MINUTES OF WLGA MEETINGS

Purpose

1. For members to review the draft minutes of the WLGA meetings specified, and for any matters arising to be reported.

Background

2. The draft minutes of the meeting listed below are appended in date order:

   **Annex A**  
   Draft minutes of the WLGA Council meeting held 29th March 2019

   **Annex B**  
   Draft minutes of the WLGA Audit Committee meeting held 18th April 2019;

   **Annex C**  
   Draft minutes of the WLGA Management Sub Committee meeting held 3rd May 2019

3. Members will note that as these minutes have been prepared in draft form, the Welsh versions are pending; members will also note that the minutes (fully bilingual) will be formally reviewed at the WLGA Council AGM scheduled to be held on 14th June 2019 at City Hall, Cardiff.

Recommendations

4. Members are asked to note the:

   4.1 **Draft** minutes of the WLGA Council meeting held 29th March 2019;

   4.2 **Draft** minutes of the WLGA Audit Committee meeting held 18th April 2019;

   4.3 **Draft** minutes of the WLGA Management Sub Committee meeting held 3rd May 2019.

Authors:  
Susan Perkins  
Executive and Democratic Services Manager  
Tel: 02920 468656  
E-mail: susan.perkins@wlga.gov.uk
WLGA Council Meeting held at City Hall, Cardiff, CF10 3ND
on Friday 29th March 2019

Present:

Chair  WLGA Presiding Officer, Cllr A Morgan (Rhondda Cynon Taf)

Cllr N Daniels (Blaenau Gwent)  Cllr G Giles (Newport)
Cllr H David (Bridgend)  Cllr M Whitcutt (Newport)
Cllr N George (Caerphilly)  Cllr D Wilcox (Newport)
Cllr B Jones (Caerphilly)  Cllr N Prior (Pembrokeshire)
Cllr S Morgan (Caerphilly)  Cllr D Simpson (Pembrokeshire)
Cllr D Poole (Caerphilly)  Cllr J Evans (Powys)
Cllr H Thomas (Cardiff)  Cllr R Harris (Powys)
Cllr E Dole (Carmarthenshire)  Cllr S Hayes (Powys)
Cllr D Jenkins (Carmarthenshire)  Cllr R Bevan (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
Cllr H Evans (Carmarthenshire)  Cllr G Hopkins (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
Cllr M Stephens (Carmarthenshire)  Cllr R Lewis (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
Cllr E ap Gwynn (Ceredigion)  Cllr M Webber (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
Cllr R Quant MBE (Ceredigion)  Cllr A Lewis (Swansea)
Cllr C Hughes (Conwy)  Cllr C Lloyd (Swansea)
Cllr G Jones OBE (Conwy)  Cllr R Stewart (Swansea)
Cllr D Meurig (Gwynedd)  Cllr M Thomas (Swansea)
Cllr D Siencyn (Gwynedd)  Cllr R Clarke (Torfaen)
Cllr Ll Medi (Anglesey)  Cllr H Jarvie (Vale of Glamorgan)
Cllr I Williams (Anglesey)  Cllr J W Thomas (Vale of Glamorgan)
Cllr K O’Neill (Merthyr Tydfil)  Cllr T A Edwards (Wrexham)
Cllr A Taylor (Neath Port Talbot)  Cllr H Jones (Wrexham)
Cllr M Prichard (Wrexham)

Representing Associate Member bodies:

Fire & Rescue  Cllr M Lloyd Davies (North Wales)
Services

National Parks  Cllr A Gruffydd (Snowdonia)
Authorities

WLGA Officers in Attendance:

Dr Chris Llewelyn, Chief Executive
Mr Jon Rae, Director of Resources
Ms Naomi Alleyne, Director of Social Services & Housing
Dr Tim Peppin, Director of Regeneration & Sustainable Development
Mr Jonathan Lloyd, Head of Employment
Mr Daniel Hurford, Head of Policy - Improvement and Governance
Ms Susan Perkins, Executive and Democratic Services Manager
Mr Dilwyn Jones, Communications Officer

Other Officers in Attendance:
Mrs Nerys Hurford, Welsh Translation

Guests in attendance for item 12
Julie James AM, Welsh Government Minister for Housing and Local Government

Accompanying the Minister:
Mr Reg Kilpatrick, Director - Local Government
Ms Lisa Kames, Local Government Democracy
Ms Paula James, Local Government Transformation and Partnerships

