
EAST OF ENGLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE - ROCHFORD COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP (319/99)

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following the Council's decision not to continue with membership of the East of England Local Government Conference, this report brings to Members attention a plea from the recently appointed Regional Director for Rochford to reconsider its decision and remain in the Conference.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As part of a comprehensive review of the Council's subscription portfolio during the 1999/2000 financial year, Members concluded that there was insufficient justification to continue to subscribe to the developing East Of England Local Government Conference.
- 2.2 The Council's decision has been formally communicated to the Conference, and the recently appointed Regional Director, Brian Stewart, has now written to ask Rochford to reconsider its decision.

3 MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 The key points made by the Regional Director in his letter of 13 June 2000 are:
- Disappointment regarding the Council's decision
 - Rochford would be the only Council of the 54 Councils in the Region not to be a member of the Conference
 - From April 2001 the Conference becomes the Regional Planning Body for the East of England after SERPLAN and SCEALA have been wound up
 - Developing planning guidance for the East of England is crucial to the social and economic development of the Region
 - Without membership, the Council will not have an opportunity to input to the development of policies which may affect the Council's own vision and aspirations for its community
 - The Conference will shortly integrate with the Eastern, Essex and Hertfordshire Regional Employers Organisation, which currently has the same 54 Councils in its membership
 - The regional agenda is becoming more important to national and local government and the strength of the East of England Conference will come from all 54 Councils continuing to participate
 - The AGM of the Conference takes place on 23 June 2000. It should be noted that the terms of the formal Constitution require any

Council wishing to leave the Conference to give one year's notice of their intention to do so

- The Regional Director is making arrangements to visit each council in the Region and would like to visit Rochford at an early opportunity to explain the importance of the Conference

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 It is clear that the roles and responsibilities of the East of England Local Government Conference are continuing to develop and from 1 April 2001, the Conference will take responsibility for preparation of planning guidance for the Region once SERPLA and SCEALA are wound up.
- 4.2 It is considered that it is important for the Council to play a part in developing strategies and initiatives to promote the future economic and social well being of the Region. The strength of any of the Regions in the UK will, to a great extent, depend on all local authorities being represented, and this fact has been highlighted by the Regional Director.
- 4.3 There is no doubt that, given the demise of SERPLAN and SCEALA, there would be a need for Rochford to be represented on the Conference from 1 April 2001. In the meantime, the Conference is undertaking a broad range of work intended to benefit the future development of the Region, and it is suggested that Rochford continues to play a part in the preparation of the regional agenda.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Conference is intended to consider the social, environmental and economic development of the Region. From 1 April 2000, the Conference will take over responsibility for providing planning guidance for the East of England Region.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The membership subscription for the 2000/2001 financial year is £4500.
- 6.2 The membership subscription for the London and South East Regional Planning Conference (SERPLAN) in the 2000/2001 financial year is £1,040.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The current Constitution of the East of England Conference requires the Council to give one years' notice of its intention to cease membership.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**
- (1) Whether Rochford should maintain its membership of the East of England Local Government Conference
 - (2) That the Regional Director be invited to make a presentation to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee. (HCPI)

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Background Papers:

Letter from Tendring District Council 9 May 2000

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