

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCE – REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 25 FEBRUARY 2014
Author: CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will recall the report considered by Council on 5 December 2012 in relation to Members' Learning and Development, which included Members' attendance at courses and seminars.
- 1.2 The decisions taken by Council included delegating to the Chief Governance Officer decision-making in relation to Members' attendance at such events where the cost does not exceed £200.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Member attendance at a forthcoming conference for which the full delegate fee, per person, is £399 plus VAT.

2 REQUEST TO ATTEND COSLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- 2.1 Requests have been received from Councillor Meiklejohn, Leader of the Opposition, and Councillor Gow to attend the annual CoSLA conference which will be held in the Fairmont St Andrews on Thursday 13 and Friday 14 March 2014. As previously stated, the full delegate fee for attendance at this event is £399 exclusive of VAT.
- 2.2 Depute Provost Patrick has also expressed an interest in attending the conference for one day only, which costs £180 plus VAT and is therefore below the threshold for decision-making by the Chief Governance Officer.
- 2.3 There has been a consistent pattern of attendance by Falkirk Council Members at this event over recent years, with payment having been authorised at officer level. The request outlined in this report comes to the Executive simply because of the change in policy approach to such matters, as noted above.
- 2.4 The Council is currently represented on the Convention by Depute Provost Patrick and Councillors Alexander, Gow and C Martin. Councillor Meiklejohn routinely attends Convention meetings on behalf of Councillor Alexander.
- 2.5 Attendance at the conference is in accordance with the named Members' approved duties in their role as elected Members, as defined in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

- 2.6 Members are requested to consider the requests from Councillors Gow and Meiklejohn and, if minded to grant these requests, are asked also to approve in principle further representation by the named Members noted in paragraph 2.4 or other elected Members whose attendance is supported by their respective Group Leader.

3 FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of the proposed attendance by Councillors Gow and Meiklejohn, as well as Depute Provost Patrick, can be met from existing budgetary provision, as could that of others who may also wish to attend. Of the £10,130 in the 2013/14 budget for Members' development and training, only £924 has been spent to date.
- 3.2 Details of Members' attendance at conferences and seminars, together with associated costs, are reported annually, as required by The Local Government (Allowances and Expenses) (Scotland) Regulations 2007 and guidance issued by the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC). Details of previous representation at the CoSLA annual conference from 2009/10 to 2012/13 are available on the Council website and will be supplemented with 2013/14 details by 1 June 2014.
- 3.3 There are no equality implications.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Members are invited to:-

- a) consider the requests from Councillors Gow and Meiklejohn to attend the annual CoSLA conference as detailed in paragraph 2.1 above, at a cost of £399 per person plus VAT; and
- b) consider whether to approve in principle any further requests to attend this event, as outlined in paragraph 2.6 above.

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CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER

Date: 13 February 2014

Contact Officer: Dale Robb, Business and Members' Services Manager (ext 6111)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Report to Falkirk Council on 5 December 2012 – Members' Learning and Development
- 2 Legislation referred to within this Report.
- 3 SLARC Guidance issued in 2006 and as amended.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01324 506111 and ask for Dale Robb.