

Helping to shape our District through transforming our assets



Asset Management Strategy

2018/19 to 2022/23

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1 Introduction:

West Berkshire is a vibrant and economically strong district. Lying on a major crossroads on the junction of the M4 and A34, coupled with rail access creates good transport connectivity. Such locational advantages have been a key factor in shaping its strong local economy, with employment growth and comparatively low unemployment.

West Berkshire Council has a significant property portfolio which either contributes directly with the delivery of its services (such as libraries, schools, and care homes) or indirectly (such as corporate offices, depots, and investment properties).

It is vital that the Council assets are utilised to their optimum capability, both in delivering quality services and in economic terms. This is especially so given that properties are high value and high cost resources.

This Asset Management Strategy seeks to offer a coordinated approach to property and land asset management, to ensure West Berkshire Council continues to properly manage the property portfolio, enabling it to direct capital funding to the right places, whilst embracing new asset strategies and opportunities available to us.

To enable the property assets to work most effectively, West Berkshire Council is pursuing a number of new strategies, working with other public sector organisations. Through the 'One Public Estate' forum we are working with partners including other Berkshire unitary authorities, the Fire Brigade, Police and NHS Estates to develop common asset benefits. We are also progressing the potential shared opportunities to develop affordable housing by working jointly with Sovereign Housing Association. The purchase of commercial property and its ongoing management will enable us to bring sustained revenue income and we expect to have invested £50m in property by 2019.

This Asset Management Strategy and actions conducted through it will contribute to the Council's resilience, its working relationship with other partners, and its service delivery.

The strategy will be reviewed annually as part of the Council's capital programme refresh, and to ensure the strategic management of our assets is current, up to date and meets the needs of a changing environment.



Nick Carter
Chief Executive

Part A:

Context and objectives



Spurcroft Primary School – new block



The Willows Primary School – new block

2 Context

The Asset Management Strategy for 2018/19 builds on and develops the existing strategy, offering annual refresh, builds on successes and embraces new initiatives which have emerged over the last twelve months.

This strategy offers a format which expresses the wider context within which the Asset Management Strategy sits and how the strategy contributes to the Council's wider vision, aims and priorities.

This Asset Management Strategy supports delivery of the Council's overarching corporate aims and objectives and forms part of the Capital Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23.

2.1 Asset Management Strategy

This Asset Management Strategy seeks to convey both the context of the West Berkshire Council estate and the drivers and deliverables to ensure that Council assets are utilised to their optimum capability, both in delivering quality services and in economic terms.

The drivers, enablers and deliverables for the Strategy are discussed in more detail in sections 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 but may be summarised as:

Drivers: Financial efficiency and opportunity to generate income as well as operational efficiency.

Enablers: To ensure an efficient estate, continuing to commit to maintaining the condition of assets through the capital programme, developing new income streams through the estate and new opportunities through the 'One Public Estate', the devolution of assets to parish and town councils and potential for joint working with partners.

Deliverables: Actions to ensure the objectives of the strategy are achieved are to include, the review of the estate both operationally and financially and to act on any opportunities which arise from it, to conduct condition surveys to drive the 'needs' based commitment to capital maintenance of our buildings, to consider the transfer of assets through the 'devolution' process and to fully invest £50m of commercial property in accordance with the Property Investment Strategy.

2.2 Council Strategies

The West Berkshire Council Strategy 'Shaping our District' 2015 – 2019 was published in 2015 and refreshed in March 2016 and 2018.

It is the primary document in conveying the Council's vision of 'Working together to make West Berkshire an even greater place in which to live, work and learn' and the strategic aims and priorities to achieve this vision.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a rolling three year strategy which is built to ensure that the financial resources, both revenue and capital, are available to deliver the Council Strategy.

The Capital Strategy outlines the five year Capital Strategy for 2018 to 2023, including the minimum revenue provision (MRP) statement and to set out the funding framework for Council's five year capital programme for 2018/19 to 2022/23.

The Asset Management Strategy supports these strategies to delivery high quality public services.