Apologies for Absence:
Cllr R Goodway (Cardiff)  Cllr P Fox OBE (Monmouthshire)
Cllr L Evans (Carmarthenshire)  Cllr R Greenland (Monmouthshire)
Cllr N Smith OBE (Conwy)  Cllr R G Jones (Neath Port Talbot)
Cllr H Evans OBE (Denbighshire)  Cllr M Spencer (Newport)
Cllr J Thompson-Hill (Denbighshire)  Cllr A Davies (Powys)
Cllr A Shotton ( Flintshire)  Cllr A Hunt (Torfaen)
Cllr M Perfect ( Flintshire)  Cllr B Gray (Vale of Glamorgan)
Cllr G Thomas (Gwynedd)  Cllr G Ratcliffe (Brecon Beacons NPA)
Cllr L Mytton (Merthyr Tydfil)  Cllr M James (Pembrokeshire Coast NPA)

Item 1  Welcome and apologies for absence

1. Councillor Andrew Morgan welcomed all members.

2. Councillor Morgan requested that any further apologies be submitted at the close of the meeting; all apologies were then recorded as above.
Item 2 Minutes of WLGA Meetings

3. Members received the draft minutes of the WLGA Council meeting held 30\textsuperscript{th} November 2018, the draft minutes of the WLGA Executive Board meeting held 25\textsuperscript{th} January 2019 and the draft minutes of the WLGA Management Sub Committee meeting held 22\textsuperscript{nd} February 2019.

4. Resolved that:

4.1 The minutes of the WLGA Council meeting held 30\textsuperscript{th} November 2018 were approved;

4.2 The minutes of the WLGA Executive Board meeting held 25\textsuperscript{th} January 2019 were approved;

4.3 The minutes of the WLGA Management Sub Committee meeting held 22\textsuperscript{nd} February 2019 were approved.

Item 3 Leader’s Update

5. In her address to the members, Councillor Debbie Wilcox remarked on the constructive relationship which has been established with the new First Minister Mark Drakeford AM and new Housing and Local Government Minister Julie James AM who has given her commitment to attend WLGA meetings to hear members thoughts and concerns as they arise. The Minister has also committed to reinvesting and re-establishing an improvement resource within the WLGA. A series of positive financial announcements have been made in recent months and whilst somewhat later than would be hoped, these announcements are very welcome and the Leader paid tribute to all colleagues who have lobbied to achieve these outcomes. The WLGA will be embarking on earlier, more compelling, more constructive and comprehensive engagement in relation to the Spending Review and next year’s Settlement and will do this through the political groups and their links to colleagues in the Senedd as well as the Welsh Government. The WLGA has produced a collaboration compendium and this runs to over 20 pages, with more information to be added; this shows the local authorities’ collective commitment to collaboration and reform. The Leader has also championed the cause of Wales and Welsh Local Government at a UK level, including Brexit meetings with the Secretary of State for Wales and national Local Government Association meetings; at a recent meeting the Leader had pressed, and received assurances from the Secretary of State James Brokenshire that there will be a Welsh consequential form the post-Brexit Stronger Towns Fund. The WLGA will prepare a report for a future meeting on the respective roles, overlap etc. of Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Boards.
Item 4  Spring Statement and Spending Review

6. Cllr Mark Whitcutt presented an update on the Chancellor’s Spring Statement issued on 13th March, the WLGA’s approach to the Spending Review and recent announcements by the Welsh Government for 2019-20.

7. Members noted that in terms of the broader picture, much of what might be achieved by the Budget is still conditional on the final deal with the EU. The forecast is that the economy is shrinking: 2.7% lower at the end of 2020 than was forecast in March 2016. A late Spending Review announcement could impact on the timing of the Welsh Government Budget and Local Government Finance Settlement. The core grant has reduced by around £1billion since the onset of austerity measures. Cost pressures are increasing in a range of 4% to 5%. The £42.1m for teachers’ pension costs is welcomed, as is the news on fire fighters’ pensions. An additional £40m funding for education capital will be paid directly to local authorities with the same kind of flexibility that came with the highways’ capital funding last year.

8. In the following discussion members articulated that Welsh Government should look to implement the tax raising powers available to it; increasing Council Tax year on year was not sustainable, nor was this approach fair. The regressive nature of Council Tax was noted as was the need for the UK Government to provide the necessary funding to Welsh Government and maintain pressure on the UK Government to do so as most funding was through the Block Grant. Members agreed that any discussions with Welsh Government on sustainable funding should be on a cross party basis where ever possible. It was suggested that with the appropriate legislation, tax raising powers might be available to Welsh local authorities who could deploy this to support essential services. The WLGA would look to increase media work to help dispel some of the public’s misconceptions about Council Tax.

