
HOUSING STRATEGY – BEST VALUE REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to advise on progress on producing a new housing strategy and seeking a Member Working Group to oversee the exercise.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. An interim report in respect of the Best Value review was presented to Members at the Community Services Committee held on 10 October 2000.
- 2.2. The report showed that Rochford's current strategy was regarded as below average by the Government Office of the Eastern Region. Officers had obtained a checklist issued by the Department of Environment, Transport and Regions which set out the elements required for an authority to be regarded as best practice.
- 2.3. It is necessary to aspire to being regarded as best practice in order to have a greater chance of attracting spending provision in the District. It would also offer greater scope for considering all available methods of managing housing stock in future.

3 THE WAY FORWARD

- 3.1. A team of officers is conducting a complete strategic review. This will involve consulting local stakeholders and incorporating their views, where possible, in the new strategy which has to be completed and agreed by Members by the end of July 2001.
- 3.2. The stakeholder meetings are currently taking place. The following groups have been identified:-
- Neighbouring authorities
 - Registered Social Landlords and their tenants
 - Council tenants
 - Developers
 - Health and Social Services
 - Estate Agents and Residents' Associations
 - Private Landlords and tenants
 - Rochford District Council Members
- 3.3. Once all of the meetings are completed, a draft strategy will be drawn up for Member approval and then discussed at a meeting to which all stakeholders will be invited. Following this final consultation, any revisions to the strategy will be put forward for Member consideration.

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- 3.4. In order to ensure Member input at all stages, it is suggested that a working group be set up in order to carry out the following:-

- ◆ Input initial Member views into the strategy
- ◆ Oversee the draft strategy for presentation to Council
- ◆ Attend the stakeholder conference
- ◆ Oversee final draft strategy for presentation to Council.

- 3.5. In order to carry out this work, it will be necessary to convene a number of meetings in the daytime.

4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. Good quality social housing does impact upon Crime and Disorder issues. If, by improving our strategy we can create more quality social housing, it will have a major benefit for the whole of the District.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There will be attendance allowances payable, which may be met from within the current budget. Officer resources will be required in attending meetings and preparing the strategy. This will be met from within existing resources. When developing the stakeholder conference it would be desirable to engage the services of a professional facilitator. No costings have as yet been obtained for this service, but it is envisaged that sufficient provision will be available from the Best Value Consultation budget.
- 5.2. If the Council is successful in convincing agencies of the validity of its strategy, there is the possibility of attracting more resources for housing into the District. Whilst this may not necessarily be funding direct to the Council, it would nevertheless have a positive impact on the District.

6. RECOMMENDATION

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

1. To create a working group to carry out the tasks as set out in the report
2. That Members nominate representatives to the group.
(CD(FES))

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