2.3 Council Strategy

The Asset Management Strategy supports delivery of West Berkshire Council's overarching aims and objectives contained within the Council Strategy 'Shaping our District' 2015 – 2019 published in 2015 and refreshed March 2016.

2.3.1 The vision.

The Council's vision is 'Working together to make West Berkshire an even greater place in which to live, work and learn'.

2.3.2 Our aims.

Four aims have been set to support this vision. These are:

- A. Better educated communities;
- B. A stronger local economy;
- C. Protect and support those who need it;
- D. Maintain a high quality of life within our communities.

2.3.3 Priorities for improvement

Six key priorities for improvement have been identified to achieve these aims. These are:

Better educated communities

1. Improve educational attainment.
Raise the attainment of all our children at every key stage –
2. Close the educational attainment gap.

A stronger local economy

3. Enable the completion of more affordable housing
4. Deliver or enable key infrastructure improvements in relation to roads, rail, flood prevention, regeneration and the digital economy.

Protect and support those who need it

5. Good at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
6. Support communities to do more for themselves.

2.4 Public finances

The reduction in Revenue Support Grant received by the Council in recent years coupled with growing costs has created the need for local authorities to achieve significant savings through efficiencies, reshaping services and creating new income streams.

This strengthens the need for both the operational, corporate and investment assets of the Council to be continually reviewed for their most efficient and effective use without impacting on service delivery.

2.5 The Capital Strategy

The Capital Strategy sets out the financial and policy context within which the Council can plan for long term investment in its assets and in the future of West Berkshire. It defines the amount of planned investment over the next five years and shows how this is to be funded.

The aim of the Capital Strategy is to:

- Enable the Council's assets and systems to be maintained and improved, to enable the effective and efficient delivery of the Council's key priorities as set out in the Council Strategy 2015 to 2019;
- To ensure that capital investment is affordable within the terms of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS);
- To target capital funding at Council priorities, within available resources, in particular to maintain and improve the highways network and schools and to improve the efficiency of Council services through investment in ICT.

2.6 Drivers for Change/objectives

In supporting both the Council Strategy and Capital Strategy the performance of assets is important to enable:

1. Financial efficiency, budget reduction, generating income, and capital release;
2. Efficient and effective service use of operational buildings;
3. Better coordinated and shared public service delivery points;
4. Improved procurement;
5. Greater community involvement in local services;
6. Energy sustainability standards;
7. Improved staff productivity, retention and recruitment.

2.7 Enablers

To achieve the objectives and outcomes necessary, the Asset Management Strategy will have a number of enabling activities:

- 2.7.1 **Transforming the estate to create efficiencies.** Intended to ensure services are making most efficient and cost effective use of both operational and corporate assets to deliver services. This will enable potential rationalisation, cost reduction and asset release.
- 2.7.2 **Creating asset based long term income streams.** To continue to develop the acquisition and management of commercial investment property, through the Property Investment Strategy. This will generate sustainable long term income.
- 2.7.3 **Maintaining the quality of our public and corporate buildings.** Through the prioritised allocation of both revenue and capital maintenance budgets across the estate to address condition based repairs. This will ensure assets continue to be fit for purpose and provide a high quality environment for occupants and visitors.
- 2.7.4 **Supporting communities to do more for themselves.** Working with Town and Parish Councils to establish assets which would benefit from 'devolution'.

- 2.7.5 **Public sector partnering.** Through working with other public sector organisations (other Berkshire LA's, NHS, fire brigade and police) within the 'One Public Estate' environment to seek shared financial benefits through best use of assets.
- 2.7.6 **Joint working to deliver affordable housing.** Working jointly with Sovereign Housing Association, possibly through a Joint Venture to bring forward affordable housing.

