

**Report to: Finance and Performance
Management Cabinet Committee**

Date of Meeting: 25 September 2006



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services

Subject: Value For Money Self Assessment 2006

Officer contact for further information: S. Tautz (Ext 4180)

Committee Secretary: G. Lunnun (Ext 4244)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Council's draft self-assessment in respect of the annual Value For Money exercise be endorsed for immediate submission to the Audit Commission; and**
- (2) That, subject to recommendation (1) above, the draft Value For Money self-assessment be referred to the Cabinet at its next meeting for formal adoption.**

Report:

1. As part of the Audit Commission's annual evaluation of the council's use of resources, the authority is once again required to complete a Value For Money (VFM) self-assessment for submission to the Commission before the end of September 2006.
2. The requirement for producing a self-assessment in support of the VFM key lines of enquiry has been modified for the 2006 assessment, and local authorities such as Epping Forest District Council that scored 2 or above for the VFM theme in 2005, are only required to identify any significant changes in the council's performance against the key lines of enquiry and audit focus, cross referenced to supporting evidence. The council's draft VFM self-assessment for 2006 is therefore being developed on this basis and will follow as an Appendix to this report.
3. In preparation for the VFM assessment, a need was been identified to bring together the various elements of the council's current approach to providing value for money services into a single comprehensive document. This has been achieved through the development of a corporate Value for Money Strategy adopted by the Cabinet at its last meeting.
4. The VFM self-assessment must be submitted to the Audit Commission by 30 September 2006. In view of this timescale, the Cabinet Committee is requested to consider and agree the draft document, which will be referred to the Cabinet for formal adoption at its meeting in October 2006.

Statement in support of recommended action:

5. The requirement to produce a VFM self-assessment has been imposed on all local authorities. In order to achieve the most favourable opinion on the council's use of resources the self-assessment needs to be completed and approved by members as promptly as possible.

Reason for decision:

6. To ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate management arrangements to secure value for money.

Options considered and rejected:

7. None. Any action other than completing and submitting the self-assessment in accordance with the prescribed timetable is likely to lead to criticism in the annual Management Letter and may adversely affect the audit opinion on the council's use of resources. If the council were to decline to participate in the self-assessment process it is likely that the Audit Commission would assess the authority's management arrangements for securing VFM on the basis of previous audit work undertaken and existing perceptions of the authority.

Consultation undertaken:

8. Management Board and Senior Management Team.

Resource implications:

Budget/Personnel/Land: None.

Council Plan/Best Value Performance Plan reference: Section 8 – 'How we Measure Our Achievements'

Relevant statutory powers: None

Background papers: None

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: None

Key Decision reference: (if required) None