

To: Information and Customer Services PFH 20 June 2005
From: Democratic Services Manager

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COST SAVINGS

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION BUDGET

Members' Diaries

Saving only £800-£900 plus officer time

Impact

Members and some officers find the diaries useful to carry around, though not all Members use them.

We have spares of the covers.

Postage

Budget: £4,800

Further savings could be made by further restricting items posted to time limited items. Also possibly posting agenda once a week only.

Seminars and Courses

Budget: £11,500. Possible reduction: £6,000

Impact

Reduction in the number of courses run by outside trainers – this would affect skills training in particular; areas related to services could presumably be provided in-house.

Budget could be cut entirely, but we might not be able to provide essential training (e.g. ethics/code of conduct)

Members' Allowances

Budget: £340,520

Savings only available if allowance rates are cut.

Civic Expenditure Allowance

Budget: £6,090. Could be eliminated

Impact

No Chairman's reception, staff Christmas party or other social occasions, no "donations" to other mayor's or chairman's charities when attending functions, or other minor gifts.

Travelling, subsistence and refreshments

Budget: £34,850 (N.B. actual for 2004/05 £36,852)

Travel allowances could be reduced to the Inland Revenue tax-free figure of 40p per mile instead of the current maximum of 52.7 p – some other Councils pay at this level

An annual allowance could be made – see below

Finalised spread sheet for the year enclosed.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Salaries

To reduce the number of staff by 1 would require a reduction in the number of meetings serviced by at least 40 a year.

This could be achieved by not servicing:

Portfolio Holder meetings (N.B. Mrs Roberts has regular meetings but these are serviced by the Community Development Team); or

Meetings with minimal Member input, eg – Management Team

e-government programme board
LSP Executive
Lt Gransden Airfield
Safety Committee
Home Improvement Agency
CELG (Chief Executives' Liaison Group)
Service First
Crime & Disorder Partnership

Reducing Member training would produce a saving in staff time

An annual allowance for travel expenses could be made to each Member depending on the distance they live from the offices – this would save the monthly task of checking and inputting each claim, but Members who do not currently claim might well wish to take advantage of an annual allowance, and the tasks take no more than 2 hours a month for us. There would, however, also be an impact on Payroll

Spread sheets of meetings serviced in 1999/2000 and 2004/05 attached for information, also comparisons with other authorities in the region, as collated by Colchester Borough Council. N.B. the average per person with 219 meetings is 39.82.

Susan May
16 June 2005