

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee**                      **Adult & Community Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of Committee**                      **21 June 2005**

**Report Title**                                **Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards Asset Management Plan**

**Summary**                                      This report provides information about the Asset Management Plan for the Directorate of Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards and background to the property held and future developments.

**For further information please contact:**                      Edwina Cordwell  
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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]**

No.

**Background papers**                              Information in non-electronic format which details each building. This information includes cost of rates, utilities etc, together with customer statistics. This is held by Edwina Cordwell  
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**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**                      Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)                               Not applicable
- Other Elected Members                       Councillor Sid Tooth  
 Councillor Richard Dodd  
 Councillor Mrs Marion Haywood
- Cabinet Member                               Councillor Colin Hayfield
- Chief Executive
- Legal                                               Victoria Gould – comments incorporated
- Finance                                             Paul Walsh, Financial Services Manager, Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards - approved

- Other Chief Officers  Peter Ridley, Director of Property Services – comments incorporated
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  .....

**FINAL DECISION No**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  To Cabinet as part of Corporate Asset Management Plan
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

## Agenda No

### Adult & Community Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 21 June 2005

#### Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards Asset Management Plan

#### Report of the Director, Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards

##### Recommendation

The Directorate of Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards Asset Management Plan is attached for your comment and endorsement.

### 1 Introduction

The Directorate operates out of a large number of buildings. Varying arrangements are in force across the portfolio, e.g.

- county owned
- leased from private landlord
- county owned and sub-let
- covenant restriction
- listed building status

The breakdown of our assets is as follows:

- Main Directorate Headquarters, Barrack Street, Warwick.
- Trading Standards Headquarters, Budbrooke, Warwick including public weighbridge and specialised meteorological service and laboratories.
- 2 Museums - The Market Hall, St John's House, plus the Heritage Education "temporary" building at St Johns and offices/reserve collection stores at the Butts and Montague Road (Oken's House closed in 2004).
- County Record Office, Warwick.
- 32 libraries throughout the County plus one trailer library serving Hartshill with its previous second site at Stockingford now served by the new Early Years Excellence Centre partnership.

- Montague Road, Warwick includes Library Stock Services, Schools Library Service, Library Transport Services, Babies Need Books, and Museums Stores.
- Corporate Records Management Facility based at Wedgnoek House, Warwick.
- Support for library refurbishment via the Capital Programme has been received as well as some specific project support. This has enabled major 'makeovers' of a number of libraries.
- The progressive redevelopment of the Montague Road Stores to facilitate extensive ground floor warehousing activity and release expensive and inefficient first floor accommodation in Barrack Street for pure office use. However, the County is reconsidering its holdings at Montague Road and as yet we await clarity of strategy.
- The extension and complete refurbishment of the County Record Office in Priory Park, Warwick with the assistance of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £1.2m.
- Warwick Library was refurbished in 2002 with many compliments from customers. Facilities include a disabled toilet plus an extensive ICT suite.
- Wolston Library has been extensively modernised to provide ICT and other facilities for this growing community.
- Whitnash Library has been extended to include an IT suite/meetings room, a disabled toilet and a kitchenette designed in such a way as to allow independent access so that the community can hire these facilities out of hours. The main body of the library has been refurbished with new decoration, carpet and counter, induction loop and automatic doors. This was completed in April 2003 and has been funded through a successful bid for Section 106 Planning Gain Funds from the developers of the huge Warwick Gates estate.
- The refurbishment of Lillington Library has been completed through a complex package of Capital Funds, local revenue sources and SRB6 PIE funding from European sources. An office and advice room has been created for use by the local community and a community worker and the library has benefited from re-shelving, carpeting, decoration, new counter and induction loop and was completed in May 2003.
- Stratford Library opened in July 2003 has benefited from a £500,000 investment in improvement and refurbishment. The project has been jointly funded and developed by Warwickshire County Council, Stratford District Council and Stratford Town Trust, Improvements include: a new first floor Information Centre in a part of the building not previously open to public; ground floor ICT access zone with 16

computers available for public use, new lift and stairway to first floor; public toilet with disabled access, major upgrade to data comms infrastructure and complete redecoration.

