



FUNDS FOR SLCC MEMBERSHIP FOR TOWN CLERK

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

PAPER B

6 AUGUST 2025

The purpose of this Report is to provide Members with information regarding the value of the Town Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). This membership provides essential access to professional advice, guidance, and resources that support the Clerk in ensuring the Council operates lawfully, efficiently, and in the best interests of the community. As the cost of membership is not currently included in the budget provision, this matter is brought before the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

No. DETAIL

1) JUSTIFICATION FOR SLCC MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) provides the Town Clerk with essential tools and support to carry out their statutory duties effectively and in accordance with current legislation and best practice. The following key benefits demonstrate the value of this membership:

a) Access to Expert Advice

SLCC offers direct access to a team of experienced advisors who provide guidance on complex legal, procedural, and governance matters. This ensures the Council remains compliant with evolving legislation and sector standards.

b) Up-to-Date Information and Resources

Members receive regular updates on legislative changes, policy developments, and sector news through bulletins, magazines, and online resources. This helps the Clerk to anticipate and respond to changes proactively.

c) Peer Support and Networking

The SLCC community provides a valuable network of fellow clerks, offering peer support, shared experiences, and collaborative problem-solving. This is particularly beneficial in addressing unique or sensitive local issues.

d) Support for Good Governance and Ethical Standards

SLCC plays a leading role in promoting civility and respect in local government, supporting clerks in managing challenging situations and fostering a positive working environment.

e) Professional Development and Training

Membership includes discounted access to a wide range of training opportunities, including webinars, regional training seminars, and nationally recognised qualifications such as CILCA. These opportunities support the Clerk's continuous professional development and enhance the Council's capacity.

Given the breadth of support provided, SLCC membership is a cost-effective investment in the Council's governance, resilience, and service to the community. It is noted that According to the SLCC's 2023 Membership Survey, 97% of members' councils pay for their clerks' SLCC subscription, as encouraged by the Local Government Act.

2) RISKS OF NOT INVESTING IN MEMBERSHIP

Choosing not to fund SLCC membership for the Town Clerk may expose the Council to several operational and governance risks, including:

a) Reduced Access to Legal and Procedural Guidance: Without SLCC support, the Clerk may face delays or difficulties in obtaining accurate advice on complex or urgent matters, increasing the risk of non-compliance with statutory duties.

b) Missed Legislative Updates: SLCC provides timely updates on changes in legislation and best practice. Without this, the Council may inadvertently fall behind on legal obligations or sector expectations.

- c) Limited Professional Support: The absence of a professional network can lead to isolation in the role, reducing opportunities for shared learning, benchmarking, and peer support - particularly important in challenging or unprecedented situations.
- d) Increased Training Costs: Non-members pay higher fees for training and events. Over time, this could result in higher overall expenditure for the same level of professional development.
- e) Reputational and Governance Risks: A lack of access to sector-specific resources and support may impact the Clerk's ability to advise the Council effectively, potentially leading to poor decision-making, reputational damage, or even legal challenge.

Investing in SLCC membership is therefore a proactive measure to safeguard the Council's compliance, resilience, and reputation.

3) QUOTE TO BECOME A MEMBER

- a) £360 per annum + £20 initial one-off joining fee / £380 Total

4) SUGGESTED APPROACH

- a) While no specific budget allocation has been made for SLCC membership within the 2025/26 budget, a review of existing provisions has identified sufficient funds within the Legal budget line, currently set at £1,000. In light of the anticipated professional benefits of SLCC membership—and the potential risks to the Council in the absence of such support—it is considered both appropriate and justifiable to allocate the associated expenditure from this budget at this time.

It is, however, acknowledged that the current provision for legal support is limited and does not reflect best practice. Accordingly, a review of this budget line is proposed as part of the broader budget planning process for 2026/27, to ensure it is more suitably aligned with the Council's ongoing needs and statutory responsibilities.

- b) This approach ensures the transparency and integrity of the overall budget, which will remain unaffected. Furthermore, by reporting the expenditure in this way, it will assist in clearly identifying and planning for a dedicated budget provision in the 2026/27 financial year.
- c) Importantly, access to SLCC is expected to reduce the need for alternative training, advisory, and professional development resources, thereby offering both financial and operational efficiencies.

5) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to support the investment in annual membership for the Town Clerk.
