

Leader Decision

26 March 2020

Property Management Strategy

Recommendation

That the Leader agrees the Council's Property Strategy 2020-2025 attached as an appendix to this report.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 The Council Plan sets out the Council's ambition to ensure that Warwickshire is the best it can be, sustainable now and for future generations. The Council faces pressures from increasing demand for services and further constraints on, and uncertainty about, our long-term resources. This requires the Council to work in new and different ways to achieve its ambitions for Warwickshire.
- 1.2 Our Property Strategy forms a core part of the wider strategic framework and supports the ambitions set out in the Council Plan. The Property Strategy is a key contributor to our medium-term financial strategy (MTFS), the emerging plans which underpin our Commercial Strategy, our desire to work collaboratively and in partnership with other organisations and our commitments on climate change.
- 1.3 The revised Strategy which is attached to this report as an appendix works alongside and complements several other Council strategies to provide clarity on why we own and how we manage our assets both now and in the future.

2.0 Options and Proposal

- 2.1 We have committed to refreshing our current Asset Management Framework (the previous strategy document) which covers the period to March 2020. Development of the new Property Strategy has followed the new Council approach and style used for developing other Council strategies such as the Commercial Strategy and the Capital Strategy.
- 2.2 The Property Strategy will support delivery of the ambition set out in the Council Plan and with this in mind, it is focused on 4 specific themes, namely;
 - **Our Communities/Customers** – ensuring assets are fit for purpose and accessible for customers, with strategic investment in land to support our objectives (eg Pears). This theme includes identifying opportunities for the Fire and Rescue service to collaborate with other blue light services and other public sector bodies to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and public safety, through the most efficient use of assets such as fire stations, fire control and training facilities. It also includes exploring the potential to invest in new property assets to deliver

the best service delivery to customers and residents.

- **Business and Economic Growth** - attracting economic investment and identifying land supply for employment to support our Commercial Strategy. This theme also includes the work being undertaken to develop proposals for a property company and will also include the review of our smallholdings in support of our Economic Growth Strategy.
- **Partners** – commitment to working with partners to maximise use of the Public Estate. This theme includes the work we are undertaking on the One Public Estate programme, and collaborative work beyond this, including Transforming Nuneaton and the contribution the County Council can make to the Rugby town centre project and other place shaping projects.
- **Staff** – providing a fit for purpose environment for our staff aligned to a property rationalisation programme and a flexible and agile workforce are key elements of the Council's change programme. This theme includes the review and rationalisation of our portfolio, initially within Warwick and Leamington, linked to the roll out of M365, implementation of new technology and adoption of new and more flexible ways of working, and accelerating carbon reduction.

2.3 These four themes are underpinned by a 'Property Offer'. The Property Offer sets out the expectations which are constant and run across each of the four themes. The offer sets out the principles we will apply in making all of property related decisions. The principles are:

- Taking a holistic and joined up approach
- Being ambitious, forward looking and sustainable
- Delivering high quality buildings
- Making best use of our resources
- Supporting our climate change ambitions
- Balancing risk and opportunity

2.4 The Strategy sets out some high-level actions that are planned to be taken within over the next year and in that context sets the direction of travel for how we deal with our property assets. However the Strategy covers a period of 5 years (2020-2025) and a more detailed delivery plan with milestones and a resourcing plan will be worked up in the coming months.

3.0 Financial Implications

3.1 Individual property related projects/investments which require financial investment will be subject to robust business cases and member approvals as necessary.

3.2 All projects delivered in support of the Property Strategy will be properly commissioned and will support the Council in making informed choices on estate matters (such as acquisitions and disposals). The Strategy will develop a wider investment programme to manage and maintain our assets and to maximise returns through strategic disposals, income generation and wider collaboration.

3.3 In taking the Strategy forward, the requirements of the MTF5 (disposal of assets for

capital receipt) will be respected and factored into any projects or proposals.

4.0 Environmental Implications

4.1 The Council Plan has made clear commitments about climate change and we have a clear vision around ensuring our assets are sustainable and environmentally robust. We act as guardians for our land and buildings and our Property Strategy seeks to prolong the life of our assets and will look at investment opportunities to reduce our Carbon Footprint across new and existing sites in line with the Climate Change action plan which is being developed.

5.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 Once approved, the new Strategy will be adopted and a communications plan developed. A more detailed delivery plan will also be worked up and future decisions on specific projects will be brought back for member approval as considered necessary.

6.0 Background papers

None

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This report was circulated to the following members prior to publication.

None – there are no local members associated with this report