9. Resolved that:

9.1 Members noted the report.

Item 5  Brexit Update

10. Councillor Rob Stewart presented the report providing an update on recent and forthcoming Brexit-related developments, an update on the WLGA submission to the Welsh Government’s EU Transition Support Fund for financial support on behalf of the twenty-two local authorities, and feedback from discussions at the Partnership Council meeting held 18th March 2019.

11. Members noted that local authority planning for ‘No Deal’ Brexit remains paramount; the WLGA is supporting local authorities and an event is planned for 17th April and the work and checklist commissioned by the WLGA from
Grant Thornton is being used by many local authorities. It is evident that local authorities have made good progress since the Wales Audit Office review in December, for example, participation in the Brexit Preparedness Advisory Panel. The WLGA bid for £1.2m to the EU Transition Fund has been approved (this will equate to £45k per local authority and provide £200k to the WLGA to provide a support programme). The money was bid for on the basis of full flexibility for authorities to cover the costs they deem appropriate in relation to Brexit related posts, and to ‘backfill’ work that officers have had to put on hold; spending can continue through into 2019/20.

12. **Resolved that:**

12.1 Members noted the report.

**Item 6**  
WLGA Response to the Welsh Government Consultation on Improving Public Transport

13. Councillor Andrew Morgan introduced the report seeking members’ endorsement of the WLGA’s response to the Welsh Government consultation document ‘Improving Public Transport’ a White Paper on proposals to legislate for reforming the planning and delivery of local bus services and licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles.

14. Members noted that in terms of content, the consultation more resembled a ‘Green Paper’ and that more detailed White Paper is expected later in the year. In developing the draft response, the officers of the WLGA have consulted widely with the four regions (reflecting the former regional transport consortia areas), the Chairs of the current regional transport bodies and Transport Cabinet members from across Wales.

15. During the course of discussion, several members referred to the severe problems encountered by rural communities who have very limited access to bus services and it was suggested that the WLGA Rural Forum might undertake research and then lobbying in this regard.

16. **Resolved that:**

16.1 Members endorsed the WLGA response to the Welsh Government consultation on ‘Improving Public Transport’.

**Item 7**  
Review of Community & Town Councils

17. Councillor Debbie Wilcox introduced a report on conclusions of the review of Community and Town Councils and seeking members views on taking forward a joint programme of partnership work with One Voice Wales.
18. In the discussion, members acknowledged that not all Town and Community Councils have the capacity, or desire to deliver services, and if this is to be considered it needs to be subject to local discussion and agreement; it was also noted that discretionary services don't have the necessary funding available for local authorities to deliver them, and if such services were to be passed on then the Town and Community Councils would have to fund them themselves. It should also be noted that not all Town and Community Councils are members of One Voice Wales and it was suggested that the Welsh Government might wish to examine the underlying reasons for this which may relate to tax issues.

19. Following a vote, it was determined that Cllr Debbie Wilcox would chair a small joint task and finish group to consider good practice and develop a joint programme of work; Cllr Dafydd Meurig and Cllr Neil Prior were nominated to attend. There will be a full report and recommendations to the November meeting of the WLGA Council.

20. Resolved that:

20.1 Members noted the report;

20.2 Members agreed that all local authorities would commit to review and/or agree local Charters or partnership agreements during the next twelve months;

20.3 Members agreed to establish the Joint Task and Finish Group to progress the joint work programme to report to the WLGA Council later in 2019;

20.4 Councillor Debbie Wilcox was nominated as chair of the Joint Task and Finish Group with the membership of that group also comprising Councillor Dafydd Meurig and Councillor Neil Prior.

Item 8 Local Government Reform

21. Councillor Debbie Wilcox introduced the update on discussions from the Local Government Reform Working Group.

22. Members noted that recent meetings of the Local Government Reform Working Group had been hindered by scheduling difficulties and also the ongoing uncertainty around Brexit. Collaboration and shared services remain a central theme of the Welsh Government’s agenda. The Minister was keen that local government should take the lead, and she has offered to incentivise and support collaboration where possible. The Collaboration Compendium has been welcomed by members; the compendium shows extensive examples of local government initiatives most notably those regarding Waste, City Deals,
the Wales Pension Partnership. Councils will adopt collaboration if there’s a clear business case or justify their decisions not to proceed through local governance arrangements if they decide against, but there is some support for developing a Code of Practice to assist in this area, but members do not support the concept of a Statutory Code. The Minister supports the proposals for the WLGA to develop and deliver a Digital Collaboration and Leadership offer to local government for which a business case is being finalised.

