

meeting Administration Committee

date 9 December 2009

agenda item number **5(c)**

## REPORT OF THE SERVICE MANAGER (MEMBER SUPPORT)

### COUNTY COUNCIL LUNCH

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To propose new arrangements for lunch at County Council meetings.

#### 2. Background

2.1 During County Council meetings lunch has traditionally been provided for members, senior officers attending Council, and invited guests. This “networking” occasion helps build good working relationships among members and also provides an opportunity for business to be transacted between members and officers informally.

2.2 Members who take lunch during County Council meetings have historically foregone any subsistence allowances during the day to defray the cost of the meal. Members are given the opportunity annually to decide whether they will attend the lunch or not (if not they can claim subsistence).

2.3 The Conservative Group proposed that in view of the current financial climate members who decide to take lunch at County Council should make a contribution of £7.50 per meal from December 2009. This charge would also apply to members’ guests and honorary aldermen. The charge would not apply to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and their official guests.

#### 3. Process

3.1 It is proposed to ask all members to decide whether or not they wish to take lunch. Those who indicate that they wish to take a meal will be liable for the charge for all County Council meetings unless their apologies are presented. There will be no facility for members to change their mind on individual days. Members will not be offered the opportunity to change their decision again until April 2011

3.2 The charge for members will be deducted through the payroll as follows:

- a) In the March 2010 payroll for meetings in the remainder of the current financial year.
- b) For future years in advance over the first three payrolls of the year.

Members who are absent will have their charges refunded through the payroll system.

- 3.3 A register will be provided at lunchtime for members to note if they have a guest who is taking lunch. This will not affect the agreed protocol (which is attached at Appendix 1) that members who wish to have guests for lunch must seek approval in advance. The charge for a guest's lunch will also be deducted through the payroll.
- 3.4 Officers taking lunch will be required to contribute £7.50 by cheque to Members Support.

#### 4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that

- I. The charge of £7.50 for County Council lunches be introduced with effect from 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009.
- II. The level of charges be increased annually from April 2011, in line with the overall increase in prices charged for catering at County Hall.
- III. The process for collecting the charge be as set out in the report

**David Ellis**  
**Service Manager (Member Support)**

#### **Service Director (Finance) Comments**

In a full year the total contribution will be a maximum of £5,025, however, the actual contribution to the cost of lunch will depend on the number of members who choose to have lunch. (MB 26/11/09)

#### **Legal Services Comments (SLB 24/1/2009)**

By virtue of paragraph 9.5 of the delegation to Administration Committee, the Committee has authority to authorise hospitality to be offered by the County Council. Administration Committee has authority to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

**Background Papers Available for Inspection: Nil**

**Electoral Divisions Affected: All**

### **Guests taking lunch at County Council Meetings**

1. This protocol is to clarify the position on Members inviting guests to lunch during County Council meetings.
2. Lunch and tea on County Council days are provided for Members of the Council and officers engaged with the business of the County Council. They are provided to enable the business of the Council to be transacted and are regarded as working activities. Members have agreed to make a payment to defray the cost of the meal.
3. On occasion members may have personal guests who they wish to join them for lunch and/or tea. The procedure for this is as follows:
  - a) The approval of the Leader of the County Council must be sought in advance and the names of any guests notified to Julie Brailsford or Karen Townrow in Member Support in advance of the meeting.
  - b) Members should note on the register provided if they have guests. The charge for the guests' meals will be deducted via the payroll.
  - c) Members are expected to limit the number of guests to no more than 2 guests at 2 meetings of the County Council per year. This should be regarded as a maximum and not an individual entitlement.