

## **DRAFT LOCAL SERVICE AGREEMENT ON HIGHWAYS**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the progress now made in relation to the Local Service Agreement initiative with Essex County Council in respect of Highways. In the light of the details now coming forward, Members views are sought before progressing the matter further.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 At the July 2002 Council meeting, Members considered a report concerning the potential for establishing a Local Service Agreement (LSA) between Essex County Council and this Authority. This initiative, which was promoted by Lord Hanningfield, the Leader of the Essex County Council, aimed at securing improvements in service delivery/target achievements through negotiation and agreement between the tiers. At that meeting, Members identified a number of possibilities for investigation – the elderly, youth services, highways and back office issues such as recruitment, training and development (min 378/02). An update report was produced for Policy and Finance Committee in October 2002 (min 483/02).
- 2.2 Since that time, Officer discussions have taken place in an attempt to look at the potential for a Local Service Agreement between the District and the County to secure service improvements for local residents in these areas. A meeting has also taken place between the Leader of the Council and the County Cabinet member for Strategic Coordination and Stakeholder Liaison. Nevertheless, progress on the exact details behind such an Agreement have been limited to date, as the County has attempted to move the agenda forward across the whole of Essex. A further update report was provided to Council in June 2003 (min 296/03).

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

#### Draft Agreement for Highways

- 3.1 A draft Local Service Agreement in respect of the Highways and Transportation Service has now been produced by Essex County

Council for consideration and comment. A copy is attached as Annex 1. Members will see that the document is still at the “principles/framework” stage. A set of Working Papers which provide some background analysis to the emerging Local Service Agreement have been placed in the Members library for information.

#### **4 OFFICER COMMENT**

- 4.1 Before entering into discussions with the County Council on the details as set out in the draft Agreement, officers would welcome Members’ views on its content. Clearly, the absence of detail or any indication of the resources available mean that there is still a considerable way to go before any “in principle” decision can be translated into reality. Nonetheless, the draft does highlight a number of areas where Districts might or might not like to take on additional responsibilities/activities and at this stage, Members may wish to indicate whether any of these areas, and if so which ones, they would like to see form the basis of a Local Service Agreement, between the County Council and this Authority. The document also provides some details on protocols around the political decision making process on which Members might like to give a view.

#### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 No additional resource requirements have been identified in the discussions to date. The only resources expended relates to senior officer and member time.
- 5.2 If specific resource issues do emerge in the course of further discussions with the County relating to this Agreement on Highways, then these will be reported back to Members for decision prior to further progression.

#### **6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Whilst not required by statute, it is clear that much of the recent local government legislation encourages partnership working an innovation between the tiers.

**7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee considers the emerging Local Service Agreement for highways and comments accordingly, particularly highlighting those areas, if any, that should be pursued to form the basis of a detailed working agreement between the Authorities, together with a view on the proposed political decision making mechanisms suggested in the document.

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