2.8 Action Plan/deliverables

Appendix **B** offers an action plan for the deliverables proposed to ensure West Berkshire Council achieves the outcomes necessary to achieve its aims and objectives. These are summarised as:

1. Refresh the five year Asset Management Strategy annually;
2. The Asset Management Strategy is to inform the Capital Programme to assist with the annual refresh of the programme;
3. To record and maintain assets data on the Property Database;
4. To assist the operational Services to refresh the Service Plans and Asset Management Plans which come from them;
5. To establish, set against the service requirements, the efficiency of both the corporate buildings and operational buildings, giving regard to space utilisation and cost when benchmarked against alternative accommodation;
6. Propose a plan for any recommended rationalisation of the estate, following review;
7. To carry out a rolling programme of condition surveys of all assets and offer an annual refresh of prioritised 'condition' based works within the capital programme
8. To agree and progress actions coming from the One Public Estate partnership;
9. To work to promote and develop opportunities for the transfer of assets to the community, including through the 'devolution' programme. Appendix F offers detail on the asset transfer process.
10. To conclude the exploration of the formal joint venture between West Berkshire Council and Sovereign Housing Association;
11. To continue with the acquisition of commercial properties in accordance with the Property Investment Strategy, to invest £50m of capital funding and to carry out the long term management of the property portfolio.

Additionally the following section 'Approach to Asset Management' offers detailed information on the elements summarised in this section.

2.9 'Plan on a Page'

The manner in which West Berkshire Council carries out its approach to Asset Management is summarised in the following 'Plan on a Page' offering a single visual representation of the strategy.

West Berkshire Council - Asset Management Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23

'Plan on a Page'

Key Principles:

1. The **operational estate** is an **enabler**, not driver of the service delivery;
2. The **commercial** estate will achieve revenue income streams to **benefit council** services;
3. We will ensure the estate is **fit for purpose** and maintained in **good condition**;
4. We will make **efficient** and **effective** use of the estate;
5. We will maximise **value for money** from the estate;
6. We will explore the potential for **flexible and shared** use of the estate for the public benefit.

Overview and context:

- WBC owns and operates from 345 built or land assets;
- Assets include schools, leisure centres, residential and car parks;
- A significant number of assets are owned freehold, but leasehold ownership is in place for some assets;
- Affordable housing stock in West Berkshire is primarily held by Housing Associations but WBC retains ownership of emergency accommodation, DIY shared ownership (DIYSO) and caretaker properties.

Drivers:

- A. Improved public services;
- B. Financial efficiency, income generation, budget reduction and capital receipts;
- C. Greater community involvement in local services;
- D. Improved staff productivity, retention and recruitment.

Enablers:

- a) Berkshire 'One Public Estate' initiative;
- b) The potential for 'Devolution' of assets to Town and Parish Councils;
- c) To explore joint working with Housing Associations for the delivery of affordable housing;
- d) The capital investment in our estate.

Action Plan/ Deliverables:

- 1) Review the Asset Management Strategy annually;
- 2) Asset Management Strategy is to inform and contribute to the Council Strategy;
- 3) To record and maintain property data on the Asset Management database;
- 4) To review the corporate estate to ensure efficient and economic utilisation;
- 5) To review the Operational Service Plans and assess efficient utilisation of the estate;
- 6) To assess the operating cost of operational and corporate buildings against benchmarks;
- 7) To invest capital funds to ensure the condition of the estate is maintained in suitable condition;
- 8) To continue to progress opportunities through the One Public Estate forum;
- 9) To explore opportunities for Joint Venture working with Sovereign Housing Association;
- 10) To carry out acquisitions and management of commercial property in accordance with the WBC Property Investment Strategy.

Part B:

Approach to asset management





3 Approach to Asset Management

3.1 The estate.

West Berkshire Council owns a substantial and diverse property and land estate, both held in urban and rural locations. Properties are held primarily for the delivery of frontline public services or generally to support the key objectives of the Council whether directly or indirectly.

