

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 24 AUGUST 2015

REPORT ON: ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 237-2015

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To recommend that the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to approve the attendance of members at certain conferences.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- i) agree a list of annual conferences which are the most important and useful for members to attend
- ii) delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve attendance at these events, and at 'one-off' events of particular relevant/importance to the Council, by one member from the Administration and one member from the Opposition
- iii) ask members who attend approved conferences to share learning from the event with colleagues

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of attending conferences will be met from within the appropriate departmental revenue budgets.

4. MAIN TEXT

4.1 The Council has a commitment to ensuring that members have the knowledge to undertake their role effectively. To achieve this, the Council provides induction training, arranges a programme of briefings on current issues, provides a press cuttings service on articles relevant to local government, encourages members to participate in COSLA groups and facilitates access to the Improvement Service's CPD framework and online training and development materials.

4.2 Attendance at conferences provides another opportunity for members to:

- keep up-to-date with new legislation and policy initiatives
- learn about leading practice in other authorities and organisations, including innovative approaches to challenges we also face
- exchange ideas and make useful contacts with elected representatives and officers from Government, partners, the third sector and other authorities
- enhance their professional knowledge and ability to challenge officers, scrutinise performance, provide strategic direction and lead change, as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement

4.3 At present, attendance at conferences requires to be specifically authorised by Committee for each event. It is proposed that the Council agrees a list of key annual conferences which are regarded as most important and useful for members to attend, and gives the Chief Executive delegated authority to approve the attendance of one member from the Administration Group and one member from the Opposition at each of the events on this list. It is also proposed that the Chief Executive should have similar delegated authority to approve the same representation

of members at 'one-off' events of particular relevance or importance to the Council e.g. on new legislation, policy initiatives or issues of current importance.

4.4 The proposed list of key annual conferences is:

- COSLA Annual Conference
- CIPFA Scottish Conference
- Chartered Institute of Housing Conference
- Social Work Scotland Conference

4.5 It is also proposed that members who attend these conferences should provide feedback on the event (e.g. copies of handouts and presentation slides) to share the learning with colleagues. A section of the Council intranet will be developed to give all members access to this information.

5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Executive Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Democratic and Legal Services and all chief officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

David R Martin
Chief Executive

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