23. Members also highlighted the extensive collaboration and joint working with other public services and it was agreed that these would also be mapped out in a Stage II process; local authorities were encouraged to send such examples to the officers of the WLGA.

24. The Local Digital Fund in England is helping to empower local authority endeavours and it would be possible for Welsh local authorities to work collaboratively with their counterparts in England; this is an important initiative and one where local authorities should take a lead.

25. Members asked whether ‘statutory’ vs. ‘non-statutory’ operational collaborations might be distinguished in the compendium. Local determination on collaboration remains imperative; collaborations which are ‘forced’ can be divisive and difficult to sustain.

26. Resolved that:

   26.1 Members noted the report.

Item 9 Call for Evidence to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body

27. Councillor Debbie Wilcox introduced the report seeking approval for draft written evidence to the newly established Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB).

28. Members noted that Teachers Pay was devolved to the Welsh Government in September 2018. The IWPRB makes recommendations to the minister on pay for teachers for the academic year 2019-20.

29. Members expressed the view that the pay award for teachers needs to be consistent with others in the public sector, especially local government; there should be no targeted pay until the Valued Professions Report is considered in full. The pay award should be fully funded by the Welsh Government who should also recognised other incidental costs associated with any uplift; the funding needs to be provided in a sustainable, clear and transparent way.

30. Resolved that:
30.1 Members approved the WLGA evidence to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body on Teachers Pay.

**Item 10  WLGA Budget 2019-20 and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

31. Members received the paper seeking approval for the WLGA budget proposals for 2019-20 together with the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2022-23; members were also invited to set the subscription levels to the WLGA for 2019-20 as considered and endorsed by the WLGA Management Sub Committee at the meeting held 22nd February 2019.

32. **Resolved that:**

   32.1 Members approved the WLGA Budget for 2019-20;
   
   32.2 Members approved the WLGA Medium-Term Financial Plan to 2022-23 and the specific recommendations to provide additional funding for a policy officer for preventative services, for increased communications and political support from 2019-20 onwards;
   
   32.3 Members agreed to freeze WLGA subscriptions at 2018-19 levels for 2019-20;
   
   32.4 Members agreed that WLGA reserves would be used to smooth out expenditure over the three-year period until savings are realised.

**Item 11  WLGA Pay Policy Statement**


   The officers of the WLGA left the Council Chamber for this item to absent themselves from discussion.

34. **Resolved that:**

   34.1 Members approved the WLGA Pay Policy Statement for 2019-20.
Item 12  WLGA Council Meeting with Julie James AM, Welsh Government Minister for Housing and Local Government

35. Councillor Andrew Morgan welcomed the Minister for Housing and Local Government Julie James AM who thanked the WLGA for the invitation to address the members.

36. The Minister spoke of her desire to reduce duplication and complexity in partnership arrangements and expressed some concerns about duplication of roles of Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Boards. The Local Government and Elections Bill strengthens and extends the political franchise in Wales to 16-year olds, to foreign nationals etc. A new performance framework will be put into effect in Wales, with more support for self-assessment together with more support for organisational change where this is needed.

37. The Minister was eager to advance and add pace and scale to social housing models in Wales in support of people who are in need, and to improve the economy. The Minister welcomed the invitation extended by Councillor Andrea Lewis to attend meetings of the Cabinet Members for Housing. The Minister was asked to consider what might be done to support older people continuing to live in their own homes and to look at the Planning system which members felt sometimes work against affordable housing initiatives.

38. The Minister indicated that she was open to discussions and suggestions on the funding formula for local government and would like the Finance Sub Group to meet more frequently. The Minister appreciated the difficult decisions that local authorities are having to face. The Minister was not proposing to cap Council Tax; such decisions were matters for the local authorities themselves.

39. The Leader thanked the Minister for her address, recognised that we have now embarked on a new and constructive phase in central-local relations and stressed that the best outcomes are achieved for the people of Wales when Welsh Government and local government work closely together.
WLGA Audit Committee held Thursday 18th April 2019 in the WLGA Boardroom, Local Government House, Cardiff with a video link to Powys County Council

Present:

Councillor Linda Evans (Carmarthenshire) - Chair
Councillor Maureen Webber (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
Councillor Christopher Weaver (Cardiff)
Councillor Stephen Hayes (Powys)
Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill (Denbighshire)

WLGA Officers in Attendance:

Dr Chris Llewelyn, Chief Executive
Jon Rae, Director of Resources
Richard Dooner, Programme Manager
Susan Perkins, Executive and Democratic Services Manager

Others Present:

Mr Johnathan Dight - Bevan and Buckland
Mr David Parsons, Information Governance Manager Cardiff Council and WLGA Data Protection Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill (Denbighshire)

Item 1 Welcome and apologies for absence

1. Councillor Linda Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting of the WLGA Audit Committee and effected round table introductions.

