
ESSEX WIDE APPROACH TO BEST VALUE CONSULTATION

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report seeks Members' approval to engage in a joint consultation exercise with Essex County Council in order to meet statutory requirements of Best Value.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. The Department of Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR) has issued guidance in respect of Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators for 2000/2001.
- 2.2. A number of Indicators are of a statutory nature, in essence the guidance stipulates the questions to be asked, the time of year the survey should be undertaken, that random sampling should be used and the margin of error that is acceptable.
- 2.3. As the guidance is so specific, Members will appreciate that every Council in the country will be carrying out surveys of an identical nature at around the same time of the year.

3 THE WAY FORWARD

- 3.1. In view of the above, there is logic in a number of authorities working in partnership to complete this exercise.
- 3.2. Essex County Council has previously worked in partnership with Braintree District Council in carrying out this type of exercise. This was regarded as quite successful and the County Council has invited other Districts to work in partnership with them in order to carry out the statutory survey.
- 3.3. It is envisaged there will be a core questionnaire which will be applicable to all Districts. In addition, there may be a facility for each District to add questions specific to their own requirements.
- 3.4. Essex County Council would undertake the work of drawing up the contract specification and carrying out the tendering process.
- 3.5. The financial contribution from each District would be dependent upon the size of their sample survey and the amount of additional questions included on the survey.

- 3.6. As the survey needs to be carried out in the autumn, Essex County Council requires firm commitments from participating authorities in order to let a contract within the time available.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. Members have agreed a budget for consultation in the current year of £30,000. It is suggested that a sum of between £15,000 and £20,000 be set aside for the statutory consultation exercise. The objective would be to achieve as many additional local questions as possible for the sum available.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. All local authorities are required to carry out this consultation exercise.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

to participate in the Essex Joint Consultation exercise and that a budget of up to £20,000 be made available. (CD(F&ES))

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

Background Papers:

Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators for 2000/2001 – Vol 1

Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators for 2000/2001 – Vol 1 User Specification Performance Indicators: Guidance on Methods of Data Collection.

For further information please contact Roger Crofts on (01702) 546366