

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**ATTENDANCE AT NATIONAL CONFERENCES****Purpose of the Report**

1. To clarify the position regarding attendances at National Conferences by elected members.

Information and Advice

2. It has been custom and practice for many years that the lead member and/or their deputy for a function, and additionally in some cases the main Opposition spokesperson, would be the elected member/s who would attend any National Conference relating to that function. This arrangement has become even more essential as reductions in budget have required that only the most prominent conferences are now attended by officers and members.
3. Examples of such National Conferences, at which it is very important that the County Council is represented, include the Local Government Association Conference, the County Council Network Conference and the National Children and Adult Services Conference (this is an indicative, not an exhaustive list).
4. At the 21 March meeting of the Children and Young Persons Committee a standard report was taken to approve the attendance of the Chairman of that committee at the forthcoming National Children and Adult Services Conference organised by ADASS. The report clearly stated that approval was sought for the attendance of the Chairman of the Committee.
5. It is worth noting that this event is regularly used as a platform for policy announcements and offers the opportunity for discussions with ministers. It is understood that there are sessions planned specifically for designated lead members for children's services in light of the recently issued White paper on the future of schools and the commencement of the Goddard Enquiry and its possible ramifications.
6. Under the Authority's constitution the Chairman of the Children's and Young Peoples committee is the designated lead Councillor for Children and Young Peoples services in accordance with Section 19 of the Children Act 2004
7. An amendment was moved and incorrectly adjudged as valid at the Children and Young Persons committee in March which resulted in a decision to approve the attendance of a member other than the Chairman of the committee. The reason for moving the amendment given in the meeting was that as the Council is in no overall control it was reasonable that members other than the Chairman of the Committee should attend.

8. This report seeks to clarify the position regarding such attendances. Undoubtedly it would be helpful to elected members and the Council overall if attendances at National Conferences could be undertaken by the widest group of members possible. Unfortunately resources available to support attendances at conferences for both officers and members has reduced considerably as a result of the reductions in budgets. In the circumstances therefore it is suggested that whilst places at conferences are restricted either by resources or due to limited availability then they should be offered to the Chairman of the relevant Committee and/or the Vice-Chairman. Where funding is available then any further place available could be offered to the main Opposition Spokesperson.
9. If members agree the recommendations within this report then attendance at the forthcoming National Children's and Adults Services Conference will be amended accordingly.

Other Options Considered

10. None

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. To clarify the position regarding attendances at National Conferences for elected members.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working 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

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Implications

The Chairman of the Children's and Young Persons Committee is the designated lead officer for Children's matters under the Children Act 2004

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That elected member attendance at National conferences is always by the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman of the relevant committee and where resources and availability allow, the main Opposition spokesperson could also attend.
- 2) That attendance at the National Children and Adult Services Conference be in accordance with this policy.

Anthony May
Chief Executive

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Jayne Francis-Ward

Constitutional Comments (SLB – 07/04/2016)

13. Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (SES – 13/04/2016)

14. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

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.

- 'None'

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- 'All'