

Report To:	STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	Date:	8 JULY 2019
Heading:	MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE - UPDATE		
Portfolio Holder:	N/A		
Ward/s:	N/A		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee in relation to Members' attendance at meetings and training over the past municipal year and the payment of the Performance Related Element of the Members' Allowance.

Recommendation(s)

To note the record of attendance by Members as set out in the report and to discuss the operation of the Performance Related Element of the Members' Allowance.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

To ensure a clear and transparent process regarding the payment of the performance element of the Members' Allowance. To enable the Committee to perform its monitoring role in relation to the ethical governance of the Authority.

Alternative Options Considered

None as the report is for noting and general discussion by the Committee.

Detailed Information

Members' Allowances are subject to an independent review every four years. In 2016, as part of its review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) recommended that an annual £500 Performance Related Allowance be established; in conjunction with a reduction in the basic allowance for Councillors of the same amount. All Members would be

entitled to claim this allowance, if they had attended 70% of their scheduled meetings and compulsory training events.

The IRP's recommendations were accepted by Council on 21 July 2016 (min. C.20 refers) and agreed that the Performance Allowance would come into operation at the start of the new local government year, in May 2017.

The Committee was tasked with producing guidance for the payment of the performance related element of the allowance to recommend to Council for approval. The Council meeting on 20 April 2017 (min. C.73 refers) approved the Guidance (which is attached as Appendix 1) following the recommendation of this Committee which worked with the IRP to identify an appropriate approach to the practical application of this element of the allowance.

The Guidance sets out the criteria for excused and unexcused absences, provided for the Monitoring Officer to administer the process and at her discretion to consult with Group Leaders regarding absences caused by "exceptional circumstances".

It was agreed that Members would be individually informed of their attendance record on a quarterly basis and that this information would also be shared with their relevant Group Leader. Information has been given to Members on this basis over the past municipal year.

Members Attendance – Summary Information - June 2018 to May 2019

The year-end information was collated and circulated to Members. The attendance information can be summarised as set out below:

Member Attendance Levels:

Members with 100% attendance	8
Members with attendance between 90% and 99%	10
Members with attendance between 80% and 89%	8
Members with attendance between 70% and 79%	6
Members with less than 70% attendance	3

Absence figures:

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	TOTAL
Authorised Absences	7	17	5	4	33
Unauthorised Absences	16	38	8	16	78
No apologies given for absence (unauthorised)	6	5	3	2	16

Reasons for absences (12 months):

Reason	Number of times
Bereavement (Authorised)	0
Family/Medical Emergency (Authorised)	1
Rescheduled Meeting and Holiday booked (Authorised)	2
Illness (Authorised)	30
Work Commitment (Unauthorised)	26
Personal (Unauthorised)	31
Holiday (Unauthorised)	3
Other engagement (Unauthorised)	2
No reasons for absence (Unauthorised)	16

At the end of the municipal year, three Members (all now no longer Members following the recent District Elections) fell below the 70% required attendance level by recording 33%, 60% and 67% attendance levels overall. According to the Scheme therefore, these former Members did not receive the £500 performance related element of the allowance. All other Members during 2018/2019 municipal year reached the 70% threshold and received the £500 allowance during June.

Members are asked to note the record of attendance by Members as set out in this report and to discuss the operation of the Performance Related Element of the Members' Allowance over the past year.

The Independent Remuneration Panel will be carrying out a review of the Scheme during this municipal year and the Panel will consider the Performance Related Element as part of this review.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Ensuring effective community leadership, through good governance, transparency, accountability and appropriate behaviours.

Legal:

The Council has to comply with the requirements prescribed in the Members' Allowances (England) Regulations 2003 and arrange to adopt a revised Allowances Scheme following recommendations from an Independent Remuneration Panel. Further independent guidance was sought from the Panel to implement the Performance SRA (attached as appendix 1).

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The underspend of £1,500 against the Performance Related element of the Members' Allowances Budget will be reflected in the financial monitoring reports to Cabinet.
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
No risks have been identified associated with the recommendations in this report.	

Human Resources:

There are no Human Resource implications arising from this report.

Equalities:

The guidance approved by Council has given due regard to equalities and diversity legislation, particularly with regard to childcare and dependent carer's provision.

Other Implications:

None

Background Papers

None

Report Author and Contact Officer

Ruth Dennis
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE
MONITORING OFFICER
r.dennis@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457009