
REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

1 REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Parish/Town Council Training

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Standards Committee on 23 June 2015 to Full Council with a recommendation in relation to District Council scheduled planning training courses. An extract of the key elements of the report of the Assistant Director, Democratic Services to the Committee is appended.
- 1.2 Concern was expressed by Standards Committee Members at the low number of attendees from Parish/Town Councils at both free and chargeable District Council training sessions. It was observed that:-
- 1.3 Even though most Parish/Town Councils had training budgets, many had not attended the planning training sessions that have been designed specifically for them.
- 1.4 In terms of concern that the number of Parish/Town Council attendees would be very high at District Council planning training sessions if the recommendation was passed, it was noted that many District Councillors were also Parish/Town Councillors, which may reduce the number of training places taken up by Parish/Town Councils. The representative attending the training would be able to report back on the training to their Parish/Town Council.
- 1.5 Whilst priority at planning training sessions should be given to District Councillors, the layout of seating in the training room could be rearranged to accommodate a higher number of attendees.
- 1.6 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES** that one place be offered to each of the Parish/Town Councils free of charge on each of the District Council planning training courses.

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides information relating to Parish/Town Council training budgets and Parish/Town Council attendance at District Council run training courses.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 9 April 2015, the Committee requested that information be provided on the number of training courses that have been available to the Parish/Town Councils and the number of attendees (both since the charges were introduced and prior to this when the courses were free of charge to Parish/Town Councils). It was further requested that information be obtained around Parish/Town Council training budgets.

Parish/Town Council Attendance at District Council training sessions

- 2.2 With effect from the 2012/13 Municipal Year a charge of £40 per person per session was introduced for attendees from Parish/Town Councils at appropriate Rochford District Council Member training sessions.
- 2.3 Following the introduction of this charging mechanism, Parish/Town Councils continued to be invited to attend appropriate Member training events at no cost in respect of courses that the Council organises specifically for Parish/Town Councils or where the training is on a topic where it would benefit the District Council for Parish/Town Councils to attend.
- 2.4 Each year since charges were introduced the Council has delivered a training course for Parish/Town Councils that covers Standards and the Councillor Code of Conduct. This is offered to all Members and Clerks of the Parish/Town Councils at no charge.
- 2.5 In Part 1 of the 2015/16 training programme Standards Committee training has been offered to Parish/Town Councils at no charge. This follows the practice of previous years. This year the training is being delivered by an external trainer and will be held in the Council Chamber in order that sufficient numbers can be accommodated. The training has been designed specifically for Parish/Town Councils.
- 2.6 In addition to the Standards/Code of Conduct training, the following courses have been offered at no cost to Parish/Town Councils:-

Health and Wellbeing Board – 9 July
Economic Development – 16 July

- 2.7 Attached are figures showing Parish/Town Council attendance at District Council Member training courses prior to the introduction of charges, as well as figures showing Parish/Town Council attendance at training courses after charging was introduced.
- 2.8 Also shown are details of the planning courses offered to Parish/Town Councils by the then Head of Planning and Transportation at a cost of £40 per person. This was completely separate from the Member training programme. There are currently no plans to offer planning courses to Parish/Town Councils in 2015/16, but there may be the opportunity to arrange a course, which will be subject, as usual, to the £40 charge per person.

Parish/Town Council budgets

- 2.9 Parish/Town Clerks were asked to provide the following information around training budgets:-
- (1) the budget they allocate annually for Councillor training
 - (2) the amount spent on Councillor training each year, for the last two years.
- 2.10 Responses have been received from ten Parish/Town Councils: responses have been collated. It can be seen from the responses that each of the ten Councils has a specific budget for training its Members.
- 2.11 Hullbridge Parish Council commented that in the past only two delegates from each Council were permitted on courses and that Council Clerks were not invited. Where this has been the case, it is because of room capacity issues. In order to avoid such restrictions, Standards training courses are now generally held in the Council Chamber.
- 2.12 Rochford Parish Council advise that they base their decision on whether to attend training offered by Rochford District Council on the following factors:- value for money; timing of the course; whether the training is being delivered by an external trainer or officer; whether the course is exclusively for Parish/Town Councils and relevance to the Parish Council. (Staff who attend a course will brief Members on the content.) They comment that Rochford District Council limits the number of delegates from Parish Councils, whereas other organisations do not.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Member training budget for 2015/16 is £6,500.

