
SCHEDULE OF ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report relates to the schedule of attendance at Committee meetings following consultation with other Authorities.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At the last meeting of the Committee Members considered the schedule of Members attendances at meetings during 2008/09. A copy of the schedule is attached at Appendix A. The Committee discussed whether to continue current schedule production arrangements or introduce changes.
- 2.2 The option of discontinuing publication of the schedule on the Council's website and in the Member's Bulletin, on the basis that the information was in the public domain in any event, was raised. It was also suggested that an additional column could be added to the schedule to include information on Members suffering from long-term or serious illness at the discretion of the individual Member concerned. The Committee agreed that it could be helpful if information was provided to the next meeting on how other Councils monitor and report figures relating to Members attendance at Committee meetings (Minute 135/09 refers).

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Consultation has been undertaken with a sample of other Essex Authorities. None of these Authorities produce and publish schedules in the way followed by Rochford. The position is summarised below:-

Castle Point Borough Council – monitors and collects information for reporting internally on request. Is mindful that it is difficult for a schedule of meeting attendance figures to give the complete picture.

Uttlesford District Council – there is some internal monitoring by officers in the context of the six month rule (the rule whereby failure to attend a meeting over a six month period has implications for Local Authority membership). Minutes are published on the Council's website from which attendance can be identified.

Thurrock Borough Council – if an internal request is received for the attendance figures for a particular Member over a period, it is possible to provide a report.

Colchester Borough Council – as with Uttlesford, points individuals to the published minutes of meetings if there is a query. Observes that the time spent on ward duties is likely to be considered more significant than the number of hours spent at meetings

Epping Forest District Council – as with Thurrock, if an internal request is received for the attendance figures for a particular Member over a period, it is possible to provide a report.

Braintree District Council – produced some figures up to 2006/07. Is not aware of any need for a schedule of figures.

3.2 As with most other Authorities, the minutes of all Rochford District Council meetings are available on the Council's website, providing a public record of Councillor attendance at meetings. Specific figures can also be provided on request. The Committee may feel that, in the context of the approach of other Councils and the parameters traditionally informing the schedule production process (set out at Appendix B), there is merit in either:-

- retaining the current schedule format with the addition of a column for Members to include information on long term or serious illness. Publication to be discontinued on the Council's website or in the Members' Bulletin on the basis that it is in the public domain by virtue of being a Standards Committee agenda item.
- discontinuing the yearly production and reporting of this information on the basis that statistics can always be called for if there is a need.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The production of bespoke statistical information involves some officer resource.

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** whether to continue to receive a schedule reports on the record of attendance at Committee meetings.

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Background Papers:-

None

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If you would like this report in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

Appendix A

Members' attendance at Council Meetings

From 13 May 2008 - 29 April 2009 Municipal Year 2008/09

Member	Total Committees: Possible Attendance	Total Committees: Actual Attendance	Total Sub-Committees: Possible Attendance	Total Sub-Committees: Actual Attendance	Overall	
					Possible	Actual
Mrs P Aves	28	24	0	0	28	24
C I Black	38	34	4	4	42	38
Mrs R Brown	28	1	0	0	28	1
Mrs L A Butcher	44	38	0	0	44	38
P A Capon	33	25	1	1	34	26
Mrs T J Capon	39	34	0	0	39	34
M R Carter	28	22	0	0	28	22
J P Cottis	33	23	0	0	33	23
Mrs L M Cox	31	16	0	0	31	16
T G Cutmore	39	38	2	2	41	40
Mrs J Dillnutt	33	19	0	0	33	19
K A Gibbs	40	17	0	0	40	17
Mrs H L A Glynn	31	14	1	1	32	15
T E Goodwin	28	13	4	4	32	17
K J Gordon	39	32	4	3	43	35
J E Grey	28	18	0	0	28	18
K H Hudson	42	33	3	3	45	36
A J Humphries	28	26	1	1	29	27
T Livings	44	23	0	0	44	23
G Lucas-Gill	36	35	1	1	37	36
C J Lumley	28	16	0	0	28	16
Mrs J R Lumley	36	21	0	0	36	21
M Maddocks	36	30	0	0	36	30

Appendix A

Member	Total Committees: Possible Attendance	Total Committees: Actual Attendance	Total Sub-Committees: Possible Attendance	Total Sub-Committees: Actual Attendance	Overall	
					Possible	Actual
J R F Mason	28	21	0	0	28	21
D Merrick	33	29	0	0	33	29
Mrs J A Mockford	33	30	1	1	34	31
R A Oatham	31	27	1	1	32	28
J M Pullen	28	27	3	3	31	30
P R Robinson	36	13	0	0	36	13
C G Seagers	28	25	0	0	28	25
S P Smith	33	30	0	0	33	30
D G Stansby	33	24	0	0	33	24
M G B Starke	39	36	0	0	39	36
M J Steptoe	41	33	0	0	41	33
J Thomass	38	20	0	0	38	20
Mrs M J Webster	39	39	1	1	40	40
P F A Webster	44	37	0	0	44	37
Mrs C A Weston	36	30	4	3	40	33
Mrs B J Wilkins	31	30	0	0	31	30

Committee attendances do not take account of Members visiting or of absences due to official engagements or attendances at other fora, such as Advisory Groups, Interview Panels, Group Leaders Panels and Party Group Meetings. The attendance of Substitutes is not incorporated.

Appendix B**Schedule of Attendance at Committee Meetings – Factors to be Considered**

- The statistics being as simple as possible, and avoiding percentages given the possibilities for distortion.
- An awareness that Committee attendance figures do not take account of Member absences due to official engagements or attendance at other fora, such as Interview Panels, Group Leaders Panels, Party Group meetings and, now, Portfolio Holder Advisory Groups.
- The production of over amounts of detail being resource intensive.
- The role of the Standards Committee being to monitor attendance at meetings with any concerns associated with a Member's attendance being raised with the appropriate Group Leader in the first instance.
- The maintenance of attendance information not being about competition or the development of some form of league table and recognition that concerns about attendance are always likely to be the exception rather than the rule.
- An awareness that the statistics cannot reflect/acknowledge ward work in the community.