

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

22 FEBRUARY 2023

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, INSIGHT
AND GOVERNANCE**

Report prepared by Debbie Snook

NON-ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Issue for Decision

To review the approval of the reason for non-attendance at Council meetings by Councillor Mrs Ring.

Recommendation Made

That the approval of the reason of ill-health for non-attendance at Council meetings by Councillor Mrs Ring be confirmed for the period up to and including 9 May 2023, the day when Members come into/leave office following the Borough Council elections on 4 May 2023.

Reasons for Recommendation

Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 states "...if a Member of a Local Authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the Authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a Member of the Authority."

Therefore, if a Councillor does not attend a meeting for six consecutive months, they automatically cease to be a Councillor unless the Council approves the reason for the non-attendance before the six-month period has elapsed.

Councillor Mrs Ring has been absent from Council meetings since 21 May 2022 on the grounds of ill-health. The Council, at its meeting held on 28 September 2022, approved the reason of ill-health for Councillor Mrs Ring's non-attendance in order to prevent her from ceasing to be a Member of the Authority in the event of her being

unable to attend a meeting before 21 November 2022 (the expiry of the six-month period). Since no reason for absence should be approved without a time limit, the Council agreed that the approval of the reason should be reviewed at this meeting.

Councillor Mrs Ring continues to suffer ill-health. The seat that she holds is scheduled to be contested in the Borough Council elections on 4 May 2023. It is therefore recommended that the Council confirm its approval of the reason of ill-health for Councillor Mrs Ring's non-attendance for the period up to and including 9 May 2023, the day when Members come into/leave office following the Borough Council elections on 4 May 2023.

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

The Council could decide not to confirm the approval of the reason for absence and to declare the seat vacant. However, Councillor Mrs Ring would cease to be a Member of the Authority with immediate effect.

The recommendation aims to manage the risk to Councillor Mrs Ring of an extended period of absence from Council meetings.

Background Documents

None