

## REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

### 1 REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Standards Committee on 2 October 2014 to Full Council with recommendations on allocating funding from the Member training budget for Members to attend certain externally run conferences/training courses and charging other authorities for places on Rochford District Council Member training courses. An extract of the key elements of the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services to the Committee is appended.

#### **Member Attendance at Externally Run Conferences/Training Courses**

- 1.2 The Standards Committee observed that:-
- 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 sum of up to £1,500 could be identified to enable individual Members to request attendance at external training courses/conferences and the allocation of funding for this training could be subject to the agreement of all political Group Leaders.
  - 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.

#### **Offering Places to Neighbouring Authorities on Member Training Courses**

- 1.3 The Standards Committee observed that:-
- In that the purpose of offering places on Rochford Member training courses to neighbouring authorities at a charge would be to raise income, this charge should perhaps be higher than the £40 charged to the District's Parish/Town Councils. A £45 charge per attendee would be appropriate.

- 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.

1.4 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

- (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)

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

### **FORTHCOMING OPPORTUNITIES**

- 4.5 Council on 15 April 2014 considered the report of the Standards Committee on the way forward for Member development in light of the recent Charter assessment recommendations. It was resolved that arrangements for Member development are kept as they are currently and that the Standards Committee retains responsibility for Member training. In accordance with the resolution that a representative from each political group is involved at meetings when the training programme is considered, there is now a Member from each political group on the Standards Committee.
- 4.6 It was further resolved by Council that the Standards Committee should explore how the training programme may be tailored more specifically for individual Members' training needs. Members of the Committee are asked to consider how this can be achieved. The proposed developments in e-learning opportunities for Members may be considered in this regard.
- 4.7 One suggestion could be to advise Members that funding may be available for Members to attend certain externally run conferences/training courses; these would have to be considered in terms of budget capacity.

### **CHARGING OTHER AUTHORITIES FOR TRAINING**

- 6.1 As part of the 2014 Member Services Service Review Actions and Savings Plan the option of charging neighbouring Authorities for places on our Member Learning and Development programme was raised. It was felt that there is potential for raising income in the region of approximately £120 per annum based on the Parish charge rate. This would be possible for a few courses (perhaps 2-3 per annum) as most are run by Rochford District Council officers and are Rochford specific. It was requested that this be brought for consideration to the Standards Committee.