

## Protocol for Councillor Attendance at Conferences & External Training & Development Events

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 are included on the list of Annual Conferences (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.
- 3 Conferences which are received into Democratic Services which are then circulated to relevant members for their consideration

Such requests will be restricted to **a maximum of 1 per member per year**. Members are encouraged to identify in advance through their personal development review any conference with a specific theme which they would be interested in attending should the opportunity arise.

### List of Annual Conferences

#### Criteria for Attending

Details of those members who are eligible to attend annual conferences are shown in the list of approved conferences (see insert). 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 & 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.

## **Other 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)  
*(Whilst priority will be given to those members who have flagged up the request through their PDR, the PDR process is not a prerequisite of a request being approved)*

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 whether the member has already had a request approved in that budget year.

## **External Opportunities offered by Democratic Services**

Similar to ad-hoc requests, emails and flyers advertising external events are often received into Democratic Services where they are assessed for suitability / value for money etc. Subject to available budget, these 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