

Councillor attendance at ad-hoc conferences and external training and development events.

A PROTOCOL

The purpose of this protocol is to give members and officers clear understanding of the process for the approval of Member requests to attend external training, seminars and conferences. Attendance at party political conferences are specifically excluded from this protocol and all expenses associated with attendance at these events will be met by the relevant group or the individual concerned.

Requests to attend conferences and seminars fall within three categories:

- 1 Conferences which form part of the Council's standing list (see Annex 1 to this protocol)
- 2 Ad-hoc Requests e.g. conferences which are received direct to the individual member from an external source. Such requests will be restricted to **a maximum of 1 per member per year**. Members are expected to identify in advance through their personal development review any conferences with specific themes which they would be interested in attending should the opportunity arise .
- 3 Conferences which are received into Democratic Services which are then circulated to relevant members for their consideration

Conferences on the Standing List

Criteria for attending

Details of those members who are eligible to attend standing conferences are listed in Annex 1 to this protocol. This is the only criteria required for eligibility to attend such conferences, however, if a member wishes to send a substitute in their place, then they must seek clearance from the relevant Head of Service.

Approval and Funding Arrangements

Approval together with any arrangements for attendance at these conferences can be made either by the relevant directorate or by Democratic Services. The Council no-longer has a separate budget for conferences on the standing list, therefore, funding for any costs including travel and accommodation for these conferences will be met jointly between the relevant directorate and democratic services. For this reason, it is essential that both departments provide a charge code to which their relevant portion of the costs can be charged.

Members Ad-hoc Requests to attend External Conferences

Throughout the year members receive a large proportion of emails and flyers advertising external events at both a regional and national level.

Criteria for attending

Members will need to ask themselves one of the following questions before requesting to attend an ad-hoc external conference or training event.

- Does the event directly relate to the priorities and work of the Council, and to their role, OR
- Does the event directly address new legislation, new “best practice” requirements, or other innovation, OR
- Does the event match any of the areas identified for development in their Personal Development Review? (PDR)

Other factors will also be taken into account, which will include 'best value' (e.g. consideration of the delegate fee, travel and accommodation costs, location and the number of previous requests a member has made in that budget year).

External Opportunities offered by Democratic Services

Similar to ad-hoc requests, emails and flyers advertising external events are received into Democratic Services where they are assessed for suitability, value for money etc. Then, subject to available budget may be forwarded to members who:

- Have identified the topic as a relevant area for development through their Personal Development Review
- Would directly benefit from attending the seminar due to their role/portfolio

Approval Process

Approval to attend an external seminar forwarded by Democratic Services is automatic by nature of the invitation. Members wishing to take up such an offer should respond to the Senior Member Support Officer accepting the offer of a place so that registration and travel/accommodation arrangements can be made

Promoting the Dissemination of Learning

Promoting the Dissemination of Learning is a requirement of the I&DeA Member Development Charter. Attendance at external events is a valuable way of acquiring information about a wide range of issues including new and innovative practice, new legislation, and other regional and national developments.

It will therefore be expected that, wherever appropriate, Members who attend external events will lodge with the Members' Library any course information, handouts, etc. In addition, any Member attending external events must be prepared to provide a short written report as a minimum requirement, and where appropriate to provide briefing sessions to other Members in order to pass on information or learning that has been acquired.

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