Parish/Town Council attendance at District Council Member training courses prior to introduction of charging mechanism for Parish/Town Councils in 2012/13

2010/11

Planning 13/5/10	3
Code of Conduct 10/6/10	4
Climate Change 16/6/10	4
Local Government Finance 22/6/10	0
Planning 12/10/10	5
Influencing decision making	8
Leisure team briefings	10
Speed reading 17/2/11	1
Community Safety 9/3/11	5
Affordable Housing 17/3/11	14

2011/12

Planning 12/5/2011	13
Managing Difficult Situations 24/5/2011	9
Local Government Finance 14/7/2011	8
Standards/Code of Conduct 19/7/2011	12
Voluntary Sector in Rochford 13/10/2011	2
National Planning Policy Framework 25/10/2011	26
Domestic Abuse 24/10/2011	4
Safeguarding 22/11/2011	7

Parish/Town Council attendance at District Council Member training courses following introduction of charging mechanism for Parish/Town Councils in 2012/13

2012/13

Code of Conduct/Standards 19/6/12	31 (free)
Code of Conduct/Standards 21/6/12	13 (free) for RTC
Changes to Welfare Reform 27/6/12	0
Freedom of Information 12/7/12	1
Police and Crime Commissioner	1
Disabled Facilities Grants 18/1/12	0
Census 8/11/12	0

2013/14

Standards/Code of Conduct 12/9/13 7.30 pm	14 (free)
Standards/Code of Conduct 20/6/13 10 am	20 (free)
County Highways 11/7/15	7 (at £40 per person)

2014/15

Chairmanship 22/7/14	3 (at £40 per person)
Standards/Code of Conduct 9/7/14 10.30 am	19 (free)
Safeguarding 18/11/14	11 (free)
Anti-social Behaviour 4/12/14	6 (free)

Note: Since the introduction of charging, a Standards/Code of Conduct course has been offered free of charge each year to Parish/Town Councils. These courses are designed specifically for Parish/Town Councils and are free by virtue of the District Council's role in monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct in respect of its Parish/Town Councillors.

Planning training

Below are details of the four planning training courses that were offered by the Head of Planning to Parish/Town Councils at a cost of £40 per attendee following introduction of charging.

Planning training for Parishes 1/9/2014	8 attendees (Rayleigh Town Council, Rochford and Great Wakering Parish Councils) @ £40 = £320
Planning training for Parishes 17/9/2013	11 attendees @ £40 = £440
Planning training for Parishes 1/9/2014	8 attendees (Rayleigh Town Council, Rochford and Great Wakering Parish Councils) @ £40 = £320
Planning training for Parishes 23/9/2014	10 attendees (Rayleigh Town Council, Rochford, Hockley and Barling Parish Councils) @ £40 = £400

PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS TRAINING BUDGETS**Ashingdon Parish Council****Training budget 2015/16 - £1100**

1. Training expenditure for 2014/15 - £950
2. Training expenditure for 2013/14 - £915.

Barling Magna Parish Council**Training budget 2015/16 - £110****Training budget 2014/15 - £105****Canewdon Parish Council****Training budget 2015/16 - £840**

- 1 Training expenditure for 2014/15 - £868
- 2 Training expenditure for 2013/14 - £110

Foulness Island Parish Council**There is no training budget****Great Wakering Parish Council**

Training budget 2015/16 - £450 (this includes Council Clerk training)
 (In view of the number of newly elected Councillors following the recent election, the Clerk anticipates spending in the region of £400 in 2015/16.)

Training expenditure for 2014/15 - £200 approx

Hawkwell Parish Council**Training budget for 2015/16 is £300.**

1. Training expenditure for 2014/15 - £30
2. Training expenditure for 2013/14 - £900 (due to the co-option of several new Members and Chairmanship training).

Hullbridge Parish Council

Training budget 2015/16 - £500 (Member and staff training).

Training expenditure for 2014/15 – £487.

Rawreth Parish Council

Training budget 2015/16 - £350 (this is the same amount for the two proceeding years).

Training expenditure for 2014/15 – nil.

Rayleigh Town Council

Training budget 2015/16 - £1,000 (for training the three members of staff and 23 Councillors) Training budget for 2016/17 expected to be increased due to training of new Councillors following election this year.

1. Training expenditure for 2014/15 - £445 for Councillors only.
2. Training expenditure for 2013/14 - £561

Rochford Parish Council

Training budget 2015/16 - £1,500 (to cover both staff and Councillors)

(Rochford Parish Council is unable to provide figures on expenditure on training in previous years due to staff resources.)