2. Apologies for absence were recorded as above.

Item 2 Minutes WLGA Audit Committee date

3. Members received a copy of the minutes of the WLGA Audit Committee meeting held October 2018.

4. Resolved that:
4.1 The minutes of the WLGA Audit Committee meeting held 11th October 2018 were deemed as accurate.

4.2 Members noted that in relation to matters arising from the minutes, the following decisions had been actioned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minute:</th>
<th>Audit Committee Meeting held 11th October 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>Members directed that a report be prepared for the next meeting of the WLGA Audit Committee on the WLGA’s Quotation and Contract Procedure Rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>Members directed that an annual update be provided to the Audit Committee on WLGA compliance with the General Data Compliance Register (GDPR).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>The Officers of the WLGA will consult with Treasury Management Officers of local authorities, and a further report with options will come back to the next meeting of the WLGA Audit Committee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 3 WLGA External Auditors Planning Report


6. Members noted that having been appointed as the new Chief Executive of the WLGA, Dr Chris Llewelyn would provide assurance on the accounts. Members noted that the materiality threshold was set as £90k, the same level as last year; any errors under that level would also be reported in the final audit report. The key dates in the audit timetable were noted. The Auditors had also sought to incorporate the WLGA Risk Register into their audit work, albeit that their examination would be confined to financial risks such as income and pensions liability. Pensions liability is a relatively large figure and the Auditors will look at its impact on the balance sheet. For Grant Debtors, the Auditors would look to assign the amounts owed to the period covered by any Grant. The presentation of final statements would be undertaken in a way that would reflect an accurate picture of the WLGA’s position.

7. The internal controls within WLGA are operating effectively with only two issues as set out in the report. The Auditors raised two matters which had not been addressed in relation to the review of the previous year: a centralised system should be devised with an ‘income sheet’ to be completed by the person wishing to raise the income and then passed to the finance team; wherever
possible, payments should be made via BACs transfer and payments by cheque should be avoided.

8. On the interim audit work already undertaken, members were advised that there were no issues on membership income and grant income is documented. All invoices selected for audit were correctly treated. There were instances were not all employees held third party identification on their personnel files, and employment contracts held on file are old and need to be updated.

9. In the discussion that followed, members were advised that the type of bank account used by the WLGA is being changed to enable more payments to be made using the BACs system (the previous account set a relatively low limit). There are approximately fifty different income streams for the WLGA and it is the case that sometimes WLGA is given a very short timescale to effect what needs to be done and this has a knock-on effect in terms of disbursements during the stated timeframe of the specific grant. Over the period of austerity, the complement of staff of the WLGA has shrunk from approximately 120 down to 60 or so staff. The Welsh Government still provide significant levels of Grant Funding to the WLGA and the Senior Management Team within WLGA have discussed how this work might need to be streamlined and centralised; the WLGA will review the finance function this year and will try to address these issues. Before embarking on any proposals to generate income, WLGA Staff are now required to complete an Income Sheet and this is passed to the Finance Team.

10. Resolved that:

   10.1 Members received the WLGA External Auditor’s Planning Report for the year ending 31st March 2019.

**Item 4 Review of Internal Controls**

11. Members received a report setting out proposals for the review on internal control policies and processes of the WLGA.

12. Members noted that this work arises from the internal audit health check undertaken by Cardiff Council over a year ago. The recommendations arising from that work by generalised, and to an extent have had to be interpreted, however, members were advised that the proposals are aimed to identify were the WLGA needs to develop its policies and procedures. It was confirmed that this work would be overseen by the Director of Resources; the work will tie into the review of the WLGA Administrative and Finance Functions and a further report on this will be presented to members in the October meeting.

13. In terms of establishing the adequacy of policies and procedures, it was confirmed that the ones relating to finance would be undertaken first and
particularly those relating to transactions to determine whether invoices were being raised at the correct time and if not, whether there were systematic reasons for not doing so. Members were also advised that the Senior Management Team were proposing to implement a new Induction Scheme for members of Staff; where necessary this will be undertaken by existing members of Staff as well as those who join the WLGA in the future.

14. **Resolved that:**

14.1 Members received a copy of the WLGA’s internal control system, indicating that they were content with the proposals.

