

## **9. MEMBERS ANNUAL ATTENDANCE REPORT (JC)**

### **1. Purpose of the report**

To consider the annual return of Members' attendance at Authority, Committee meetings and essential Member training events for 2021/22

#### **Key Issues**

- As Department Environment Food & Rural Affairs and other appointing Authorities regularly request information on the attendance level of their appointed members, the Authority publishes attendance figures annually based on the financial year, in this instance 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- To consider the effect that the COVID 19 pandemic has had on Member attendance at committees and training and to take into account the return to face to face meetings from virtual meetings.

### **2. Recommendation**

1. **To note the annual return of the Members' attendance for 2021/22 at meetings of the Authority, Standing Committees and Essential Member Training as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.**

#### **How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?**

3. The Authority has agreed a set of performance measures for Members (Min.62/05). The measure for meetings is the percentage of full Authority meetings and approved duties actually attended, that Members could have attended. The target is at least 75% overall and 75% of each specific meeting. The purpose of this report is to monitor attendance and commitment.

The Governance Review Working Group, which presented its second report to the Authority meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020, was specifically asked to revisit the issue of reporting on Members attendance and if attendance should continue to be recorded as possible and actual rather than percentages, and whether other meetings involving Members such as working groups and site visits should be included. The Working Group concluded that the existing reporting arrangements worked well and should continue to be produced in the current format. The Authority approved the recommendation of the Working Group for an annual report on Member attendance at meetings of the Authority, Standing Committee and essential learning and development events only.

#### **Background Information**

4. The annual return shown in Appendix 1 (attached to the report) has been compiled from the attendance records at full Authority, Standing Committee meetings and essential learning and development events for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The Authority has previously agreed that the use of individual percentages would not be published so the information is presented to provide a comparison between possible meetings attended and the actual number of meetings attended.

Overall for 2021/22 attendance at meetings was 64%. This is under the 75% target and compares to an overall figure of 85% for 2020/21 and 72% for 2019/20.

5. During 2021/22, Local Joint Committee did not meet so this has been omitted from the attendance statistics this year.

6. One factor for the overall attendance figure being lower than the previous year may be the effect of the return to face to face rather than virtual meetings.

The legislation which had allowed virtual meetings to be held during the pandemic ended on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021, near the beginning of the period under consideration. The meetings of Planning Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, and Programmes and Resources Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were held virtually. From that point face to face meetings were held again, but initially they were held off site at a variety of locations as it was felt that a larger room was preferable to enable social distancing.

A successful trial meeting of the Programmes and Resources Committee was held at Aldern House on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 and from that date, this Committee and Planning Committee were held on site. Authority meetings continued to be held off site until the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022 due to the larger size of that committee's Membership.

However there was still advice on social distancing in operation during the return to face to face meetings and this impacted on the ability of some Members to attend these meetings due to their individual medical issues, so this has also had an impact on the attendance figures.

## 7. Essential Member training

At the Authority meeting held on 7 October 2016 (Min.38/16) a Framework for Member Learning and Development was approved. In the Framework document, it states that attendance at training and other events would be monitored and reported. The target for overall attendance at events identified as "essential" in the Member Learning and Development Plan is 50%. In this period 8 Essential Member Training sessions were held, however attendance was only expected at 6 of these as three were sessions of planning training and attendance was only required at one session per Member. All of the training sessions were held virtually, apart from the annual Tour which visited Millers Dale Station to view the renovated goods shed and learn about work on the Monsal Trail and tunnels together with an update on Ash Dieback in the area.

Overall for 2021/2 the attendance at these events was 53% a decrease in performance compared to 2020/21 (72%). Although it should be noted that in 2020/21 only four sessions were held. The returns for 2021/22 are shown in Appendix 1

## **Committee attendance by the Chair and Deputy Chair of Authority and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Standing Committees as Observers**

Standing Order 1.45(1) states that the Chair and Deputy Chair of Authority and the Chairs of Standing Committees may attend the meetings as an observer of a committee they are not appointed to where they are able to speak but not vote. In the absence of the Chair of a Standing Committee, the Vice Chair may attend instead. In the relevant time-period, there were no instances where a Chair or Vice Chair attended.

Since July 2018 the Chair has been a Member of both Standing Committees.

## **Proposals**

8. The annual return is provided for information and for Members to note.

## **Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?**

### **Financial:**

9. No issues

**Risk Management:**

10. There are no apparent risks.

**Sustainability:**

11. There are no issues to highlight.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:**

12. There are no issues to highlight.

13. **Climate Change**

There are no issues to highlight.

14. **Background papers (not previously published)**

None

15. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Members' Attendance Record: April 2021/22

**Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

Joanne Cooper, Democratic and Legal Support Officer, 23 June 2022.