

22 February 2023

Agenda Item: 7

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ATTENDANCE AT KEY NATIONAL CONFERENCES - UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the ongoing approval for relevant Member attendance at a number of key national conferences which the Council routinely attends on an annual basis, agreed by Governance and Ethics Committee at its meeting of 28 September 2022.

Information and Advice

2. This Committee's terms of reference include approving councillors' attendance at relevant conferences for which fees are payable.
3. There are a number of key national conferences which have been attended by the County Council consistently in recent years (except for the lockdown period when such events were not held) as recognised key forums for Councils to share best practice and to hear from Government Ministers and sector leaders.
4. The Committee agreed the following recommendations at its meeting of 28 September, which aimed to streamline the process for approval of attendance and achieve best value by enabling 'early bird' prices to be obtained:
 - 1) *That a standing approval be granted for the following conference attendance by Members, together with any necessary travel and accommodation arrangements:*

<u>Conference</u>	<u>Relevant Member Roles</u>
<i>LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition</i>	<i>Council Leader Council Deputy Leader Leader of the Main Minority Group</i>
<i>CCN Annual Conference</i>	<i>Council Leader Council Deputy Leader Leader of the Main Minority Group</i>
<i>NCASC Annual Conference</i>	<i>Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health (ASCPH) Deputy Cabinet Member for ASCPH Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (CYP) Deputy Cabinet Member for CYP</i>

<i>LGA / ADPH Annual Public Health Conference</i>	<i>Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health (ASCPH) Deputy Cabinet Member for ASCPH Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board</i>
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2) *That an updated approval, where relevant, be sought at any such point when the cost of places at any of the above events increases beyond inflationary increases or the political composition of the Council changes in a way that may affect the allocation of places at these events.*

6. Since that approval, the Council held a by-election for Eastwood Division on 3 November 2022. This was won by an Independent candidate who subsequently joined the Council's Independent Alliance Group. This meant that the Group's total number of Members matched that of the Labour Group, meaning that the Council no longer had a Main Minority Group and instead now has two Opposition Groups of equal size.

7. As a result of this change in political balance, and also in line with the overall drive of the Council to reduce non-essential expenditure, it is proposed that the number of Members attending each of these four main conferences should be updated as follows:

<u>Conference</u>	<u>Relevant Member Roles</u>
LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition	Council Leader Council Deputy Leader Leader of both Opposition Groups (4 places maximum)
CCN Annual Conference	Council Leader Council Deputy Leader Leader of both Opposition Groups (4 places maximum)
NCASC Annual Conference	Cabinet Member or Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health (ASCPH) Cabinet Member or Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Families (C&F) (2 places maximum)
LGA / ADPH Annual Public Health Conference	Cabinet Member or Deputy Cabinet Member for ASCPH Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board (2 places maximum)

Other Options Considered

8. To enable the attendance of the Leaders of both Opposition Groups at the LGA Annual Conference and CCN Annual Conferences.

10. To retain all of the existing places approved for Ruling Group Members but this would not enable a reduction in overall costs (under these proposals the maximum total number of places reduces from 13 places to 12 places).

11. To not send any representatives to such conferences but that would mean the Council missing out on a valuable opportunity to share best practice and utilise networking opportunities.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. To enable the Council to continue to be represented at these key national conferences in the most cost-effective and democratic manner.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

14. As the maximum number of places available has reduced from 13 to 12 overall, the updated approach will result in a saving in overall costs. The 2022 prices (excluding VAT) were:
- LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition 2022 - £545 (£495 early bird price) per delegate (N.B attendance at this conference was previously agreed by Policy Committee in January 2022)
 - CCN Annual Conference –£780 per delegate
 - NCASC Annual Conference - £495 per delegate
 - LGA / ADPH Annual Public Health Conference – £250 per delegate

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That a standing approval be granted for the following conference attendance by Members, together with any necessary travel and accommodation arrangements:

<u>Conference</u>	<u>Relevant Member Roles</u>
LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition	Council Leader Council Deputy Leader Leader of both Opposition Groups (4 places maximum)
CCN Annual Conference	Council Leader Council Deputy Leader Leader of both Opposition Groups (4 places maximum)

NCASC Annual Conference	Cabinet Member or Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health (ASCPH) Cabinet Member or Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Families (C&F) (2 places maximum)
LGA / ADPH Annual Public Health Conference	Cabinet Member or Deputy Cabinet Member for ASCPH Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board (2 places maximum)

- 2) That an updated approval, where relevant, be sought at any such point when the cost of places at any of the above events increases beyond inflationary increases.

**ADRIAN SMITH,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

For any enquiries about this report please contact Keith Ford, Team Manager, Democratic Services, Tel 0115 9772590

Constitutional Comments (EP 09/02/2023)

15. This decision falls within the Terms of Reference of Governance and Ethics Committee

Financial Comments (SES 07/02/2023)

16. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 14 of the report. The costs to be incurred will be met from existing revenue budget allocations.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Report to Policy Committee – 13 January 2022 – Attendance at Local Government Association Annual Conference and Exhibition 2022 and minutes of that meeting.
- Report to Policy Committee – 2 September 2021 – County Councils Network Annual Conference 2021 and minutes of that meeting.
- Report to Policy Committee – 18 September 2019 – Attendance at National Children and Adult Services Conference: November 2019 and minutes of that meeting.
- Report to Governance and Ethics Committee – 28 September 2022 and minutes of that meeting.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All