



City of Doncaster Council

Report

18th January, 2024

To the Chair and All Members of the Council

APPROVAL OF COUNCILLOR ABSENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report requests that Council note the action taken by the Monitoring Officer (acting under delegated authority) in approving the request from Councillor Andy Pickering for an extension of absence from attendance at meetings due to ill health until 31st May, 2024.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATION

3. That Council note the action taken by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, in approving an extension of absence from attendance at meetings due to ill health, for Councillor Andy Pickering until 31st May, 2024.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. This action ensures locally elected Members can continue to represent their constituents following or during periods of ill health or other genuine reasons which may otherwise prevent them from attending meetings of the local authority during a six-month period.



BACKGROUND

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 Council, unless the failure is due to some reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period.
6. At its meeting on 27th November, 2014, Council granted the Monitoring Officer delegated authority to approve extended periods of absence for Members, subject to being satisfied that the grounds for the extended absence are reasonable. Any such approvals are to be reported to the next available meeting of Council by the Monitoring Officer, for information.
7. Due to ongoing health issues, Councillor Andy Pickering has been unable to attend meetings.
8. Councillor Pickering's last recorded attendance at a formal meeting was at the Planning Committee held on 27th June, 2023, meaning Councillor Pickering would be required to attend a meeting of the Authority by 27th December, 2023.
9. The Monitoring Officer, under delegated authority, approved an extension of absence from attendance at meetings due to ill health for Councillor Pickering until 31st May, 2024.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

10. There were no other options considered.







REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION



11. In the event that the Monitoring Officer did not feel able to approve the request, an Extraordinary Meeting of Council would have to have been called to consider Councillor Pickering's request.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

12. Whilst there is no direct impact on the Council's Key Outcomes, the Council is committed to maintaining the highest standards of Governance to allow for the proper discharge of the Council's functions, ensuring openness and transparency.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider –	Neutral or No implications
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			Negative overall	
 Tackling Climate Change				✓
Comments:				
 Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work				✓
Comments:				
 Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs				✓
Comments:				
 Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all				✓
Comments:				
 Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs				✓
Comments:				
 Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough				✓
Comments:				

 Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future				✓
Comments:				
 Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities				✓
Comments:				
Fair & Inclusive				✓
Comments:				

Legal Implications [Officer Initials: NC Date: 3/1/24]

13. Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that if a Member of a Local Authority fails to attend meetings through a period of six consecutive months, he/she shall cease to be a Member of the Authority unless the failure to attend is due to a reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that six month period.
14. At its meeting on 27th November, 2014, Council granted the Monitoring Officer delegated authority to approve extended periods of absence for Members if satisfied that the grounds for such a request are reasonable. Such approvals are to be reported to the next available meeting of Council by the Monitoring Officer, for information.
15. The authority of the Monitoring Officer to undertake this function is detailed in the Council's Constitution at Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions, 3.8 Full Council Functions – Scheme of Delegations (e).

Financial Implications [Officer Initials: PH | Date: 13/12/2023]

16. There are no specific financial implications relevant to this report.

Human Resources Implications [Officer Initials: SH | Date: 13/12/23]

17. There are no specific Human Resource implications relevant to this report.

Technology Implications [Officer Initials: PW Date: 13/12/23]

18. There are no specific technology implications relevant to this report.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

19. There are no risks and assumptions relevant to this report.

CONSULTATION

20. Consultation and communication have been ongoing with Councillor Pickering during his ill health to support him in his role.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

21. None

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