



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Date:	Friday, 19th March, 2010
Subject:	National Association of Councillors Spring Conference and Local Authority Members' Association Annual Conference
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (extension 6325)
Contact Officer:	Mrs. Julie Lilley, Members' Liaison Officer (extension 6321)

Relevant Background Information

The Council has received notification of two Conferences, both of which are taking place over the weekend commencing Friday, 9th April. The first of the Conferences is the National Association of Councillors Spring Conference which is being held in Scarborough from Friday, 9th until Sunday, 11th April. The second Conference is the Local Authority Members' Association Annual Conference which is being held in County Sligo from Friday, 9th until Saturday, 10th April.

The theme of the National Association of Councillors conference is 'Supporting our Communities – Delivering Housing and Regeneration'. The conference will focus on the challenges faced by Local Government in responding effectively to the needs of local communities by helping to deliver high quality and attractive places for people to live, work and enjoy. Delegates will consider also the interventions which can be made by Local Government to bring about sustainable growth and renewal, thereby ensuring successful economic development and the benefit to citizens which is intrinsically linked to it. All of the Council's Elected Representatives are members of the National Association of Councillors.

The main focus of the Local Authority Members Association Conference is to consider how Local Authorities can best respond to climate change and specifically the role which Members have to play in dealing with the environmental impact caused by such change. The keynote speaker at the Conference is Mr. John Gormley, TD, Minister for Environment.

Key Issues

There are two main issues. Firstly, the main theme of the Local Authority Members' Association Conference, Climate Change, is an area of responsibility not within the direct control of Members, whereas the National Association of Councillors Conference is concerned with economic regeneration and job creation, as well as the provision of leisure facilities and affordable new housing, all issues which impact significantly on the communities which Councillors seek to represent.

Secondly, the Committee has made it clear in recent months that it wishes to effect efficiencies in expenditure across the Council in order to reduce costs for the ratepayer and consideration needs to be given as to whether it is appropriate for attendance at both conferences to be authorised.

Resource Implications

Estimated Cost of Attendance at the National Association of Councillors Spring Conference in Scarborough

Delegate Fee:	£350
Accommodation:	£130
Travel:	£135
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Total per delegate:	£615

Estimated Cost of Attendance at the Local Authority Members' Association Annual Conference in Sligo

Delegate Fee	£175
Accommodation Costs:	£135
Travel:	£150
Subsistence:	£160
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Total per delegate:	£620

Recommendations

It is recommended, since the content of the Local Authority Members' Association Conference is not specifically related to an issue over which Councillors can exercise control or must deliver advice to constituents, that the Committee agrees to:

- authorise only the attendance at the National Association of Councillors Spring Conference in Scarborough of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors (NI Region), (or their nominees) and a representative of each of the Party Groupings on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members; and
- the payment of the appropriate travelling and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

Decision Tracking

Mr Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services, will arrange for the attendance of delegates as appropriate before 29th March, 2010.

Key to Abbreviations

N/A

Documents Attached

N/A
