

Members' Attendance and Allowance Policy

Purpose of this policy

Attendance at and participation in Council, Committee and Working Group meetings are an essential part of the Councillor's role and underpin the Council's democratic processes.

In addition to being on the Council, each Councillor is expected to be on at least one of the two main Committees, People and Place, and is expected to support Working Groups and Events.

As such, the following attendance policy has been established to ensure that all members are aware of the expectations and to provide guidelines for managing absences and lateness.

1. General

- a. Council and Committee meetings always take place from 18:00 – 20:00, on the dates approved during the Annual Meeting except where an extra-ordinary meeting is called or a meeting is cancelled.
- b. Notice of extra-ordinary Meetings, Community Meetings, Working Group Meetings and Training Meetings will be received through the same process as notices for Council and Committee Meetings (At the Annual Meeting and/or with at least three clear days before the meeting)
- c. Councillors are expected to arrive at the meeting location at least five minutes before the meeting is due to commence.
- d. Lateness is defined as arrival 10 or more minutes after the meeting commences without prior notice to the Proper Officer.

2. Issuing Apologies

- a. Councillors should issue apologies for absence to the Proper Officer by 15:00pm the day before the meeting, except in the case of an emergency when apologies should be issued before the set commencement of the meeting.
- b. Apologies for absence should be issued with a reason and is subject to approval by the meeting for which the apology is issued, except in the case of absence at Community Meetings, Working Group Meeting and Trainings Sessions, when approval will be tabled at the next Full Council Meeting.
- c. Apologies for absence issued after the set commencement of a meeting, or issued without a reason will not be put to a vote for approval and will result in a record of no-contact absence.
- d. Councillor are expected to be in attendance for the full duration of a meeting and should issue apologies, in accordance with sections 2a – 2c if they will attend a meeting for one hour or less. Such apologies will be Noted by the meeting.

3. Conditions of approval of Absence

- a) If the Councillor is a member of any branch of, or employed in the service of His Majesty's naval, military or air forces when employed during war or any emergency on any naval,

military or air force service.

- b) Ill or experiencing a mental health difficulty if attending the meeting could spread the illness, hinder the ability to participate or amplify the condition.
- c) A sudden family emergency that requires immediate attention.
- d) A pre-scheduled medical appointment that cannot be changed.
- e) A scheduling conflict with another equally important meeting that cannot be reschedule.
- f) A business trip or traveling for work during the meeting time.
- g) Unavoidable personal obligations such as religious observances, court appearances, legal matters, or other personal commitments that cannot be postponed.
- h) A sudden work crisis or urgent task that requires immediate attention and cannot be delegated.
- i) Severe weather conditions that makes it unsafe to commute or attend the meeting.

4. Conditions for Rejections of Apologies

- a) Not providing a reason.
- b) Failure to prioritize and manage diaries and time effectively to accommodate the meeting.
- c) Regularly missing meetings with reasoning that suggest a lack of commitment.
- d) Routine personal tasks or errands.
- e) Social events or personal plans that could be adjusted.
- f) Personal conflicts or disagreements with colleagues.
- g) Avoiding responsibility or accountability by skipping a meeting.
- h) Failing to communicate in advance about potential scheduling conflicts or issues that could prevent attendance.
- i) Claiming not to be feeling well without any clear medical reason

5. Confidentiality

- a. Councillors can request by writing to the Proper Officer that the reason/s issued alongside apologies for absence be kept confidential.
- b. The Proper Officer should respect requests for confidentiality.
- c. In such instances, the Proper Officer should interpret and report to the meeting whether or not the reason provided satisfies the conditions for approval of absence as outlined within this policy.

