

Report 1: Chair's Annual Report

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview from the Authority's Chair of the governance of the Authority for the year ending 31 March 2022.

2. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- a. note the contents of this report on the governance of the Authority; and
- b. approve publication of information on members' attendances and allowances, set out in Tables 1 and 2 of Appendix 1 to this report; on the Authority's website, and in relevant performance reports as part of the Authority's accounts.

3. Implications

- a. Financial: Financial performance for the 2021/22 financial year is discussed at Report 2 on this Agenda.
- b. Equalities: There are no direct equality implications from this report. Where possible, opportunities are taken to enhance the diversity of the Authority's governance through the inclusion of independent members on panels, working groups and task and finish groups.

4. Governance Overview

- a. This year has been another busy and engaging year for members of the Authority. During the period, member attendance at Principal Meetings (all Authority Days) was 76% (87% for the previous year, with the Defra target being 75%) and at Core Meetings (Full Authority, DMC and Review) was 80% (86% for the previous year, 75% for the Defra target).
- b. Appendix 1 to this report provides a summary of members' allowances; members are asked to consider this and approve its publication. Members should note that Table 1 and Graphs 1 and 2 detail attendance at Principal Meetings (all Authority Days) and Core meetings (Full Authority, DMC and Review).
- c. Member Appraisals: Three SoS National appointments have had appraisals. The Chair will contact all Members to discuss appraisal options.

5. Committee and Task and Finish Group Reports

Development Management Committee (DMC) Annual Report

- a. The DMC formally met to consider two planning applications on one occasion during the year. A total of 99 planning applications were determined by the Authority over the year. The delegation to senior officers was 98% and this reflected the small scale and uncontroversial nature of the planning applications received this year and adherence to the policies within the adopted Local Plan.

- b. The performance for planning applications was excellent, achieving 100% performance in terms of speed of decision for both minor and other applications. No major planning applications were received during the year. There were three applications that were refused, giving an approval rate of 97%. There was only one application withdrawn. A total of 5 new houses were approved during the year.
- c. No complaints about the planning service were received during the year. There were no appeals received, which reflects the low refusal rate over the past few years.

The Sill Advisory Board

- d. The final Sill Advisory Board meeting was held on June 13th 2022, to review the evaluation, explore learning outcomes and discuss the financial outturn at the completion of the project.

Authority Review Group

- e. The Authority Review group have met twice during this period. The topic of the meeting in October was "Engaging Diverse Audiences" and February "Development Management".
- f. External stakeholder experiences were included in both meetings.
- g. All recommendations from review meetings have been taken to Leadership Team for actions and timescales to be agreed and planned.

Finance and Audit Group

- h. The Finance and Audit Group met four times during the reporting period in July, August, November, and February, to provide a steer and scrutinise in further detail finance, audit and risk related reports.

Standards & Appeals Committee

- i. The Standards and Appeals Committee met twice in February this year. At their first meeting they were joined by other members to undertake Code of Conduct training and following this met to discuss the implementation of the new code which was later adopted at the Full Authority meeting in March.

Equalities Annual Update

- j. Over the past year the HR Officer and Director of Business Development have attended regular Defra Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity (EDI) meetings hosted by DEFRA. This has provided additional insight to the EDI Action Plan, which has been developed. We are already performing well in this area but are keen to improve further which the action plan will enable.

6. Conclusions

Governance within the Authority has adapted well over this year to accommodate both changes in Board membership and effective use of blended working with use of both face to face and virtual meetings.

I would like to thank members of the Authority for their support and for their continued commitment to the work of the Authority.

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Appendix 1: MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AND ALLOWANCES 2021-2022

Changes in membership 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

In the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, there were five changes to the Authority membership. In May 2021, two long serving Northumberland County Council appointments, Cllr Anthony Murray and Cllr Glen Sanderson left the Authority. Cllr Cath Homer and Cllr Mark Mather were nominated to the Authority as their replacements. Cllr Cath Homer tendered her resignation to the Authority in November 2021, a replacement from Northumberland County Council was not appointed in this time.

In May 2021, two Secretary of State (Parish) members (Cllr Johnny Wilson and Cllr Chris France) did not stand for reappointment. Following a recruitment process with Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) in July 2021, Cllr Len Glen-Davison and Cllr Denis Mullan were appointed to the Authority by the Secretary of State.

Attendance

All Authority members are expected to attend the Full Authority and Policy Conference Meetings. Graphs 1 and 2 (within Appendix 1) illustrate individual member attendances at Principal Meetings (all Authority Days) and at Core Meetings (Full Authority, DMC and Review).

