
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 8 DECEMBER 2010**PORTFOLIO: FINANCE & RESOURCES****REPORT FROM HEAD OF LEGAL, ESTATES & MEMBER SERVICES****SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT EAST REGIONAL ASSET
MANAGEMENT PROJECT (IE RAMP)****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That the Council remain engaged with the general programme as it develops, to both be informed and to take advantage of any initiatives as they emerge.
- 1.2 That the Council register an interest as a partner in the Essex County Council (ECC) Collaborative Facilities Management (FM) procurement exercise so that it is able to take advantage of the framework agreements at a later date should it prove that there is a cost and quality advantage in doing so.

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 IE RAMP is a project set up under the umbrella of Improvement East, Local Partnerships and Price Waterhouse Coopers, which is looking at how public sector assets are managed within Essex. The project has involved most of the District and Borough councils, both the unitary authorities, the County Council, Essex Police, Essex Fire & Rescue and the Primary Care Trusts. The brief was to seek ways that the various agencies could co-operate in order to show real savings in the cost of running publically owned assets. It follows on from a similar project in the Midlands – Transforming Local Government Property Asset Management.
- 2.2 The process has included collecting data on what assets are held by each Authority and the expenditure incurred. Rochford's asset base has been reviewed and rationalised on a number of occasions, with almost no under used assets, and thus, when compared with some of the other participating agencies, the Council doesn't have an extensive under-utilised estate and historically high operating costs. The Virgin Active arrangement for the leisure centres was seen as a very positive approach, as was the operation of the community halls by community associations.
- 2.3 Overall, the work to date has proved useful in benchmarking terms and highlighting both potential problems and opportunities. Whilst those agencies with larger asset bases and higher costs have the most to gain, the work streams now identified merit a watching brief, to ensure that the Council takes advantage of any developments if they are of benefit to the authority.
- 2.4 The ongoing work streams include examining the opportunities to establish trusts to operate community and leisure assets, shared office and reception areas, closer working on S106 arrangements, co-location of facilities such as depots and a sharing of energy management knowledge. The ongoing work

streams will also look at the possibility of pooling all assets and operating them under an Essex wide umbrella and town centre rationalisations.

- 2.5 Essex County Council has taken the lead on developing Collaborative FM, indeed this is a project that they have been running for some time. The County Council is seeking a single supplier to outsource all of its Estates, Property and Asset Management. The 10-20% cost savings being quoted for this exercise are against a 2009/10 baseline, which will include many of the savings already achieved.
- 2.6 Under pressure from the smaller authorities ECC has decided to seek a ten year contract as a whole but also as a series of smaller framework agreements, each with four year lives, which other authorities can join at a later stage once true costs are better understood.
- 2.7 Local authorities such as Rochford District Council, with a limited asset base and low running costs, may gain some advantages from this project as it develops and ideas mature by maintaining a watching brief.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A limited amount of officer time will be required to remain engaged with this project as a watching brief.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

Background Papers:

None.

For further information please contact Alan Thomas (Asset Manager) on:-

Tel:- 01702 318110

Email:- alan.thomas@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.