

**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE – ANNUAL REVIEW 2005 / 2006****Standards Committee, 13 July 2006****Report of the Head of Corporate Services****Statutory Powers: Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003****Financial Implications: Nil****Purpose of the report**

1. The Standards Committee receives an annual update on the level of Members' attendance at public meetings of the Council so that it can monitor its performance target that councillors should attend at least 50% of all meetings of the bodies to which they have been appointed.

**Recommendation**

**That the Committee RESOLVES to note the report.**

**Background**

2. At its meeting on 26 February 2001 the Standards Committee recommended to Council that a minimum attendance requirement of 50% should be set for meetings of the Council and its various bodies (minute S.10/01 refers). Any Member whose attendance failed to meet this standard would be requested, on a voluntary basis, to return a proportion of their Basic Allowance. This recommendation was agreed by the Council at its meeting on 10 May 2001 (minute 16/02 refers). This convention has been backed by the Councils' Independent Panel on Members' Allowances as one of good practice.
3. A schedule of all councillors' attendance from the Annual Council meeting on 12 May 2005 to 10 May 2006 is shown at appendix A.
4. Statistics of particular interest include:-
  - (a) the constancy of the number of Members (6) achieving 100% attendance rate;
  - (b) 45% of Members achieving an attendance rate of 90% or more;
  - (c) the lowest attendance rate now being 50% and therefore meeting the minimum requirement set by the Committee;
  - (d) the overall average attendance rate being 85%;
  - (e) a large amount of interest being shown by Members who are not Members of a particular Council body but turn up to those meetings (either as an invitee or by their own request) so as to listen to the discussions and take part where appropriate.

5. It should be noted that attendance at meetings forms only one part of the role of a councillor and does not reflect the level of work done within their respective wards or in representing the Council on other bodies. It should also be noted that Members come from different backgrounds and some, particularly those in full time employment or with carer responsibilities, may find attendance at meetings more of a challenge. It should not, therefore, be regarded as a barometer of a councillor's effectiveness as an elected representative.
6. There are two areas of attendance which are not included within the annual statistics but which effect Members' attendance, involvement and the performance of the Council:-
  - (a) Attendance at the outside bodies. The Council does not check Members' attendance at the 50 outside bodies on which it is represented. Members are reminded though of the Council decision (minutes 12 and 27/03 refers) which asked that they produce regular reports on issues which have been raised at meetings of the outside bodies. The Council has attempted to improve the community role of the Member by targeting representation on only those outside bodies which in some way or another align with the Council's corporate priorities.
  - (b) Attendance at training events. It is disappointing to note that attendance levels at training events are relatively low. This is an area that will continue to be monitored particularly now that a Member's eligibility to sit on the Council's regulatory committees, Development Control and Licensing, is dependent on them achieving a minimum 80% attendance rate at related training events.

### **Risk Assessment**

Risk	Mitigation
Poor attendance at meetings may impact on the reputation of individual councillors and the Council as a whole.	Attendance levels are monitored and reported annually.

### **Conclusion**

7. Despite the limitations of the statistics, they do again demonstrate the degree of commitment and dedication shown by Members in attending formal meetings of the Council and its bodies. Clearly with a greater focus on improving attendance at training events etc, the role, experience and abilities of Members can continue to be developed.

Richard McDermott  
Member Support Services Manager

Standards Committee  
 13 July 2006

K.Williams  
Head of Corporate Services

### **Background Papers:**

None