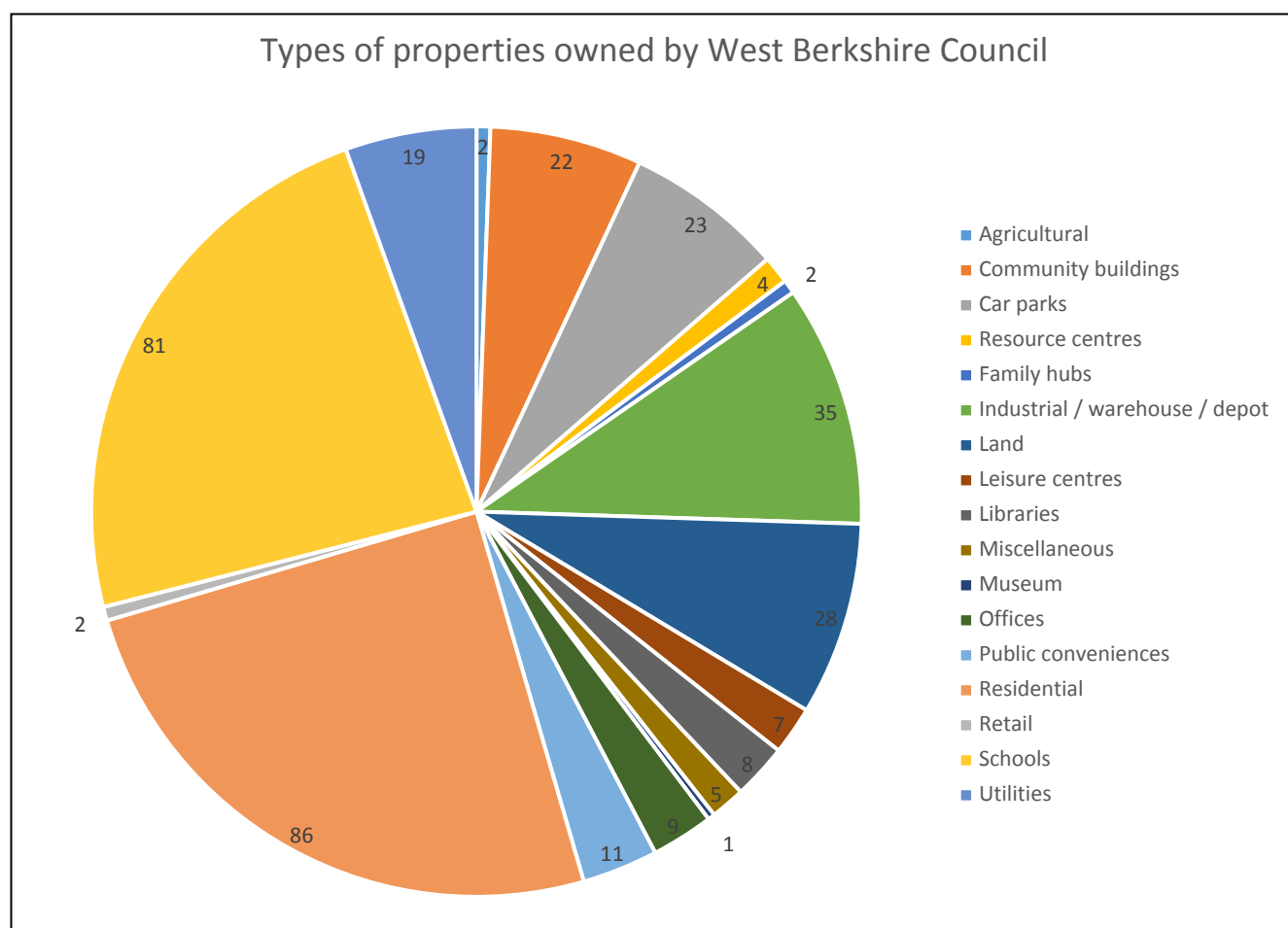
The diverse portfolio includes not just schools, family hubs, libraries, care homes, museums, leisure centres, waste recycling centres but also commercial property let to other organisations bringing revenue income which directly contributes to the Council's service delivery, and farms let to tenant farmers.

