

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>Standards Advisory Committee</b></p> <p>Thursday, 30 July 2020</p>	
<p><b>Report of:</b> Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p><b>Member Attendance Update</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	(All Wards);

### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on Member attendance at formal Council and Committee meetings.

### Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the report.

### 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This is a noting report to enable the Committee to undertake its role monitoring Member behaviour in relation to the Code of Conduct.

### 2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 This is a noting report.

### 3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Councillors and Co-optees will attend a number of formal Council and Committee meetings as part of their different roles. The number of meetings will vary significantly depending on the role of each Member with some required to attend many some Committees whilst others may only be on Council.
- 3.2 There is no statutory requirement for Members to attend meetings except that there is a general requirement that a should a Councillor fail to attend at least

one qualifying meeting in any six-month period they will automatically cease to be a Member of the local authority.

- 3.3 This requirement can though be overcome through a report to Council which can agree an extension for one or more Councillors for any appropriate reasons. Over the last year, two such extensions have been granted:
- 13 November 2019, Council agreed an extension for Councillor Mufeedah Bustin to allow her to undertake maternity leave. The extension was to 31 May 2020.
  - 16 June 2020, the General Purposes Committee (under its emergency powers on behalf of Council) agreed a general extension for all Councillors until the end of October 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on Council meetings and attendance.
- 3.4 Member attendance details are set out in the minutes to the meeting. They are also listed on the website under each meeting as well as being available through individual stats reports for each Councillor/Mayor/Co-optee.
- 3.5 A number of status indicators are used in relation to Member attendance:
- Expected – the Member is expected to attend this meeting (usually a meeting which has not yet taken place)
  - Present as Expected – the Member attended the meeting
  - Present as Substitute – the Member attended as a substitute for the regular attendee
  - In Attendance – the Member has attended a meeting where they are not on the Committee itself. This could be to give evidence/make a submission or simply to observe.
  - Apologies – apologies for absence were received on behalf of the Member either in advance or at the meeting
  - Absent – the Member did not attend and no apologies were received

#### In Attendance

- 3.6 The introduction of virtual meetings has given rise to anomalies in respect to the 'In Attendance' status at meetings. At physical meetings it is easy enough to see whether a Member is in attendance. It becomes a lot more difficult for virtual meetings. A Member may join the Teams meeting and so be easily logged by the clerk but equally they may just watch the public webcast. They may also watch an archive recording at a later date.
- 3.7 Where there is doubt the Democratic Services Officer could operate an 'honour' system whereby if a Member emails them to confirm they have watched the meeting then they will be added to the attendance for the meeting. Or 'In Attendance' could be restricted to those who actively participate (although it wouldn't be desirable if this encouraged Members to make contributions just to be marked as 'In Attendance'). For the moment the issue is being monitored and Members are be marked 'In Attendance' where possible.

## Attendance Recording

- 3.8 Appendix 1 sets out the attendance for the period May 2019 to May 2020. It sets out where Members have been present as part of the committee membership or otherwise in attendance as well as any apologies given. Where no apologies were given they are marked as 'Absent'.

## 4. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None specifically arising from this noting report.

## 5. **OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

- 5.2 None specifically arising from this report although monitoring by the Standards Advisory Committee helps ensure statutory rules are being effectively followed.

## 6. **COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 This report recommends that the Standards Advisory Committee note Member attendance for the period May 2019 to May 2020 as reported in Appendix 1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## 7. **COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new arrangements to govern the Standards of Conduct for local authority members and co-optees. Seven guiding principles of conduct are set out:- selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership.

- 7.2 The information in this report supports these guiding principles and, in particular, enhances performance and openness in relation to members' performance of their Council duties.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- Previous attendance monitoring reports to Standards Advisory Committee.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Member attendance May 2019 to May 2020.
- Appendix 2 – Co-optee attendance May 2019 to May 2020.

### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None.

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A