

Standards Committee – 2 October 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **2 October 2014** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr D Merrick
Vice-Chairman: Cllr R R Dray

Cllr J C Burton
Cllr Mrs C M Mason

Cllr Mrs C A Weston

INDEPENDENT PERSONS (INVITEES NON-VOTING)

Mr M G Drage
Mr S Shadbolt

PARISH MEMBERS (CO-OPTED NON-VOTING)

Cllr P Beckers
Cllr Mrs D Constable

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs G A Lucas-Gill, M J Steptoe and Mrs L Walker.

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Bugeja - Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services/Monitoring Officer
M Power - Committee Administrator

203 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

204 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2014/15 – MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services containing the mid-programme review of the 2014/15 Member Learning and Development programme.

During discussion the following was noted:-

- As well as there being a representative from each political group on the Standards Committee, which has responsibility for determining the Member training programme, all Members have involvement in the training programme by way of the annual training assessment questionnaire.

- There is currently no amount set aside in the training budget for Members to attend externally-run training courses.
- To ensure that funding for attendance at external training courses is allocated fairly, agreement of expenditure by the Leaders of each political Group could be sought in respect of each funding request. This could be done informally by telephone or email. External courses would have to be deemed appropriate, necessary and relevant to the Members' role and not be able to be delivered within the Council's general training programme. A motion that a sum of up to £1,500 be identified to enable individual Members to request attendance at external training courses/conferences and that allocation of funding for this training be subject to the agreement of all political Group Leaders, moved by Cllr Mrs C M Mason and seconded by Cllr J C Burton, was carried.
- There are training opportunities available at no cost to the Council organised by bodies such as the Local Government Association, which may be of interest to Members.
- The first of the e-learning courses should be available to Members later this year. There is likely to be a short test after each course to ascertain that the Member has achieved an acceptable level of understanding of the course content.
- E-learning will be offered in tandem with traditional, classroom-style courses and, as such, will be an extension of the existing learning offered to Members.
- In that the purpose of offering places on Rochford Member training courses to neighbouring authorities at a charge would be to raise income, it was suggested that this charge should be higher than the £40 charged to the District's Parish/Town Councils. A motion that the charge for neighbouring authorities attending Rochford Member training courses be set at £50 per attendee, moved by Cllr J C Burton and seconded by Cllr Mrs C M Mason, was lost; a motion that a £45 charge per attendee be set, moved by Cllr R R Dray and seconded by Cllr J C Burton, was carried.
- Those courses that the Council organises specifically for Parish/Town Councils that are considered either essential for Parish/Town Councils to attend or are on a topic where it would benefit the District Council for Parish/Town Councils to attend will be offered at no cost; where this is not the case, a charge of £40 will be made.
- In the first instance, contact could be made with neighbouring authorities to advise them of the potential availability of places on Rochford District Member training courses. Thereafter, they would be advised when specific courses become available.

- In respect of the request for Licensing Committee Members to attend an outdoor music event, this would provide Members with the opportunity of observing such an event, with licensing officers, and give them a different perspective on licensing arrangements. It is unlikely that there would be a cost associated with this as Members would be attending the event in an official capacity as Members of the Licensing Committee. However, if there is a cost involved, an application could be made under the arrangements for Member attendance at external training courses.

Recommended to Council

- (1) That an amount of up to £1,500 be identified each year out of the Member training budget (£7,000 for 2014/15) for individual Members to be able to request attendance at external conferences/training courses, the allocation of such training to be subject to the agreement of all Group Leaders.
- (2) That a charge be set of £45 per attendee for neighbouring authorities for places on certain courses in the Rochford District Council Member Learning and Development programme. (HLEMS)

It was further:-

Resolved

- (1) That the attendance of Licensing Committee Members at an outdoor event licensed by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council with a view to broadening knowledge of such events in terms of licensing issues/requirements be endorsed, provided this is at no cost to Rochford District Council.
- (2) That the 2014/15 Mid-Programme Review and progress with regard to e-learning be noted. (HLEMS)

The meeting closed at 8.41 pm.

Chairman

Date

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