

Minutes of LAMA delegation meeting with DOEHG Officials

Date: 20 June 2014

Venue: DOEHLG Offices, Custom House Quay, Dublin

Present: **LAMA:** Hugh Mc Elvanney, Pdraig Conneely, John Carey, John Kennedy, Jude Devins, Martin Brett

DOEHG: Donal Enright, Denis Conlan, Sean O'Suilleabhain

Item 1: Status of Lama Funding:

Key Points:

- LAMA will be continued to be funded as normal.
- It is up to the members of each local to provide the figure of €4,500 in their annual budget to fund the ongoing costs of LAMA.
- There has been no direction from Dept. to Local Authorities with regard to the reduction or withholding of any allocation from its annual budget to LAMA.
- From Dept. perspective, LAMA will act as the members' union; AILG will consult Dept. on policy matters.
- Member's subscription of €35 per annum per members is a matter for the LAMA executive and it has sole discretion to increase/decrease as required.

Item 2: Conferences/Training:

Key Points:

a) Conferences:

- A local authority's annual budget for conference attendance cannot exceed €700 multiplied by the number of elected members in that authority. The maximum amount that can be spent on conference attendance by a local authority during the period 1 June 2014 to 31 December 2014 is €350 multiplied by the number of elected members in that authority.
- A maximum of €1,000 per annum can be claimed by any individual Cllr. The maximum that can be claimed by an individual Cllr during the period 1 June 2014 to 31 December 2014 is €500.
- The figure for Conf. includes conf. registration fees and T&S.
- This figure does not include "training" below.
- Councillors wishing to attend a conference must have the approval of the elected council who must take in account a number of matters including delegation size, cost, value for money, proven interest in the matter.

- T&S Rates have remained the same.

b) Training:

- A separate figure can be provided for Training as part of the annual Estimates.
- Each local authority has discretion with the figure it provides for Training.
- Training can only be provided by appropriate professional and representative bodies e.g. IPA, EPA, AILG.
- Training will be provided on a regionalised / localised basis.
- Councillors can only claim T&S for conf. attendance for the appropriate location, e.g. within their region.
- Councillors can also attend up to a max of 2 seminars from the Union (LAMA) out of the training budget provided.
- Discussions are ongoing with the AILG in relation to the appropriate training programme for elected members, and the relevant provisions of the guidance in Circular Letter LG 12/2014 will be reviewed in that context.
- The Dept. recalled the reasons why a ceiling needed to be placed on conference attendance and if necessary, the need for a ceiling for attendance at training would be reviewed.

Item 3: SPC Chairs/Municipal District Chairs Allowances:

Key Points:

- SPC Chairs are as normal (not liable for tax).
- MDC Chairs (taxable/non-taxable?) Dept. will seek clarification from the Revenue Commissioners

Item 4: Gratuity Allowance:

Key Points:

- A no. of queries were raised with regard to the gratuity allowance. Due to the technical nature of the queries it was agreed that Jude Devins would email Donal Enright with list of questions Re: Gratuity Allowance who in turn will make the necessary enquiries and respond.

Item 5: Social welfare assistance/entitlements:

Key Points:

- Entitlement to social welfare assistance is a matter for DSP. It was noted that an elected member declaring himself / herself to be a "full time public representative" could indicate unavailability for work.

- LAMA needs to decide on whether it wants to request a change in PRSI class from Class K; some members may benefit; others may lose out. The Dept. noted this would be a matter for DSP.
- LAMA to arrange a meeting DSP to this to be clarified. (LAMA would be grateful if DOEHLG could provide a relevant contact.)

Item 6: Local Community Development Committees (Chairs):

Key Points:

- Chairs of Committees will not be taken exclusively from LA membership. The chairmanship will be decided by the LCDC. It was clarified after the meeting, of the 9 LCDCs with chairs selected, 5 are councillors.
- Chairs will not be in receipt of any allowance.

Item 7: Other:

- a) Office Support System: Dept. has discussed this matter with AILG
- b) ETB: LAMA was advised that Dept. of Education and Skills can confirm allowance payable for Chair of ETB and whether this is taxable.

Follow up Actions Required by DOEHG Officials

1. Dept. to enquire with the Revenue Commissioners as to whether MD Chairs allowances are taxable/non-taxable?
2. Dept. to respond when specific queries are raised Re: Gratuity Allowance
3. Dept. to advise LAMA of appropriate DSP contact to arrange meeting if possible
4. Confirm whether there is any allowance for LCDC Chair and whether this is subject to tax?
5. Dept. to identify contact in DE&S re. whether there is any allowance for ETB Chair and whether this is subject to tax?