

**To the Chair and Members of the
COUNCIL**

APPROVAL OF COUNCILLOR ABSENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report:-
 - (i) Asks Council to approve a request for an extended leave absence from attendance at meetings due to illness for Councillor Tony Revill until 7th May, 2015; and
 - (ii) Seeks authority to delegate to the Monitoring Officer, the ability to approve extended periods of absence for Members in certain circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that:-
 - (i) As provided for under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, approval be given to extend the period of absence at meetings for Councillor Tony Revill until 7th May, 2015;
 - (ii) Authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to approve extended periods of absence for Members in appropriate circumstances and for such approvals to be reported to the next available meeting of Council for information; and
 - (iii) Subject to approval of (ii) above, that the Council's Constitution be updated accordingly.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

- 3 The proposal set out in this report, provides an efficient mechanism to administer arrangements for long term absences due to illness. The current position is that only Full Council may approve an extended period of absence for a Councillor who has not attended a meeting for a period of 6 months. If such an approval is not given by Full Council, the absent Member will cease to be a Member of the Authority. A reduction in the number of formal Council meetings risks the possible need to convene an extraordinary meeting of Council to consider such requests.

BACKGROUND

4. Members may be aware that Councillor Tony Revill is currently unwell and unlikely to be able to resume normal duties for some time.
5. Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, provides that if a Member of a Local Authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his/her last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Authority, he/she shall cease to be a Member of the Authority, unless the failure is due to some reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period.
6. Councillor Tony Revill's last recorded attendance was at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the 23rd June, 2014, which in normal circumstances, would mean that Councillor Revill would be required to attend a meeting of the Authority before the 22nd December, 2014.
7. Councillor Revill has indicated that he is unlikely to be able to resume normal duties for some time and therefore, to avoid disqualification, the Council is asked to approve his absence for an extended period until the Borough Council Elections on 7th May, 2015.
8. At present there is no delegated authority in the Constitution to cover approval of Member absences beyond six months. Such a delegation to the Monitoring Officer would avoid the need to convene an extraordinary meeting of Council to consider such requests. Council is asked to approve the following delegation:-

The Monitoring Officer is authorised to approve requests in writing for Member absence in excess of six months, if satisfied that the grounds for such a request are reasonable. (Members are asked to make requests prior to the expiry of the fifth month of absence.)

In the event that any such approval is granted, a report will be presented to the next available meeting of Council.

In the event that the Monitoring Officer does not feel able to approve the request Council will be asked to consider the extension.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9. (A) Support the recommendations set out at paragraph 2 of this report. (RECOMMENDED OPTION)
- (B) By not supporting the recommendations set out at paragraph 2 could result in calling extraordinary meetings to consider such requests.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCILS KEY PRIORITIES

10.

	Priority	Implications
	We will provide strong leadership and governance, working in partnership.	Approving the proposed delegation will streamline the approval process for such requests and possibly reduce costs if an extraordinary meeting had to be convened to consider such a request.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

11. If the Council decided not to approve Councillor Revill's absence and he is unable to attend a meeting prior to 22nd December, 2014, a casual vacancy would arise.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12. These are contained within the body of the report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

14. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

CONSULTATION

15. Consultation with the Labour Group has taken place with regard to Councillor Revill's current well-being.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Request from Councillor Revill

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