

## **TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report outlines the responses received from the Town and Parish Councils in the District to a recent consultation exercise undertaken by the Authority.
- 1.2 The purpose of the exercise was to clarify the resources and capacity available at the local level and to receive some feedback on the mechanisms currently in place to facilitate partnership working.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 With partnership working around the delivery of services and the provision of facilities being an area of growing interest, a survey has now been carried out of the Town and Parish Councils in the District in an attempt to clarify the resources and capacity, if any, which might be available.
- 2.2 In looking at possible joint initiatives in the past, it is clear that this Council did not always have a complete picture on the planned activity, capacity, resources or views of the Local Councils concerned.
- 2.2 Last year an attempt was made to put together financial information based on the accounts of the Local Councils. Unfortunately this did not prove satisfactory, as a number of assumptions had to be made in relation to these figures.
- 2.3 Consequently a questionnaire was drawn up and sent to the Local Councils in April with a reminder sent in June.

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 Appendix A to this report shows the information on the replies received at the time of writing this report. Further information may be available at the meeting.
- 3.1 Members are aware of how variable the sizes of Parishes are. The amount of precept required shows that there are five who are below a precept of £10,000. When thinking about service delivery and partnerships, therefore capacity is an issue, particularly for these Councils.

- 3.2 It is also worth noting that within those Local Councils whose precept is under £10,000 they contain the Parish with the lowest Parish precept per Band D (Rawreth - £17.25) and also the highest (Sutton - £46.85).
- 3.3 As far as questions 1 to 4 are concerned there appears to be moves to make the information more widely known e.g. through Parish magazines and website developments.
- 3.4 If Members would like to have ongoing information regarding the plans of the Local Councils a new request could be made for the information that they have considered in setting their precept to be sent to the District Council, at the same time when the precept is demanded of us.
- 3.5 As regards Question 6. One of the key reasons for this questionnaire was to identify the activity of the Local Councils to better inform the District regarding partnerships and the avoidance of duplication. Here comments are made on these issues.
- 3.6 Although the concept of avoiding duplication may be simple in that the District Council might wish to be responsible for strategic assets and services for the District and Local Councils responsibility for local assets and services, there are a number of factors that have to be taken into account.
- The resources available within the Local Council to fund and manage the facilities deemed local.
  - Defining what is a strategic asset or service.
  - Preferences of the District or Local Council as to whether they choose to manage an asset or service.
- 3.7 On question 7 the specific item are examples where partnership working could help. These specific issues will be taken up by the appropriate officers to identify what is involved within the request.
- 3.8 With regard to questions 8, consultation is a vital part of the evidence for the way that services are delivered. It is acknowledged that this process can be difficult for the smaller Local Councils. In addition the District Council knows the problems it faces when consultation deadlines do not fit into the established Committee timetable.

#### **4 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The activities and inter-relationships with Local Councils have the potential to affect all services.

**5 RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 It is proposed that Members consider this report.

Dave Deeks

Head of Financial Services

---

**Background Papers:**

Replies from Parish/Town Councils.

For further information please contact Dave Deeks on:-

Tel:- 01702 546366, Ext 3100  
E-Mail:- dave.deeks@rochford.gov.uk