



RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

to
COUNCIL
8 SEPTEMBER 2022

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTIONS OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's public speaking protocol the following question was received from a member of the public.

2. QUESTION

The following question was received from Mr David Horner on 5 September 2022

'Given the austerity the country is now facing now and over the coming winter could the Council confirm which Members and Officers attended the recent 2022 Local Government Conference in Harrogate and could both I and the council tax payers of the District be provided with full details itemised per attendee of the expenses involved in the cost of travel, accommodation and all other expenses claimed from or spent by this Council. Could you also explain what value was gained by attending this conference. Please would you also confirm that all free hospitality received by attendees (Officers and Members) will be properly recorded for public scrutiny and could this information be provided to me and Council tax payers as soon as it becomes available.'

3. RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER

- 3.1 At Council on 9 July 2015 the following resolution was passed:

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council (or their substitute) attend the Local Government Association Annual Conference and Exhibitions with the Chief Executive.

In the absence of a chief executive post, The Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance attended this year.

- 3.2 Attendance stopped during covid, but representatives have always attended, even during years of austerity, for example in 2017 and 2018 the Leader and Deputy Leader attended, and the overall cost was:
2017 - £1,760 before travel expenses
2018 - £1,823 before travel expenses
- 3.3 Expenses incurred for 2022 attendance were:
Tickets to event- £545 each;

Travel £230 collectively.

General expenses/ accommodation £490 each.

This is the equivalent of £2,070 on comparable data to 2017/18, and £3,335 with officer attendance and travel expenses included.

- 3.4 This was the first in-person conference since covid. A detailed understanding of emerging government policy and how this will affect the District is gained from the event, and this has meant the attendees have brought back knowledge to plan ahead on areas such as:

- Levelling up

- Local government resilience

- Cost pressures and

- Emerging national policy

All members were given a summary of key take-aways that came out of the event.

- 3.5 There was also a networking reception with District Councils Network and political group and separate Chief Executive dinner, which was no additional charge to the conference.
- 3.6 There was no free hospitality or gifting received as part of this event, and more widely any information to this end would be recorded on our gifts and hospitality register if this was the case, and the value was over £50.