**Item 5  WLGA Quotations and Contract Procedure Rules**

15. Members received a report on the WLGA’s Quotation and Contract Procedure Rules.

16. Members noted that the scheme had been devised following a recommendation from the internal audit exercise and was more suited to the WLGA as a new threshold had been implemented for tenders. Members were advised that since the new scheme had been implemented (January 2018), the grounds on which a challenge could be raised had been eliminated.

17. Members expressed satisfaction with the new scheme.

18. **Resolved that:**

18.1 Members noted the update and received a copy of the WLGA Quotation and Contract Procedure Rules.

**Item 6  Treasury Management**

19. Members received a report seeking approval for the proposed WLGA Treasury Management Strategy for 2019-2020 and a proposal that WLGA officers arrange to invest up to £2.5m into Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Investment Management Limited with Data Cymru continuing to operate the two HSBC bank accounts and to manage the day to day cashflow of the Association.

20. Members were content with the recommendations, albeit acknowledging the slight risk which is ameliorated by the performance of CCLA above industry benchmarks and in recognition that this body is a long established and reputable one. Members were content with the suggestion that the officers of the WLGA would go back to the local authority Treasurers Group with a profile
of WLGA Cashflow and seek their recommendation on the appropriate level of WLGA reserves to invest with CCLA.

21. Resolved that:

21.1 The officers of the WLGA arrange to invest up to £2.5m into the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (MMF), having sought the recommendations from the local authority Treasurer’s Group;

21.2 The officers of Data Cymru will continue to operate the two HSBC bank accounts and will manage the day to day cashflows of the WLGA.

21.3 That the WLGA appoint Welsh representation to the Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Investment Trust at the next WLGA Council Annual General Meeting.

Item 7 Data Protection Annual Report

22. Members received a report providing an update on the work undertaken since the last report to the WLGA Audit Committee in October 2018, setting out the ongoing compliance work programme which aims to improve and strengthen the WLGA’s data protection controls.

23. Members were pleased to note that the WLGA is now in a strong position to ensure compliance and were pleased with progress, however, members emphasised that this process should be considered as an ongoing one and to avoid any complacency.

24. Resolved that:

24.1 Members received the WLGA Data Protection Compliance Programme Update and noted progress to date.

Item 8 WLGA Members Allowances

25. Members were invited to approve the WLGA Members’ Allowances Scheme for WLGA Office Holders for the Council period 2019-2020.

26. Members noted that the Scheme would be reviewed by the WLGA Audit Committee in October 2019 with any recommendations arising from that review to be presented to the November 2019 meeting of the full WLGA Council.

27. Resolved that:
26.1  Members approved the WLGA Members’ Allowances Scheme for Office Holders for the Council period 2019-2020.

Item 9  WLGA Strategic Risk Register

28. Members received a copy of the updated WLGA Strategic Risk Register with the risk identified under key headings, the causes and effects, the level of risk attached to each and the further actions identified to address or ameliorate the risks.

29. Members noted the WLGA’s renewed focus on the Communications Strategy with the aim of undertaking more campaigning work on behalf of the membership and the determination to properly resource and expand the WLGA Communications Team to undertake this work. The new Chief Executive would look to restructure the organisation to meet the most pressing demands and matching capacity to ensure delivery against the organisation’s strategic objectives.

30. Members were advised that the WLGA Strategic Management Team undertakes a quarterly review of the Strategic Risk Register, with half yearly reports to the WLGA Audit Committee.

31. Resolved that:

29.1  Members received and noted the WLGA Strategic Risk Register.

Item 10  Annual Report of the WLGA Audit Committee

32. Members were invited to agree the approach to the drafting and approval of the WLGA Audit Committee Annual Report to the WLGA Council Annual General Meeting in June 2019.

33. Resolved that:

32.1  The officers of the WLGA will draft the Annual Report and circulate for comment and approval in May 2019; the final report will be presented to the WLGA Council Annual General Meeting in June 2019.

Item 11  Work Programme

34. Members were invited to review and agree the WLGA Audit Committee’s future work programme.
35. Resolved that:

35.1 Members approved the proposed work programme of the Audit Committee for 2019-2020.

Item 12 Any other business

36. There were no further items, and the Chair concluded by thanking the members for their attendance and participation.
WLGA Management Sub Committee meeting held in the Boardroom, Local Government House, Drake Walk, Cardiff, CF10 4LG on Friday 3rd May 2019 with video links to Denbighshire County Council and Gwynedd Council

Present:

Chair Cllr Andrew Morgan, Presiding Officer (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
Cllr Debbie Wilcox, Leader of the WLGA (Newport)
Cllr Rob Stewart, Deputy Leader (Swansea)
Cllr Emlyn Dole, Leader of the Plaid Cymru Group (Carmarthenshire)
Cllr Huw David, Deputy Presiding Officer (Bridgend)

