

SOUTH ESSEX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. A formal invitation has been received from the South Essex Chamber of Commerce for the Council to take up membership. This report seeks Members' views in respect of the request.

2 FACILITIES OFFERED

- 2.1. At the present time the Economic Development Officer at the Council enjoys a good relationship with the Chamber. It is suggested that, by becoming a Member of the organisation, it would be easier to forge good contacts with the business community in the area.
- 2.2. Southend on Sea Borough Council is a Member of the organisation. Officers of that authority believe they have gained positive benefit by being members, but it would not be possible to place a monetary value on membership.
- 2.3. A list of some of the benefits is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.

3 BREADTH OF MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1. The Council would be a member of the Essex Chambers of Commerce and be allocated to the Service Chamber of South Essex.
- 3.2. Throughout the County, the following local authorities are members:-

Braintree District Council
Chelmsford Borough Council
Colchester Borough Council
Maldon District Council
Southend on Sea Borough Council
Essex County Council

As Members will see, at present less than half of the local authorities within the County are members.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The cost of joining for an authority the size of Rochford is £30 joining fee plus £525 annual membership.

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- 4.2. In addition, there would be some additional officer and/or Member time involved in representing the Council at Chamber meetings.
 - 4.3. There is currently no budget provision should Members be minded to approve the request. Funding will be met by internal virements.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1. Previous requests from the Chambers of Trade within the District for the Council to join have been turned down on the basis that Council believed that Parish and Town Councils were better placed to provide a local view to these bodies.
- 5.2. The Chamber of Commerce is different in that it does have a county-wide perspective.
- 5.3. As mentioned above, the Council does work closely with the Chamber and if, by becoming a member, we could improve on that relationship further, there could be benefits for the community.
- 5.4. Members need to take a view as to whether or not those intangible benefits are worth the cost of the membership fees.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee considers whether or not to join the Essex Chamber of Commerce.

Roger Crofts

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Background Papers:

Letter from the Essex Chambers of Commerce, 15 August 2000.

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