- Bidford Library opened in September 2002 as part of a County initiative to enhance services to this growing community. The Library shares the site with the local primary school, parish council and the community police. Computer facilities were enhanced by a contribution from Stratford District Council. Warwickshire Library & Information Service (WLIS) identified the need for a library in Bidford to enhance and compliment the range of services available in this growing community some years ago. The new Library provides ICT access, book and video loans and other facilities.
- Small-scale refurbishments have taken place at Bedworth Heath, Dordon and Kingsbury Libraries, time to coincide with structural renewal planned by Property Services. This has achieved considerable improvement to the appearance and service environment.
- The public area at Nuneaton Library has been substantially updated to create a more open and welcoming entrance, a brighter and more flexible interior, and a new section for Travel and Tourism. Mechanical ventilation has also added considerably to customer and staff comfort during hot weather. This scheme attracted support of £40,000 assistance from the Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone in addition to the allocation from the Capital Programme.
- The new Coleshill Library opened in April 2005 and has been warmly received.
- A partnership development in Stockingford with Education is delivering an Early Years Excellence Centre including a new community library. This replaces the current trailer library service at Stockingford and provides a unique opportunity for collaborative working between the Library and Early Years Education Service.
- The Museum Service is one of three partners responsible for the Roman Alcester Heritage Centre, which opened in Globe House, Alcester (Stratford District Council premises) in February 2004.
- Southam Library is being extended and refurbished in April / May 2005 in recognition of its growing customer base.

Further developments include:

- Alcester – A joint project with Stratford College to create a library, information and ICT learning centre is currently underway. The project will be partially funded from the Capital Programme, and Property Services rewiring programme. This is due to open in the summer of 2005.

- Atherstone, which is too small for its current role and future potential. The Directorate has commissioned a feasibility study from Property Services to explore the scope for extending the building. It is also in discussion with North Warwickshire Borough Council about the possibility of combining services in a new facility on the site of the present Atherstone Memorial Hall.
- Camp Hill – where there is an opportunity to provide a new service point in the heart of the community, as part of the regeneration programme.
- Hartshill – where the need to replace the obsolete trailer service is becoming ever more pressing.
- Rugby Library – where, in conjunction with Rugby Museum and Gallery, an application for lottery funding to provide a walk through from the Library to the Museum has been made.

## **2 Corporate Planning Context**

Service Asset Management Plans (AMPs) are to be developed having regard to County priorities set out in Our County and the key themes arising from the five district community plans.

The County Council's Property Strategy requires that Service Departments hold property for service delivery, purposes only and revenue costs should be minimised. The Directorate seeks through partnership and external funding to maximise potential in service delivery through improved facilities, extension or community buildings driving future strategy in service and property issues.

## **3 Process**

Service departments are responsible for the preparation of individual AMPs using data supplied by Property services. The Council's corporate AMP will reflect our strategic objectives and service requirements.

Each Chief Officer is required to account to their Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Cabinet has endorsed the Corporate AMP and the corporate AMP process.

Property Services Department continues to carry out and update Condition Surveys on all properties. This year Property Services has also coordinated the completion of suitability surveys at a number of properties including all of the Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards portfolio.

The Property Performance Indicators have been considered by all Service Departments, and have been developed by Property Services in accordance with Government guidelines.

## 4 Overview of Property Aims, Objectives and Strategies

The Directorate has recognised the need to develop its property portfolio in a more strategic fashion including it as a specific responsibility of the Head of Resources and Performance as well as a key responsibility for service heads.

Issues for consideration include:

- Improvement in presentation using modern design concepts to attract public interest.
- Keeping all our building stock under review in the light of changing user needs and opportunities for improvement and relocation. Specifically the libraries and museum reviews.
- Implications of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) for both physical access and service provision. In accordance with the requirement of DDA legislation Property Services, on behalf of Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards, have carried out a full buildings audit. The audits have been based on the recommendations of BS 8300 'Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people' and BS 5588:8 'Codes of practice for means of escape for disabled people'. Based on the audits carried out a cost has been indicated for essential and desirable work to be carried out to comply with DDA legislation.
- The aspiration to co-locate key staff, e.g., Directorate Management Team (DMT) together.
- The ability to meet our property maintenance commitments.
- The real benefits of planning gain.
- The revenue implications of new builds/extension both for staffing levels and utility/management charges.
- Social inclusion/equality issues.
- Staff and building security.
- Consolidation of current arrangements for day-to-day maintenance including roles, responsibilities of building managers and more robust methods for prioritising small but vital maintenance work.
- The continuing importance of challenge funding and the issues of sustainability that follow
- The continuing principle of partnership with both the public and private sector to enhance facilities.

- Meeting the property criteria set out in national library standards established by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
- The need for our buildings to respond to changing customer expectations and needs with regard to quality and nature of service.
- Reviewing legislation and health and safety implications regarding asbestos, both in refurbishments and day to day maintenance
- Asbestos is becoming an increasing issue and impinging on all developments both large and small.

