of the LGA will be calculated and shared with the political groups. Once the political balance is confirmed, the Group Leaders will enter into negotiations over the allocation of chairs, vice and deputy chairs on all the LGA's political structures.
5. Similar principles govern the Policy Boards and the Fire Services Management Committee.
 - 5.1 Where there is no overall majority and the positions of Chairs and Vice Chairs are shared, the business of the LGA will continue to be conducted by consensus or majority opinion. In these circumstances, groups not holding the position of Chair or Vice Chair will be entitled to a Deputy Chair. Chairs and Vice Chairs must reflect the views of the LGA as a whole, regardless of the political group from which they are drawn. Political group offices may be used to issue statements on behalf of the group concerned, so long as their status is clear and the titles of LGA officeholders are not used.
 - 5.2 Where there is an overall majority, that group holds Chairs and Vice Chairs, with Deputy Chairs appointed by all eligible groups. Groups are entitled to a Deputy Chair if their share of the weighted electorate exceeds 5 per cent.

Arrangements for chairs and other office holders following elections

6. In the period immediately after elections and before the first meeting of newly constituted Boards, it is normal for Chairs and other office holders to remain in place, provided they remain as democratically elected local representatives. Temporary nominations can be made if incumbents lose their seats or resign. If the elections result in a change in the largest party, however, it will be important for the existing Chair to act in concert with other party spokespeople until the new arrangements are in place.

Special Interest Groups

7. If ten or more Member Authorities with common features, interests or concerns so request by formal notice to the Chief Executive, then the Association, acting through the LGA Board, may establish a Special Interest Group (SIG). Membership shall be open to all Member Authorities with those common features. Political proportionality does not apply.
8. In any case of doubt as whether a Member Authority is eligible for membership of a SIG, the LGA Board shall determine the matter.
9. SIGs are able to speak for their interests as part of the LGA provided that their policies or statements do not conflict with or undermine LGA policy as a whole, or damage the interests of other member authorities.
10. Each SIG shall report annually on its activities to the LGA Board. Detailed information on the process and procedure for setting up and running a SIG is set out in the SIG protocol.

Conflicting Interests of Member Authorities

11. Local authority interests in the national financial settlements for local government may differ and create conflict between individual or groups of authorities. The LGA will seek to ensure that such differences do not damage the case for the overall quantum of resources but will recognise the right of authorities, individually or in groups, to make their own case and to have technical support to do so, even where this may be in conflict with the interests of other authorities. Authorities are expected to respect each other's positions and to bear in mind the need to express arguments about the merits of their own case, rather than the perceived weaknesses of others.

Emergency Situations

12. In situations that threaten the organisation, the reputation of local government or the well-being of communities that the LGA represents, the LGA's Chairman and Group Leaders will constitute an Emergency Group to lead the Association's response. The Group may supplement its membership as it considers appropriate to the circumstances of the emergency.

Support for Political groups

Budget allocation

13. Political groups recognised by the LGA, whose total share of the weighted electorate is five per cent or more, are entitled to receive reasonable support from the LGA to enable them to play their part in influencing parties on behalf of Member Authorities.
14. The LGA will allocate the following funding:
 - 14.1 The cost of salaries for Group Office staff in line with a maximum establishment agreed with the LGA Board; and
 - 14.2 A purchasing budget, divided on the basis of the political balance of the LGA. Political groups may use their purchasing budget to secure additional staff, specially commissioned research or support services.
15. The allocations between the Groups will be reviewed and adjusted annually to reflect changes in proportionality and financial pressures within the LGA.

Group Office staff

16. Staff appointed to support the political groups will be employees of the LGA and will be entitled to have normal access to the data and documents produced by the LGA. Staff will be managed by the Chief Executive of the LGA or his/her nominee.
17. The establishment for each Group Office includes a political administrator, who is responsible for providing administrative support to the Group Office.

Group Office meetings

18. The costs of political group meetings will be charged to the Group's budget. Groups may choose to pay expenses or special responsibility allowances to Group Office Holders.
19. Subject to availability, meeting and conference rooms in the LGA's headquarters may be used at the appropriate internal rate for LGA activities. Refreshments will be charged to the Group budget.
20. During pre-election periods when the LGA does not engage in political controversy, facilities at the LGA's headquarters may not be booked by LGA political groups without the approval of the Chief Executive or his/her nominee. Group Offices may not organise meetings involving other party members without consultation with all LGA Group Leaders.

Impartiality of Staff

21. As in local authorities, the staff of the LGA, with the exception of Group Office staff, will be politically impartial and will give all groups, their officers and spokespersons, equivalent advice, assistance and support, as resources allow. All staff will strive to ensure that the rules and conventions governing the Association's work are implemented fully and fairly.
22. All staff outside the Group Offices must seek the approval of the Chief Executive if they wish to stand for, or hold, elected office.
23. Political groups may, with the agreement of the Chief Executive, invite officers of the LGA to attend Group meetings to provide information, advice or confidential briefings on particular matters. Political groups may, with the approval of the other Group Leaders, commission research from an officer of the LGA.