For the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, there were 14 meetings in total as follows: -

Core Meetings

- 4 Full Authority
- 1 Development Management Committee
- 2 Authority Review

Principal Meetings (includes Core Meetings plus the following)

- 2 Policy Conferences
- 2 Finance and Audit
- 1 Standards & Appeals Committee
- 1 Landscapes Review Briefing
- 1 Management Plan Briefing

Some meetings were held virtually due to pandemic restrictions.

Member attendance at Principal Meetings (all Authority Days) was 76% (Defra target being 75%) and at Core Meetings (Full Authority, DMC and Review) was 80% (see Appendix 1: Table 1).

The analysis of attendance does not include ad-hoc working groups, task and finish groups and representation on other bodies which Authority members are involved with.

Remuneration

Appendix 1, Table 2 includes payments to members made between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 based on the figures recorded in the Authority's financial system. Members travel and subsistence costs are also detailed within Table 2.

The use of public transport and attendance at external conferences, workshops, and seminars, which are undertaken on behalf of the Authority, are not included in the individual breakdown as these are paid for directly by the Authority.

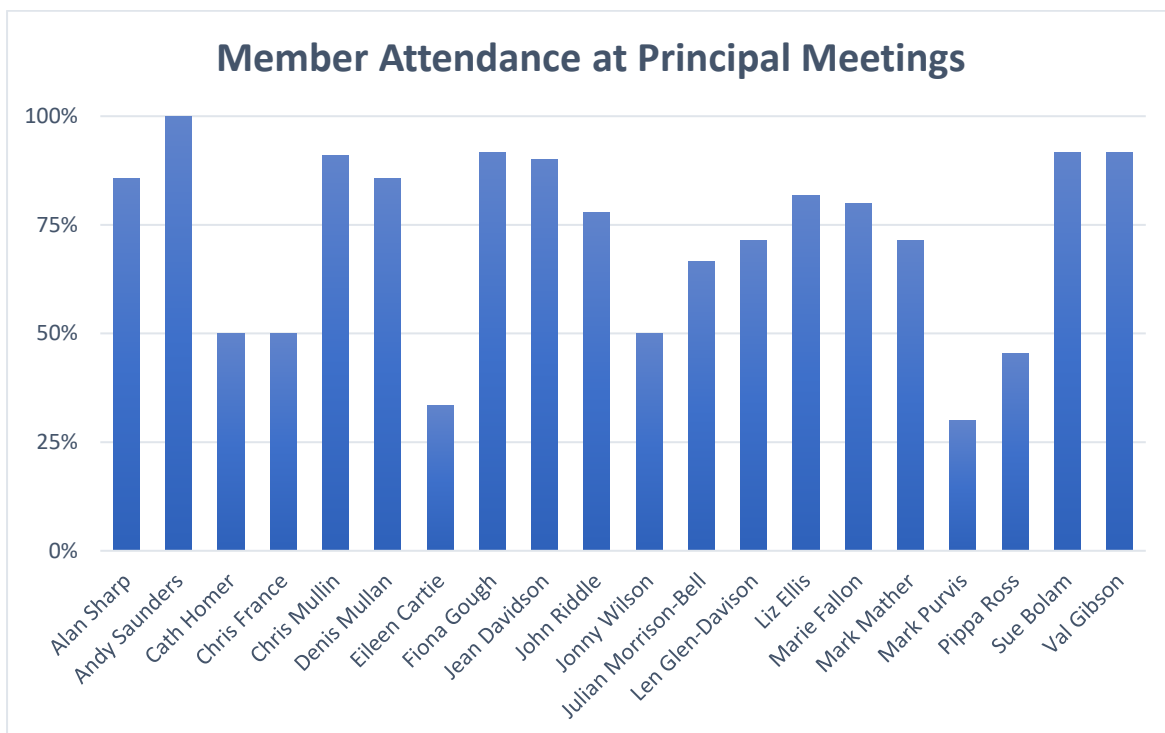
Appendix 1: Members’ Attendance at the Authority’s Principal and Core Meetings from 1 April 2021 – 30 March 2022

Please note: the figures below represent the meetings attended by representatives in their capacity as a member of that committee. The meetings attended in a capacity other than committee member, for example a voluntary attendance out of personal interest for a topic being discussed, are not included.