The Council also owns and occupies corporate office buildings and depots housing Council staff delivering services.

The affordable housing stock in West Berkshire is primarily held by Housing Associations, mainly Sovereign Housing but West Berkshire Council retains in its ownership residential emergency accommodation and do it yourself shared ownership (DIYSO) properties as well as caretakers properties for its schools.

The following data represents the property and land assets of West Berkshire Council for differing categories, although through new acquisitions, disposals and community asset transfers this data is subject to change:

Asset type	Number of assets	Percentage of all assets
Agriculture	2	0.6%
Community Buildings	22	6.4%
Car parks	23	6.6%
Resource Centres	4	1.2%
Family hubs	2	0.6%
Industrial/Warehouse/Depot	35	10.1%
Land	28	8.1%
Leisure Centres	7	2.0%
Libraries	8	2.3%
Miscellaneous	5	1.4%
Museum	1	0.3%
Offices	9	2.6%
Public conveniences	11	3.2%
Residential	86	24.9%
Retail	2	0.6%
Schools	81*	23.5%
Utilities	19	5.6%
Total	345	100%



*Schools data: The above data for schools shows maintained schools, including both Voluntary Aided (VA) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) and primary and secondary academies in West Berkshire (a total of ten academies).

With the recent progression toward the transfer of assets to the community, normally through devolution to Town or Parish Councils, some assets whilst transferred on a long lease basis (say 99 years), the freehold is often retained by West Berkshire Council and recorded on its database.

As well as being a valuable operational resource the built and land assets represent a significant cost to the Council, both revenue and capital in nature. This requires active management and the need to ensure the estate is used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Whilst retaining assets for operational purposes to deliver services is key, on occasion where an asset is unsuited to current use requirement the asset may be disposed of or leased to generate either a capital receipt or revenue income for the benefit of public services.

3.2 Decision making.

3.2.1 Roles and responsibilities

To successfully deliver the strategy, through its asset plans, this will require clear roles and responsibilities within the organisation and support from across West Berkshire Council.

- Senior Management

The Chief Executive Officer and Corporate Directors are to lead on the overall organisational culture for asset management and drive the links between the asset management strategy and the organisational objectives.

The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment is to be responsible for leading asset management decision making at 'board' level, principally Asset Management Group and Capital Strategy Group.

- Heads of Service

Heads of Service are to be the link between the operational business of the Services and form linkages between the Service Asset Management Plans and the Strategy

- Asset Management Lead

The Service Manager for the Property Team is to act as the lead officer for asset management and property matters, both in terms of the planned activities and links with the Services.

- Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets

The Executive Portfolio Member for Culture & Environment (including Property and Assets) is to act as the key contact for and link between the asset management process and elected Members

This will include close involvement in asset management decisions through governance forums.

The Property Services Manager is responsible for keeping the Portfolio Holder informed of key aspects of the asset management functions and key decisions required.

3.2.2 Asset Management Group (AMG)

The Asset Management Group (AMG) is the key forum on matters related to the management of the Council's assets. AMG considers and offers recommendation to the Council in its formal decision making.

The group is formed from both Officers from across the organisation and elected Members.

Membership and Terms of Reference for the Asset Management Group is shown in appendix C.

The terms of reference for the Asset Management Group includes:

- To oversee the development and performance of the Asset Management Strategy and the Services Asset Plans;
- To report to Capital Strategy Group on matters relating to property acquisitions, disposals and changing uses;
- To monitor the status of the estate, both operational and commercial;
- To review the priorities of the estate to ensure efficient use of assets;

3.2.3 Capital Strategy Group

The Asset Management Group is a subordinate group to the Capital Strategy Group (CSG). CSG ensures the Council's capital strategy is being well managed and that the key objectives of the capital strategy are being met, these being:

- Enable the Council's assets and systems to be maintained and improved, to enable the effective and efficient delivery of the Council's key priorities as set out in the Council Strategy 2015 to 2019;
- To ensure that capital investment is affordable within the terms of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS);
- To target funding at Council priorities, within available resources, in particular to maintain and improve the highways network and schools and to improve the efficiency of Council services through investment in ICT.