Representation on Outside Bodies and Delegations

Outside Bodies

24. Every effort will be made to ensure that all Groups recognised by the LGA are represented fairly on outside bodies, both numerically and in terms of the range and type of appointments made. Each Policy Board should aim as far as possible to reflect the LGA's political balance in relation to:
 - 24.1 The totality of appointments it makes to outside bodies; and
 - 24.2 Specific appointments to individual outside bodies, subject to the constraints set by the number of places.
25. Members nominated to represent the LGA on outside bodies are responsible for representing the views of the LGA as a whole. They will be expected to provide regular feedback to their nominating Board.
26. Outside Body appointments are reported annually to the LGA Board.

Delegations

27. The purpose of LGA delegations is to represent the interests of local government to other bodies to maximum effect. It is important to balance the interests of effectiveness (which will often imply small, tightly focused delegations) and representativeness which implies larger numbers.
28. The Chair of the LGA, or of the relevant Policy Board, in consultation with officers, will agree the most appropriate structure, and representation for the meeting. Where small delegations are preferred, the LGA will not necessarily be represented by the Chair and/or office holders of appropriate governance structure and political balance will not be an overriding factor in deciding representation.
29. Where larger numbers are appropriate, every effort will be made to ensure politically balanced delegations. The relevant Board will be informed of the meeting and advised of the composition of the delegation, and will receive copies of briefings and feedback from the meeting.
30. It is recognised that at times there will be private, informal or party political meetings where it is inappropriate for the delegation to be politically balanced. In this instance the delegation may be briefed or attended by non-political staff to provide support.

Wales

31. In recognition of its constitutional position, Wales may be invited to be represented on outside bodies and delegations which are set up to address those matters of concern to England and Wales as a whole.

Public Statements on behalf of the Association

32. Public statements made in the name of the LGA, by any member speaking on behalf of the LGA, or as a representative of the LGA, must represent the views of the LGA as a whole and not those of any one political group.
33. The following procedures for media and public statements will apply subject to special arrangements during an election period set out in paragraph 38.

Planned LGA publications or similar

34. The Group Leaders or their representatives should agree the approach to be adopted and determine;
 - 34.1 In whose name, if any, the statement should be made;
 - 34.2 A suitably experienced democratically elected local representative, or a slate of suitably experienced democratically elected local representatives, to speak on behalf of the LGA on the broadcast media, with details of their availability; and
 - 34.3 In the absence of agreement, or of a suitably experienced democratically elected local representative, an appropriate senior officer to speak on behalf of the LGA.
35. A briefing note will be prepared setting out the LGA's policy position as the basis of any statements and comments made on behalf of the LGA.

Government announcements and decisions where the LGA has advance notice

36. The process is as for planned LGA statements, with additional emphasis on the need for flexibility and pace to meet externally set timescales.

Announcements and developments of which the LGA has no advance notice

37. Precise handling will inevitably vary from case to case depending on the circumstances, but the key principles are that:
 - 37.1 As far as possible, statements should reflect a cross-party view within the LGA;
 - 37.2 Where such a view can be established the Chair or Vice Chair may issue a statement; and
 - 37.3 If this is not possible written statements should be issued in the name of the LGA without any personal attribution and an appropriate senior officer will be made available for broadcast interviews.
38. Where the LGA has an established policy position this will form the basis of any public statement. Where this is not the case, discussions will be held with the appropriate lead members to establish the basis of the LGA's reaction to any statements.
39. On occasions it may be appropriate for Groups to issue their own public statements. The status of such news releases/statements will be made clear.
40. To preserve political impartiality, no public statement will be made by the LGA or staff of the LGA without the agreement of the Chair and all group leaders:
 - 40.1 during the period between publication of notice of poll and the holding of local authority elections;
 - 40.2 during the period between the announcement of a dissolution of Parliament and the holding of a General Election;
 - 40.3 during the period of a campaign for elections to the European Parliament; and
 - 40.4 during the period of a campaign for a national referendum and the referendum vote.

Conferences

Chairing Sessions

41. Where possible the Chairs or other lead members of the appropriate Board should be invited to introduce and/or chair LGA events relevant to that Board.
42. Where the nature or timing of the event precludes this, chairing arrangements should be discussed and agreed with the Group Offices.

LGA Members as speakers

43. The LGA will ensure as far as possible that the line-up of speakers at its conferences achieve a balance of gender, ethnicity, type of authority and geographical spread. Although it is not possible to achieve a precise political balance in any one conference, the following factors will be considered when involving democratically elected local representatives as speakers or as chairs:

- 43.1 Is he/she presenting the formal LGA position (for example as chair of a Board), or of his/her authority, or a political view? If the latter, the conference must include speakers from the other groups.
- 43.2 If there are a number of sessions, the chairs and/or speakers will as far possible be distributed between the main Groups according to political proportionality.
44. When identifying councils to illustrate good practice, efforts will be made to ensure that as far as possible all parties are represented.
- Ministers and other politicians
45. Ministers speak at many LGA events. This is important as it reinforces the LGA's status as the national voice for local government and helps maximise delegate numbers.
46. Where a Minister is speaking at a one-day event, it will not always be practical or appropriate to include speakers from the other political parties. However the following factors will be taken into account:
- 46.1 If the focus of the event is largely on the implementation of, or practical implications for local authorities on, new legislation or new Government procedures or guidance, it will not normally be necessary or appropriate to involve speakers from the other political parties; and
- 46.2 If the focus of the event is to debate a new or developing aspect of Government policy, then the programme should normally involve speakers from the other political parties;
47. The programme for major two or three day events should always be politically balanced.
48. The lead members of the sponsoring Board and/or the political offices will be consulted on the selection of political speakers.