Attending the meeting via video link to Denbighshire County Council
Cllr Hugh Evans OBE, Leader of the Independent Group (Denbighshire)
Cllr Ray Quant MBE, Deputy Presiding Officer Independent Group (Ceredigion)

Attending the meeting via video link to Gwynedd Council
Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn, Plaid Cymru Group (Gwynedd)

WLGA Officers in Attendance:

Dr Chris Llewelyn, Chief Executive
Ms Naomi Alleyne, Director of Social Care & Housing
Dr Tim Peppin, Director of Regeneration & Sustainable Development
Mr Daniel Hurford, Head of Improvement and Governance
Mr Jonathan Lloyd, Head of Employment
Mr Dilwyn Jones, Communications Officer
Ms Susan Perkins, Executive and Democratic Services Manager

Item 1 Welcome and apologies for absence

1. Councillor Andrew Morgan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence were recorded on behalf of:

   - Cllr Peter Fox OBE (Monmouthshire)
   - Cllr Aaron Shotton (Flintshire)
   - Cllr John W Thomas (Vale of Glamorgan)

Item 2 Minutes of the WLGA Management Sub Committee Meeting held 22nd February 2019
3. Members received a copy of the minutes of the WLGA Management Sub Committee held 22nd February 2019

4. **Resolved that:**

4.1 Members noted the minutes of the WLGA Management Sub Committee meeting held 22nd February 2019.

**Item 3 Spending Review Communications and Engagement Strategy**

5. Unless Parliament agree a Brexit Deal it now appears unlikely that the Spending Review will go ahead in the autumn although there haven’t been any official announcements to that effect. A delay to the Spending Review would be problematic as the issues of employers’ contributions to Pensions was to have been addressed in this year; further updates will be given as the position becomes clearer. Budgets for 2020-21 may be a one-year announcement. Members were advised that officers are regular discussion with the Local Government Association.

6. The WLGA’s approach to the negotiations this year is guided by the approach agreed by the WLGA Executive Board in January. An additional meeting of the Finance Sub Group has been arranged for 22nd May where WLGA will start discussions on next year’s Settlement; for this meeting the WLGA will focus on workforce costs. Officers have been working with professional networks on a survey to be sent out shortly in the Leader’s name. Councillor Hunt, Councillor Siencyn and Councillor Fox will be heading a seminar for Assembly Members on 13th June on the subject of local government finances.

7. Members acknowledged the summary of progress to date and emphasised the urgency of being able to convey, through lobbying, the additional financial pressures that local authorities are under. The WLGA maintains a broad interface on this subject and every effort is being made to make the right connections and convey an accurate and compelling picture. Members asked that the WLGA relay a message to the regions (at member and officer level) to show what the WLGA is lobbying for; a greater understanding of the work being undertaken by the WLGA would assist in promulgating those messages, for example the WLGA’s position on 3-year funding announcements and the WLGA’s position on funding for Specific Grants being put into the Revenue Support Grant.

8. Over the course of the summer the WLGA will be commissioning a public opinion survey to gauge the value that people attach to local government services; this will be the first exercise of this kind.
9. **Resolved that:**

9.1 Members noted the update and welcomed progress to date.

**Item 4  Local Government Reform**

10. Members received a report with an update and seeking views on the latest local government reform developments and the ongoing constructive political and official level discussions between the Welsh Government, the WLGA and with professional groups.

11. Members noted that the final meeting of the Local Government Reform Working Group will be held on 21st May. Work will continue after this point and could be overseen thereafter under new arrangements following meetings of the Partnership Council for Wales, but with membership confined to the Welsh Government representatives and Local Authority representatives. The WLGA will produce a final version of the Collaboration Compendium with a view to updating this on a 6-monthly basis. Work is starting on a Code of Practice on Collaboration, to include exit arrangements.

12. Members noted that the Minister for Housing and Local Government is receptive to any ideas to be put forward in relation to the Local Government (Wales) Bill. It was noted that the Statutory Joint Committee model could be a permissive power for authorities to deploy as and when required, however, it would also be open to the Welsh Government to prescribe this in the Bill and the WLGA will holding discussions with the Minister to ascertain her views on the advisability of this approach. Members wholeheartedly support reform and modernisation of local government, however, they remain adamant that collaboration must be entered into and sustained, for the right reasons and with the right partners and founded on a robust business case; how the local authorities deliver services is more vital than pursuing collaboration for its own sake.