## 5 Key Areas for Change

### a) **Museum Service**

A Best Value Review of the Museum Service, including accessibility, was undertaken in 2002/03 and has led to a new strategy of service delivery in part based upon the objective of consolidating museum sites into a more integrated, efficient and customer orientated site or sites. As a first step the Doll Museum at Oken's House closed at the end of August 2004 and transferred the collection in part to St John's House Museum for display and to the main County Museum store.

At the same time a major project is in hand to assess the potential of the Market Hall and St John's sites, (both buildings and grounds) for future development of the service. Initial feasibility has been completed and approved by Members. This provides the basis for identifying the best option for the long-term renewal of both the Museum's public and "backstage" functions and an accommodation and funding strategy to achieve our vision of a contemporary museum, operating from first class facilities, that is able to both educate and entertain whilst telling the story of the County's human and natural history. Capital bids to support the on-going scheme development are being pursued in 2005/06.

### b) **Library & Information Service**

A strategic best value review of the Library & Information Service 'Building for the Future' is currently underway. The Review will develop a member-approved ten-year vision for the Service. The vision will define the specification, nature of provision and potential partnerships required to shape the future development of the service within Warwickshire. This will form the basis for an action plan that will include milestones at the three and five year intervals along the way to the ten-year vision.

A detailed review of the current network of libraries will form a fundamental aspect of the action plan. It is becoming clear that libraries for the future need to be flexible to accommodate differing activities (noisy and quiet areas; facilities for partner agencies; friends and community meeting places, etc).



The number of fixed point libraries needs to be reassessed, the suitability and location within communities; potential for co-locating services even possible creation of new micro libraries will be included. A report with recommendations is due to be presented to Members in the summer of 2005.

With the development of the Early Years Excellence Centre at Stockingford, options for the remaining library site at Hartshill are being explored.

Land has been identified for development in Keresley in partnership with Nuneaton Borough Council and Coventry City Council, which includes the site of the present library there. A development brief has been prepared and if the proposal goes ahead it could lead to the provision of a new library

The underlying problems of Nuneaton Library are so complex as to have been far beyond the scope of the recent refurbishment. One possible resolution of these difficulties could be a new library or substantial rebuild as part of the regeneration of the area including the present Police Station and Magistrates Court. This wider scheme is one of a number currently being jointly explored by the County and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council.

**c) Corporate Property Strategy / One Stop Shop**

The Corporate Property Strategy has identified libraries as key community venues accessible to the public and which could form the locations for selected One Stop Shops offering both WCC and district / borough council services. A pilot is taking place at Kenilworth Library in the summer / autumn of 2005, to be followed by Lillington and Whitnash. Warwick District Council is leading on the project management in conjunction with the Library Service and Property Services.

If successful, other partnerships with the remaining districts will be pursued.

**d) Customer Service Centre**

The pilot Customer Service Centre was successful and the business case for its continuation was agreed by Cabinet. Further services are being phased in to the Centre and the Authority has jointly procured a Customer Relationship Management System with the five District/Borough Councils.

The Customer Service Centre is expanding both the nature of its services and potentially its customer base. Additional accommodation is being taken in Kings House, Bedworth to provide a second site and to underpin the expansion approved by Members in 2004/05.

e) **General**

The Directorate is mindful of the target to reduce office space. However, the majority of departmental accommodation is public service for which demand is increasing. It is unlikely that any further reduction can be achieved unless a Warwickshire County Council homeworking or teleworking policy is adopted. The development of the e-government agenda will allow for the technical solutions to be explored which will allow the directorate to proactively pursue the practicality of teleworking over the next 1 –3 years.

## **6 Preferred Options for Key Areas**

### **DDA**

The Directorate has been successful in receiving £180,000 in 2003/04 and £221,000 in 2004/05 to improve the physical access to our buildings. An extensive programme is underway to complete during 2005/06 those building works that have been classed as essential in audit reports produced during 2003/04. Some corporate slippage has occurred but new external consultants have been engaged by Property Services and both the 2004/05 and 2005/06 programme are scheduled to complete this year. The amount of access improvement required varies from site to site but will include a number of ramps, automatic doors, improvements to parking spaces, emergency egress from buildings, flooring, counters and reception areas, improvements to the approach to buildings, dropped kerbs, handrails internal and external, as well as lighting and signage. Although many of the projects planned have no barriers to completion there are concerns over a number of listed buildings, such as the Market Hall Museum and the St John's House Museum where building consents will be required.

### **Best Value Reviews**

The Library and Museum services' Best Value Reviews will generate significant strategic change in building methods of delivery and services in general. The main focus of our activities will be in pursuit of these areas.

## **7 Implementation Programme**

All projects have clearly defined project plans and steering/officer groups identified. The Best Value Reviews are reported formally to both Overview & Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet.

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19 May 2005