

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 15th March 2012

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR DECISION**

MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS AND TRAINING

1. **Purpose of Report**

To submit for consideration a revised reporting format regarding Member attendance at Council/Committee/Panel meetings, training sessions and meetings of outside bodies.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

That:

- (a) Members' attendance details at Council/Committee/Panel meetings and training sessions be reported to Standards Committee on an annual basis in the format shown in the example attached in Appendix 1.
- (b) Members' attendance details at meetings of outside bodies be retained in Democratic Services and available for inspection on request.
- (c) That Members' attendance records for individual meetings be attached to the respective meeting agenda for each meeting.

3. **Community Strategy priorities**

By putting in place the means for effectively monitoring Members' performance the Council will help ensure that governance of the highest order is maintained which will contribute to achieving the Council's community strategy priorities.

4. **Other Implications**

- (a) **Financial** – None
- (b) **Risk Management** – There are no specific risks arising from this report .
- (c) **Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications** - None

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 At its meeting on 25th April 2006, the Council approved the following recommendations of the Standards Committee:

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- (b) That, annually, an information report be submitted initially to all Group leaders, non-Group Members and Members of the Standards Committee

and then to the Council showing in respect of each Member for the preceding municipal year the following:-

- The number of meetings called to attend and the number of meetings actually attended.
- In respect of meetings not attended whether or not apologies were tendered and the reasons for non-attendance given.
- The number of training sessions attended.
- The record of attendance at compulsory training sessions.
- Attendance record at meetings of outside bodies to which Members were appointed as the Council's representative.

(c) That, at the end of each municipal year, each Member appointed as the Council's representative on an outside body be required to submit a short feedback report including details of the number of meetings they were called to attend and the number they actually attended.

(d) That, in respect of (c) above, random checks on Members' attendance on outside body meetings be carried out annually with the Members being selected at random by the Chair of the Standards Committee. “

5.2 It is recognised that attendance at meetings forms only part of the duties of an elected Member. A significant proportion of a Member's time may be spent in dealing with constituents' enquiries and requests for help; representing the views, opinions and interests of their constituents in respect of ward issues/matters; representing the views and policies of the Council within their Ward which may require attendance at local tenants'/residents' meetings. Accordingly, the indicators now reported are only partially representative of a Member's overall performance.

5.3 Since the municipal year 2009/2010, a record of elected Members' attendance has been maintained in accordance with recommendation (b) above and details of the attendance of Members who were appointed to serve as the Council's representatives on Outside Bodies has been maintained during the same period.

5.4.1 Members may also be aware that agendas for meetings include a brief report setting out Member attendance for that Committee/ Panel, for that municipal year. This allows ongoing monitoring of Members attendance at that Committee/Panel meeting. It is proposed that this record is maintained as it is beneficial and takes little officer time to collate. (Example shown at **Appendix 2**).

5.4.2 Following an organisational restructure in the Democratic and Member Services Team in April 2011, capacity within the team was reduced by 3 FTE staff. As part of the restructure it was accepted that reporting of member attendance at meeting would need to be revisited.

Attendance at Meetings

It is proposed that Members attendance at meetings and training sessions be presented to the Standards Committee and Council in the new format as set out in **Appendix 1**. The statistics will be compiled using data obtained from the Committee system, 'Modern.gov' which has the facility to collate Member attendance, thereby reducing the need to compile and maintain manual records. Information produced using Modern.Gov details the number of meetings a

Member was expected at, those who attended and those who attended under Rule 30.

Outside Bodies

- 5.7 As regards resolution (c) above, it is proposed that Members are contacted via email to provide a short report regarding their attendance at a meeting of an outside body and to provide feedback on the usefulness of the meeting. This information will be held by Democratic Services and available for inspection when required. It is proposed that the arrangement set out under resolution (d) above regarding random checks on Member attendance at Outside Body meetings are no longer carried out.

6. **Background Papers**

Standards Committee Report to Council and relevant Minute for meeting held on 25th April 2006.

7. **Appendix Attached**

Appendix 1 - Revised Members' Attendance Report Format.

Appendix 2- Member attendance record included within agenda papers

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