

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Standards Committee
Date: 23 September 2020
Report for: Information
Report of: Governance Manager

Report Title

Six Month Attendance Rule - Extensions

Summary

To report on the operation of the general extension to the six-month Councillor attendance rule of 3 months, agreed by Council as one of its measures for the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Recommendation(s)

That the report be noted.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Ian Cockill, Senior Governance Officer
Extension: 1387

Background Papers: None.

1. REVISED MEETING ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND MEMBER'S ATTENDANCE

- 1.1 The six-month Member attendance rule (Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972) still applies to all Members if attending either physical or virtual meetings. The Extraordinary Meeting of Council on the 14th May 2020 agreed a general exemption, so as not to prejudice any Member who was unable to attend virtual meetings which Council had agreed would take place during working hours, or for other Covid-19 related reasons.
- 1.2 In addition, at the Extraordinary Meeting of Council, Members were also restricted by the number of meetings they could attend due to the reduction in Scrutiny Committees during the national emergency.

2. GENERAL EXEMPTION AND EXTENSIONS GRANTED

- 2.1 The Council approved a general extension to the six-month Councillor attendance rule of three months where any Member was unable to attend meetings due to work commitments, or as a direct result of the pandemic, or where there have been no relevant meetings held during the preceding six months. In each individual case the extension would be subject to the confirmation of the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Standards Committee, and would be agreed on a case-by-case basis and in advance of the elapse of the six-month period.
- 2.2 It should be noted that attendance by a member who has been given an extension at any meeting in the three-month extension period would mean that the member concerned would then simply be subject to the standard six month rule from the date of the meeting they attended.
- 2.3 The extensions granted to date as a result of this general exemption have been to:
- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Councillor Shaw | - 3 month extension to 28 October 2020 |
| Councillor Dr. Carr | - 3 month extension to 18 November 2020 |
| Councillor Mrs. Haddad | - 3 month extension to 18 November 2020 |
| Councillor Mrs. Churchill | - 3 month extension to 19 November 2020 |
| Councillor Bennett | - 3 month extension to 1 December 2020 (overridden by attendance at Employment Committee on 8 September) |
| Councillor Bunting | - 3 month extension to 17 December 2020 |
- 2.4 Councillors currently nearing the six-month rule are:
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Councillor Lally | - expires 14 November 2020 |
| Councillor Taylor | - expires 24 December 2020 |
- 2.5 The calendar of meetings for the next six months lists three full Council meetings in September, October and November which will all start at 19.00. It is hoped that all members will therefore be able to attend at least one of those meetings and that there will be less need for recourse to the three month extensions.