

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Council **DATE:** 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009

**CONTACT OFFICER:** June Cook, Member Services Manager  
**(For all Enquiries)** (01753) 875019

**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR INFORMATION/COMMENT**

#### **MEMBERS' PERFORMANCE MONITORING – ATTENDANCE RECORD 2008/2009**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To submit for consideration details of Members' attendance at Council/committee/panel meetings etc, training sessions and meetings of outside bodies during 2008/2009.

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

2.1 Council is asked to consider and comment on the information now submitted.

3. **Community Strategy Priorities**

3.1 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 The Council at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006 approved the following recommendations of the Standards Committee:

“

(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 form only part of the duties of an elected Member. A significant proportion of a Member's time may be spent in dealing with their 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 During the municipal year 2008/2009, a record of elected Members' attendance was maintained and a summary of the information gathered is set out in **Appendix 1**. Set out in **Appendix 2** are details of the attendance of Members who were appointed to serve as the Council's representatives on Outside Bodies during 2008/2009 based on the feed back forms submitted by Members.
- 5.4 The meeting etc attendance information (**Appendix 1**), for the first time, has been compiled using data obtained from Modern.gov, the new committee management system. Modern.gov allows more detailed information about Members' attendance at individual meetings to be posted on the Council's web-site as the meetings occur. However, you will see from the attached schedule that Modern.gov does not provide the same detail as the manually compiled summary reports submitted in the past. Set against this is the fact that the recording of the data and preparation of these reports is less labour intensive and costly.
- 5.5 A printout showing attendance at all meetings included within Appendix 1 has been placed in the Members' Room and a copy will be available at your meeting.
- 5.6 As regards resolution (d) above, all the Members who were appointed to serve on outside bodies in 2008/2009 were identified and a 10% sample was then selected at random by the Chair of the Standards Committee. The Members selected through this process were Councillors A Dhaliwal, Dodds, Swindlehurst and Walsh. Those organisations to which they were appointed as the Council's representatives were asked to submit details of the total number of meetings they were called to attend; the actual number they attended and, if applicable, reasons

for non-attendance, if available. A summary of their response is set out in **Appendix 3.**

### **Standards Committee's Consideration**

- 5.7 During consideration of this matter by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 7th October 2009 concern was expressed that in some instances Members had valid reasons for non-attendance at meetings and it was suggested that, in future, Members who experienced exceptional circumstances which accounted for a significant number of absences could be invited to explain the reason for their attendance record and a footnote to that effect could be added to the Report. The Committee accepted that on practical grounds explanatory notes could only be allowed in exceptional circumstances as the reporting of reasons for individual absences would not be practicable.
- 5.8 The generally poor attendance record of Members at compulsory training sessions was considered and it was suggested that this might be due in some part to sessions being arranged at short notice and coinciding with other meetings. The problem of meeting dates coinciding with other commitments was also raised in respect of meetings of outside bodies. The Committee was advised that as far as was possible all compulsory training for 2010/2011 had been incorporated into the Council's corporate meeting diary which is submitted to this meeting for approval. This would give Members advance warning of all training dates and hopefully outside bodies, particularly local ones, would have some regard to the calendar of meetings when fixing their meeting dates. Another recent measure introduced to help improve Member attendance has been to offer two alternative dates for the same training session in the hope that Members would be able to attend one of them and would not be penalised for non-attendance at the other. This approach could be adopted in respect of training sessions which are subsequently added to the approved Calendar of Meetings.
- 5.9 The Committee also considered a suggestion that in addition to the current annual performance monitoring report, each committee, sub-committee or panel should receive annually a report on the attendance of its Members.
- 5.10 The Standards Committee asked the Officers to submit to its next meeting in January 2010, a report formalizing the proposals outlined above and providing suggestions on how the attendance reports for individual Committees etc could work in practice.

## **6. Background Papers**

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

## **7. Appendices Attached**

Appendix 1 - Members' attendance record 2008/2009

Appendix 2 - Members' attendance at outside bodies' meetings.

Appendix 3 - Results of random check on attendance at outside bodies.