The direction of the organisation through its Asset Management Strategy and associated Service Plans and decisions of the Asset Management Group has a direct influence on the direction of the capital programme.

3.2.4 Other asset management forums

A number of other forums exist for the management of specific asset related activities. These are:

- Town Centre Programme Group
- Corporate Programme Board
- Devolution – Officer liaison group
- Accommodation Group
- Joint Venture – Member Reference Group and Officer meetings
- Working groups for specific projects
- One Public Estate

Each of these groups has the potential to make proposals which relate to or impact the asset management of the Council and proposals made by these groups are to be referred to the Asset Management Group for discussion and where necessary decision.

The route for decisions related to property assets is shown in appendix D.

3.2.5 Decision making and the Council Constitution

All decisions made by the Asset Management Group are required to be within the decision making cycle of the Council's Constitution.

This is particularly relevant when considering either acquisition or disposal of an asset (whether freehold or leasehold).

'Part 3 - Scheme of Delegation' is particularly relevant which gives authority to Heads of Service to make decisions (within thresholds) on matters relating to borrowing of capital, housing and the purchase and sale of land and property.

For decisions which fall outside of the delegated authority thresholds any decision made by the Asset Management Group related to the acquisition or disposal of an asset will require final approval by the Council's Executive.

3.3 The Property Services Team

West Berkshire Council's Property Services Team is an internally resourced team of property professionals. The team is responsible for a range of property based services. These are:

- Strategic Asset Management (including asset data management);
- Property based Technical Compliance (eg – asbestos, legionella and fire);
- Maintenance surveying support for corporate buildings (and schools through a traded service agreement);
- Facilities Management (of the main corporate office buildings);
- Project Management of capital construction projects and capital maintenance projects.

Each of the different elements of the Property Services Team's role contribute to the overall asset management strategy.

The Property Services Team works closely with other internal teams in delivering its services, including Health & Safety, Planning, Building Control and Legal Services.

The Property Services Team is responsible for the Asset Management Strategy as well as delivering the projects which are formed from it.

A copy of the Property Services team structure chart is attached in appendix E.

3.4 Data management

The management of data forms an important part of the overall management of the estate and its assets. The volume of data can be considerable.

3.4.1 The Property Services Team is responsible for the data collection and recording for the Council and this system is used to:

Enable accuracy in property asset reviews and appraisals;

- Support the continuous management and maintenance of the property assets;
- To satisfy statutory and other external reporting
- To maintain an accurate and complete asset register

3.4.2 The property database records the following key information:

- Unique Property reference Number
- Site address
- Site ownership status
- Size of the site
- Building scale
- Lease renewal information

- 3.4.3 Collaboration with Services is also key to maintaining accurate data and close communication is required between those managing the operational estate and the Property Services Team managing the data.

3.5 Asset priorities

- 3.5.1 In achieving the outcomes expected of the Asset Management Strategy and the corporate objectives it helps deliver, there are a number of Council priorities that drive the best use of a given asset.

It can be the case that when deciding the best approach for a given site, that these priorities compete for the asset, and it is key that the Asset Management Group considers all of the available options on a site by site basis, but giving regard to the organisations overall objectives.

- 3.5.2 The following categories exist for the estate assets:

- Operational (belonging to a Service);
- Corporate (for the benefit of the Council as a whole);
- Public facing;
- Investment/commercial;
- Regeneration/development;
- Redundant.

- 3.5.3 When deciding on the best approach for any asset, the following priorities exist:

- Retain for the operational use of a Service;
- Retain for Corporate Services;
- Re-assign/redevelop for purposes of revenue income;
- Allocate for redevelopment of affordable housing (including through available Joint Venture housing agreements);
- Transfer the asset (community transfer or devolution);
- Dispose of for capital receipt.

3.6 Reviewing the estate

- 3.6.1 To ensure the estate is being managed most effectively, the process of reviewing the estate and its assets is a continuous one.

