

COST OF PRODUCING CORPORATE DOCUMENTS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides information in respect of the costs incurred in producing the Finance Best Value Report, the Corporate Governance Strategy and the Asset Management Plan.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A number of exercises now have to take place in order to comply with Government requirements and Audit Commission guidance on Best Practice.
- 2.2 As part of the Best Value regime, the Council has undertaken a review of financial services, culminating in a final report to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 July 2003.
- 2.3 For a number of years local authorities have been required to produce an Asset Management Plan for submission to Government Office of the Eastern Region. This plan has been used by Government to influence the level of capital expenditure the authority is allowed to incur. In recent years, Rochford has been allowed to spend more as a result of our plan being adjudged as good.
- 2.4 The plan was revised and presented to this Committee on 22 July 2003.
- 2.5 The Council produced the first Local Code of Corporate Governance last year. The Code has to be reviewed annually. The revised Code was presented to this Committee on 22 July 2003.
- 2.6 At the meeting of this Committee held on 22 July 2003, Members requested the cost of preparing the above three documents (Minute 356/03 refers).

3 COST OF REPORTS

- 3.1 The largest exercise was in respect of the Finance Best Value Review. During the course of the review, user surveys were conducted in respect of benefit administration, council tax collection and payment of creditors.
- 3.2 The review led to fundamental change by merging the two functions of benefits and council tax collection in order to provide a more generic service
- 3.3 Other functions are also being carried out with regard to the future provision of business rate collection and payroll services.

- 3.4 The costings produced have had to rely on estimates of officer time as detailed time allocations were not made at the time. The costs of implementing the proposals are not included.
- 3.5 Taking the above factors into account, the cost of the review may be summarised as follows:-

	£
Staff costs	20,600
Professional survey	700
Production costs	<u>200</u>
TOTAL	<u>21,500</u>

- 3.6 The review of the Local Code of Corporate Governance, whilst of fundamental importance to the authority, was carried out quite quickly by a group of senior officers with a short consultation with the Operational Management Team.
- 3.7 The cost of this exercise was modest and amounted to around £1,200, being the cost of officer time and production of the document.
- 3.8 Similarly, the review of the Asset Management Plan was carried out quite quickly. The costs of this exercise amounted to around £2,600.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The costs of the reports are set out above. As may be seen, the vast majority of those costs emanated from officer time.
- 4.2 The cost of officers' time is already contained within the Council's budget. This was, therefore, an opportunity cost in that time spent on these activities meant less time spent on other areas of work.

5 RECOMMENDATION

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

To note the report.

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Background Papers:

None

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