Table 1: Percentage of Core and Principal Meetings attended by members from 1 April 2021 to 30 March 2022

	Defra Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Member Attendance at Principal Meetings (all Authority Days)	75%	68%	87%	76%
Member Attendance at Core Meetings (Full Authority, DMC and Review)	75%	68%	86%	80%

Graph 1: Member Attendance at Principal Meetings (all Authority Days)



Graph 2: Member Attendance at Core Meetings (Full Authority, DMC and Review)

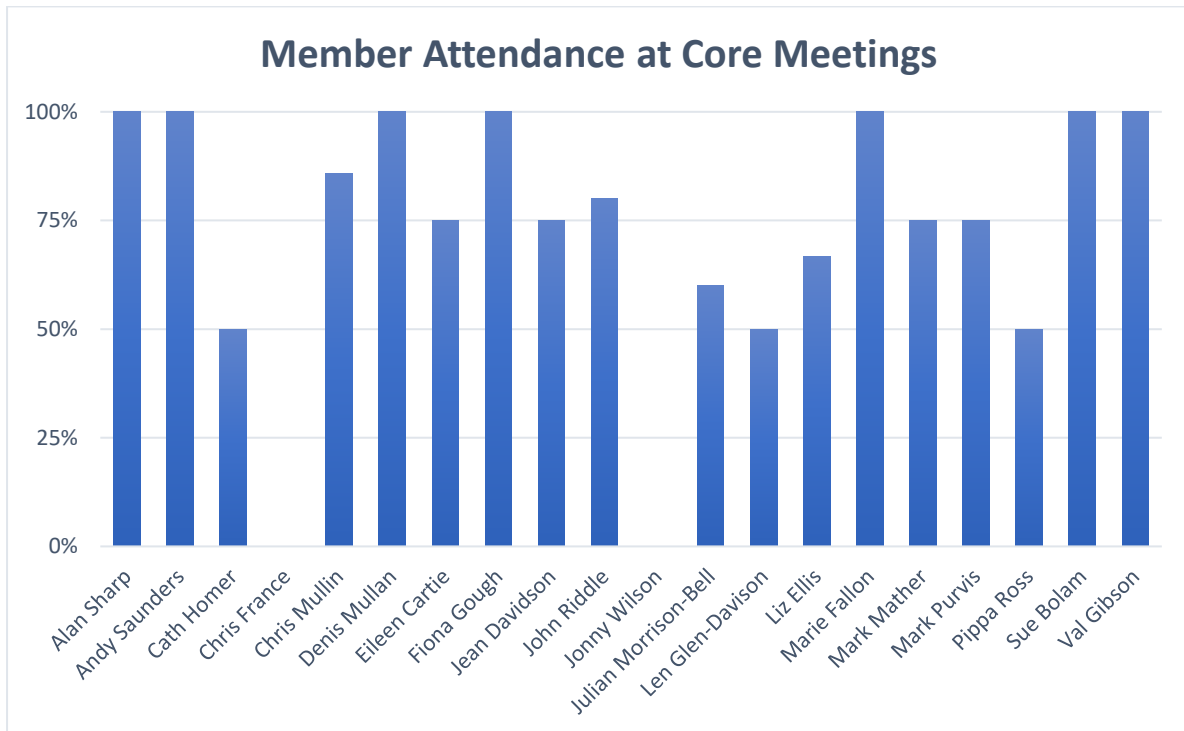


Table 2: Member Allowances and Expenses Paid from 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

Members	Travel & Subsistence		Total £	
	Allowances £	Allowances £		
Bolam SE	1886.04	402.3	2288.34	
Cartie, E	1886.04	89.55	1975.59	
Davidson J*	7544.04	289.95	7833.99	
Ellis, L	1886.04	0	1886.04	
Fallon, M	1886.04	224.1	2110.14	
France, C	618	0	618	Left July 2021
Gibson, V	1886.04	85.41	1971.45	
Glen Davidson, L	1313.13	97.2	1410.33	Joined July 2022
Gough F	1886.04	0	1886.04	
Homer, C	828.15	0	828.15	Joined May 2021 and left November 2021
Morrison Bell, J*	2829	0	2829	
Mullin, C	1886.04	386.1	2272.14	
Murray, A	289.06	0	289.06	Left May 2021
Marber, S	333	0	333	Independent Member
Mather, M	1602.12	0	1602.12	Joined May 2021
Mullan, D	1313.13	130	1443.13	Joined July 2021
Purvis, M	1886.04	86.4	1972.44	
Riddle, JR *	3771.96	0	3771.96	
Ross, P*	2829	0	2829	
Sanderson, G	309	0	309	Left May 2021
Sharp, A	1886.04	0	1886.04	
Saunders, A	1886.04	0	1886.04	
Wilson, J	618	0	618	Left July 2021
TOTALS	43057.99	1791.01	44849	

*Special Responsibility Allowances