- 3.6.2 Reviewing the estate is driven by a number of factors:

1. The up to date provision of Operational Service Plans;
2. The outcomes from activities such as One Public Estate and Joint ventures;
3. The outcomes of asset transfers through the devolution process;
4. Changes in legislation relevant to assets.

- 3.6.3 In property terms the assets require to be assessed in performance terms on a regular basis against the following criteria:

- The cost performance of the building (revenue and capital) as a comparison with other buildings and industry benchmarks;
- Space usage and efficiency of use;
- Surplus space.

As well as the quantitative measures, the review will also give consideration to whether the asset is achieving the objectives of the Service, the customer, and operational demands.

To react to changes over time, the Asset Management Strategy itself and the plans formed under it will be reviewed.

Reviews will be conducted on an annual basis.

3.7 Asset disposal

3.7.1 The disposal of an asset is one of a number of criteria for assessing an asset and normally disposal of an asset will be on the basis that the asset is surplus.

3.7.2 Any disposal of an asset will be formed on the basis that:

- An assessment of other available opportunities has been completed;
- The asset disposal has received the approval of Asset Management Group;
- Approval has been received either by Delegated Authority or from WBC Executive in accordance with WBC Constitution;
- The disposal demonstrates 'best consideration' or has received approval in accordance with General Disposal Consent 2003 at a value below best consideration.

3.7.3 The review of assets through continuous assessment with operational services, will identify assets which potentially are surplus and available for consideration for disposal.

3.8 Working in partnership

The Council has strong links with a number of organisations both with other Berkshire Unitary Authorities through shared services and external organisations, including community groups and charities, all helping to deliver high quality public services.

This partnership approach is being developed to ensure that the public assets owned by West Berkshire Council with wider assets held within Berkshire are being managed effectively.

3.8.1 One Public Estate

One Public Estate (OPE) is an established national programme delivered in partnership by the Cabinet Office Government Property Unit (GPU) and the Local Government Association (LGA). It provides practical and technical support and funding to councils to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes in collaboration with central government and other public sector partners.

OPE partnerships across the country have shown the value of working together across the public sector and taking a strategic approach to asset management. At its heart, the programme is about getting more from our collective assets - whether that's catalysing major service transformation such as health and social care integration and benefits reform; unlocking land for new homes and commercial space; or creating new opportunities to save on running costs or generate income. This is encompassed in three core objectives:

1. creating economic growth (new homes and jobs)
2. delivering more integrated, customer-focused services
3. Generating efficiencies, through capital receipts and reduced running costs.

West Berkshire Council is working with all of the Berkshire Unitary Authorities as well as Thames Valley Police, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the NHS Estate in recognition of the opportunities presented through the OPE environment.

Acting as the Berkshire Property Partnership, West Berkshire Council and its partners has successfully bid for £500,000 of OPE funding to develop projects to achieve the following outcomes:

- A shared, joined-up service vehicle for delivering Operational Property and FM across the partnership, leading to operational efficiencies
- Aligned contractual arrangements and frameworks, leading to further operational efficiencies
- The development of an effective, commercial estates and property programme management function
- Acceleration of existing property transformation projects, and the instigation of new projects emerging from whole system Area Reviews.
- Through these actions, the delivery of significant new jobs, new housing and capital and revenue receipts for the partners, working differently, in more connected ways, to provide better service and outcomes to our communities, and better value to tax-payers.

3.8.2 Shared Services

West Berkshire Council is already operating successful shared services with other local authorities across some of its services including Building Control Solutions (in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) and Public Protection Services (in partnership with Bracknell Forest District Council and Wokingham Borough Council).

Through the One Public Estate forum we are progressing with exploring the potential for a shared service vehicle to deliver all property and asset management services across Berkshire for the Berkshire Unitary Authorities and over time other public sector organisations.

3.8.3 Asset Transfer and Devolution

A key priority of West Berkshire Council within the Council Strategy is to support communities to do more to help themselves.

