

North Hertfordshire District Council is reviewing the “Cost of Democracy”

As part of this review, we would like to know the cost and numbers of staff that make up your Committee Support Team , the numbers and types of meetings held each year and how Officers charge their time for the preparation of Committee reports etc.

To help us obtain this information, we would be grateful if you could answer the following questions and return to fiona.timms@north-herts.gov.uk. We will share the full results of this benchmarking exercise with all contributing authorities.

We have provided relevant information from NHDC for information/illustrative purposes.

Please add any additional information you wish to submit to support any of the answers or information you have provided.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Your local authority name: | North Hertfordshire District Council |
| Contact name: | Fiona Timms |
| Contact telephone number: | 01462 474251 |

1. COMMITTEE SUPPORT

(a) Staff Costs and numbers

| | 2010/11 £ | 2011/12 budget £ |
|--|-----------|------------------|
| Staff cost (include NI, pension contributions overtime payments etc) | 127,171 | 122,245 |
| FTE staff | 3.55 | 3.56 |

(b) Meetings held in the 2010/11 Civic Year

| | Number of meetings | | Total duration (hours p.a) | Total agenda pages printed* |
|--|--------------------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Before 5pm | After 5pm | | |
| Full Council | - | 8 | 14 | 51,770 |
| Executive/Cabinet | - | 7 | 15 | 67,415 |
| Audit | 4 | - | 8 | 19,630 |
| Scrutiny and Sub Committees | - | 16 | 36 | 48,485 |
| Area Committees | - | 31 | 64 | 59,955 |
| Planning | - | 11 | 25 | 49,390 |
| Licensing | 5 | 2 | 14 | 12,025 |
| Others (North Herts Highways Joint Member Panel) | - | 4 | 8 | 17,220 |
| Others (Standards – including Sub Committees) | 4 | 2 | 10 | 1,710 |
| Joint Staff Consultative Committee | 4 | - | 6 | 3,340 |

*These pages are double-sided.

(c) Services Provided to Committees

(please mark with a “X” where service is provided – leave blank if not provided)

| | Attend pre-meeting | Produce Agendas | Attend meeting and take Minutes | Undertake post meeting follow ups |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Full Council | x | x | x | X |
| Executive/Cabinet | X | X | x | x |
| Audit | X | X | x | x |
| Scrutiny and Sub Committees | X | X | x | x |
| Area Committees | X | X | x | x |
| Planning | x | X | x | X |
| Licensing | | X | x | x |
| Others (North Herts Highways Joint Member Panel) | | X | X | x |
| Others (Standards – including Sub Committees) | | X | x | x |

(d) Committee Management Systems

| | |
|---------------------|---------|
| Annual Cost 2010/11 | £ 4,000 |
|---------------------|---------|

(e) Staff payment for attendance at evening meetings

How are staff that attend evening meetings to present reports etc compensated (eg Overtime, attendance allowance etc)

Details of how staff are compensated for attending evening Committee meetings:
3 X Committee Services Officers – time and a half after 6:30pm
Committee Services Manager and Democratic Services Manager – attendance allowance £ 22.99 per meeting
Other Officers presenting reports are entitled to claim time off in lieu and attendance allowance of £22.99 per meeting if Grade 12 or below

(f) Printing

| | |
|--|---------|
| Total cost of printing Agendas 2010/11 | £53,666 |
| Total number of agenda pages printed | 330,940 |

2. CHAIRMAN / MAYOR'S OFFICE

(a) Staff support to Chairman /Mayor

| | 2010/11 actual |
|------------|----------------|
| Staff cost | £21,400 |
| FTE staff | 0.65 FTE |

(b) civic duties

| | 2010/11 |
|--|---------|
| No of civic events attended by Chairman/Mayor (and Vice Chair) | 197 |

3. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Please confirm the following for the 2010/11 Civic Year:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Number of scrutiny reviews undertaken | 16 |
| Number of recommendations | 31 |
| % recommendations accepted | 58% |
| Number of call-ins | 0 |
| Number of call-ins referred back to the Executive/Council | 0 |
| Of those referred back the number that were amended | 0 |

4. OTHER INDIRECT COSTS OF DEMOCRACY

The Service Expenditure Reporting Code of Practice explains that the Cost of Democracy should include officer attendance at Committee meetings and preparation for those meetings. This includes the writing of reports and any work that was undertaken that would not have been needed otherwise for management reasons. In other words it is any work undertaken specifically for Members. That could be a special request by Members or it could be the time taken on preparing routine reports for Members (but not the background work). For example, the cost of processing a planning application, site visits and other work is a service cost because it is work to fulfill the statutory obligation. The preparation of the planning report for Members to seek Member approval is a cost of democracy.

Can you provide details of the amount recharged to 'Cost of Democracy' in 2010/11, as follows (do not include costs for the Committee Support Team, as detailed above):

| | 2010/11 actual |
|--|----------------|
| Recharge to Cost of Democracy | £898,993 |
| Number of Officers (FTEs) who recharge some of their time to Cost of Democracy | 7.08 |
| Number of officer hours recharged per week | 262 |

If your Authority does not recharge Officer time to 'Cost of Democracy' please can you explain how this cost is accounted for? For example, is the time apportioned as a non-distributed cost?

At NHDC all costs are distributed