6. Recording Attendances and Absence

- a. In accordance with Local Government Act 1972, s 85(1) and (2) "If a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend

any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority.” For the purpose of calculating attendance the following meetings qualify:

- Meetings of the Full Council
 - Meetings of any committee to which you are a member
 - Meetings of any Working Groups to which you are a member
 - Meetings of any external bodies to which you have been appointed to attend
 - Any meetings called by the Council to which your attendance is requested and which discharges a function of the Council. (Such as the Annual Community Meeting and Councillors' Induction and Trainings Sessions)
- b. A record of attendance is kept by the Proper Officer and will be published before each Annual Meeting as part of the governance reports. The record will be categorized as follows:
- P** – Present
 - PP** – Partially Present
 - AA** – Approved Apologies
 - UA** – Unapproved Apologies
 - NC** – No Contact
- c. The record will not reflect rescheduled or cancelled meetings, except where meeting is rescheduled or cancelled due to quoracy.
- d. All UA and NC records will be included in the calculations of absence.
- e. Councillors can seek the recategorization of No-Contact Absences to an Approved Absence by issuing apologies at a meeting of the responsible body (Council or Committee meeting) within six months of the meeting to which they were absent.
- f. The Chair of the meeting shall have the right to cast a second vote, where the first is tied.
- g. Once an apology for absence is approved or rejected, there can be no further voted to recategorize the absence.
- h. Councillors should refer to other requirements and policies regarding attendance as outlined in the Standing Orders and Local Government Legislation.

7. Councillors' Allowance

- a. Councillors' Allowance is set at £250 per annum (paid in arrears and subject to income tax) and is made available to Councillors at the start of each new financial year.
- b. Where a Councillors' unapproved and no-contact absence (UA and NC) reaches or exceeds 1/4 of the Meetings (rounded down) to which their attendance is required, a fifty percent cap will be placed on the Councillors' Allowance payable (£100 subject to income tax) The cap will also apply to request for Councillors' Allowance to be donated to a charity of community

interest company or organization.

- c. For the purpose of calculating whether a cap is to be place on Councillors' Allowance, unapproved and no-contact absence at the following meetings quality:
- Meetings of the Full Council
 - The Annual Community Meeting
 - Meetings of any committee to which you are a member
 - Meeting of any Working Group to which you are a member
 - Induction and Training Sessions

Please see appendix A for an illustration of possible calculations.

8. Recourse

- a. Councillors can seek recourse by writing to the Chair outlining the circumstances under which recourse is sought. The Chair of the Council, along with the Forward Planning Working Group will make a final decision.

Councillors' Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to adhere to this attendance policy.

Name:	Signature: Date Signed:
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This policy should be reviewed Annually.

Appendix A

Please note the figures below are only illustrative, the number of meetings each year are likely to var.

	Meeting	Total	Maximum unapproved absence
One Committee Membership	4 – Council Meetings	13 Meetings	3 Meetings
	1 – Community Meeting		
	4 – Committee Meetings		
	9. – Working Group Meetings		
	2 – Induction/ Training Session		
Two Committee Membership	4 – Council Meetings	16 Meetings	4 Meetings
	1 – Community Meeting		
	8 – Committee Meetings		
	1 – Working Group Meeting		
	2 – Induction/ Training Session		

Key Terms

Absent

Failure to attend a meeting which discharges functions of the Council to which your attendance is requested.

Approved Absence

An approved absence occurs when an apology for absence is:

- Issued before the planned commencement of the meeting.
- Is approved by a vote at the meeting for which the apology was issued or a meeting of the same body within six months.
- Is approved at a meeting of the Full Council within six months of the issuance of apology - in the case of Community, Working Group and Induction/Trains Sessions.

Unapproved Absence

An unapproved absence occurs when a vote to approval apologies is rejected at a meeting of the responsible body within six months of the issuance of the apology.

No Contact Absence

A no-contact absence is recorded when:

- No apology for absence is issued
- An apology for absence is issued without a reason
- An apology for absence is issued after the set commencement of a meeting

Partially Present

Partially Present is recorded when a Councillor is in attendance for one half or less of a meeting's planned duration. E.g. One hour or less for Council and Committee meeting which each have a two-hour duration.

Lateness

Failure to arrive at a meeting to which your attendance is required within ten minutes of the set commencement.