13. Members also noted the update on the establishment of the joint Welsh Government and WLGA Review of Strategic Partnerships. The Officers of the WLGA and Welsh Government Officials have had initial discussions regarding the scoping of the work and to refine the draft terms of reference. It is anticipated that the review will provide an update to the Partnership Council on 12th June, then a final report to the Partnership Council on 2nd October 2019.

14. **Resolved that:**

14.1 Members welcomed the report and agreed that oversight of the Local Government Reform agenda would continue under new arrangements following the meetings of the Partnership Council;
14.2 Members noted that the local authority representatives to the Partnership Council will be formally appointed at the next WLGA Council Annual General Meeting on 14th June 2019.

Item 5 WLGA Corporate Strategy

15. Members views were invited on a working draft copy of a new WLGA Corporate Strategy, noting that this publication would be underpinned by an Annual Business Plan, an Annual Report (covering the last Council term) and other related publications such as a new Communications Strategy.

16. Members noted that the last WLGA Manifesto contained a number of key principles, supplemented by a level of operational detail. The new draft WLGA Corporate Strategy emphasises the Association’s democratic roots and also refers to the WLGA’s new Staff Forum and officers Policy and Improvement Group.

17. Members were happy with the draft document and asked about the prospective audience. It was confirmed that this publication would have multiple audiences – the local authorities in membership, the bodies in associate membership, Assembly Members. Anything that the WLGA does would be rooted in the Corporate Strategy, and the Corporate Strategy would be dictated by the members.

18. Resolved that

18.1 Members endorsed the working draft copy of the new WLGA Corporate Strategy and directed that this be further developed for the next meeting of the WLGA Executive Board with a view to recommending approval at the WLGA Council Annual General Meeting.

Item 6 WLGA Communications Strategy and Annual Conference


20. Members welcomed the document and sought reassurance that the WLGA would be able to commit and where necessary redirect the necessary resources to achieve the ambitions set out in the report, taking the WLGA forwards on campaigns and lobbying, utilising modern communications media to best effect and ensuring the right message was delivered at the right time to the right
audience. Under members guidance and the officers would hope to expand the staff complement in this area, link effectively to regional networks and expand work with the local authorities’ own communications teams. Members indicated that they were happy with this approach, asked to be kept up to date with progress and indicated that they would take stock of what further support might be needed in the future. Members felt that a diagram showing the staffing structure of the WLGA would assist.

21. With regard to the WLGA Annual Conference, members reviewed the update paper provided and expressed support for the proposal to link the substantive theme of the conference to the LGA’s #CouncilsCan campaign and supported the new format. Members felt that more Welsh Government Ministers should be invited to the WLGA Annual Conference, and that Assembly Members should be encouraged to attend and potentially the WLGA might offer places at a reduced rate. The Group Leaders will consider whether Political Groups might hold fringe events.

22. Resolved that:

22.1 Members endorsed the draft WLGA Communications Strategy;

22.2 Members agreed that the WLGA logo should be redesigned as part of a wider rebranding exercise;

22.3 Members supported the proposals to refocus the WLGA Annual Conference in 2019 and directed the officers of the WLGA to take into account the comments and suggestions made in the meeting.

Item 7 Accommodation Update

23. Members received a verbal update on the accommodation review, noting that the matter was one of commercial sensitivity and confidentiality.

24. Resolved that:

24.1 Members noted the verbal update on the accommodation review of the WLGA.

Item 8 Review of WLGA HR Policies

25. Members received a report setting out a suite of WLGA HR related policies and procedures to support the operation of the Association.
26. Members reflected on the series of policies, noting the overview, statements of purpose and issues to be aware of.

27. Resolved that:

27.1 Members endorsed the suite of WLGA Policies as appended to the report.

Item 9 WLGA Pay Protection Policy

28. Members reviewed a report setting out proposed amendments to the WLGA Managing Change Policy to include an element of pay protection for WLGA employees who would experience detriment in pay as a consequence of redeployment.

The Chief Executive declared an interest in the subject matter but remained to answer members queries; the Directors and Officers of the WLGA left the meeting at this point to absent themselves from discussion.

29. Resolved that:

24.1 Members approved the introduction of Pay Protection for WLGA employees who would experience detriment in pay as a consequence of redeployment;

24.2 Members determined that the duration of any pay protection to be applied would be a maximum of 12 months;

24.3 Members directed the officers of the WLGA to make the necessary amendments to the relevant provisions of the WLGA Managing Change Policy.

Item 10 Any other business

30. There were no further items, and the Presiding Officer thanked members for their attendance and participation and drew the meeting to a close.