This includes close working with Community Groups, Parish and Town Councils to help maintain or improve services, which can include best use of property and land assets.

The Council's discretionary powers are now supported by statutory backing, to enable the transfer of its building assets to community groups and town and parish councils.

West Berkshire Council gives consideration to transferring assets through two routes:

1. Community Asset Transfer Policy

Community Asset Transfer is the transfer of the Council's land and buildings to community and voluntary organisations at less than best consideration, normally on a leasehold arrangement.

The purpose of the policy is to set out a framework to show how West Berkshire Council will consider requests from the community and voluntary sector to use the Council's land and buildings.

2. Devolution transfer

As part of the Council's strategic priority of "Communities Helping Themselves" a devolution prospectus has been developed. The prospectus includes the transfer of services and assets.

Devolution is about devolving, primarily to Town and Parish Councils, services and assets which the community feel would add value locally.

Devolution does not include statutory services, it is about those services which the Council has had to reduce or stop altogether and which local communities feel should be delivered at the most appropriate level of government.

As part of the Devolution agenda, a Parish Portal has been developed. This Portal provides Parish and Town Councils with a range of information to support both service and asset transfers.

The full policy document is attached in appendix F.

3.8.4 Joint Ventures

West Berkshire Council has a strong working relationship with Sovereign Housing as the largest social housing provider in West Berkshire. To further develop the provision of affordable housing the Council is exploring the potential for a closer working partnership through a joint venture.

Part C:

Service Delivery and Corporate Estate



The Downs School science block

4 Services Strategies

4.1 Key services

Public services are delivered through a range of distinct Services, some services which rely on the estate to enable them to deliver their service and others which rely only on the corporate offices.

A number of operational services rely upon the estate to deliver services to the community. Each of these services has a Service Strategy or Plan which conveys its service delivery. A summary of these services is shown in appendix A. These services are:

4.1.1 Adult Social Care

Awaiting information from the service

4.1.2 Children and Family Service

Our vision is for our most vulnerable children, including those that are Looked After by the local authority, to achieve outcomes that are every bit as good as their peers across all areas of their lives, and to provide a service that is, at the very least, 'good', if not outstanding. To achieve this we will build on existing strengths and on the principles already established in our Brilliant West Berkshire programme focused on building communities together.

4.1.3 Education Service

Our ambition is to enable all children and young people and learners to maximise their potential, while intervening positively to ensure that the most vulnerable have an equal opportunity to succeed.

4.1.4 Development and Planning

To offer housing services that provide quality housing, deliver services which meet a range of needs, are affordable, sustainable (in terms of environment and community), are safe and secure and offers support to ensure that vulnerable households are able to sustain their homes.

4.1.5 Public Protection and Culture

A vision with five key themes, Employment (regional workforce and voluntary opportunities), Accessibility (a network of facilities fit for purpose and provide ease of access), Greener (through shared knowledge, to protect, develop and expand the range of opportunities to enjoy the rural environment), safer (to engage young people for their benefit and to reduce antisocial behaviour, as well as increased participation of the elderly in leisure activities for improved safety and wellbeing), Stronger (crucial contribution to both improving the quality of the built environment and providing a diverse range of social activities).

4.1.6 Transport and Countryside

A well maintained highways network is not only a valuable asset to the community but is also fundamental to achieving the strategic objectives of the Council. Good transport is vital for a thriving economy, providing access to employment and education as well as to the services and supplies that people need. The Highways Asset Management Plan details the Council's delivery of value for money highway maintenance services, consistent with the aims and ambitions of the Council Strategy.

4.2 Other services

In addition to the key operational services which have a direct requirement for assets, further services exist within the Council which do not have wider asset requirements, other than the use of the corporate offices. These are:

Commissioning

Customer Services and ICT

Finance and Property

Human Resources

Legal Services

Prevention and safeguarding

Public Health and Wellbeing

Strategic Support

5 Corporate Strategies

5.1 Delivering the Capital Programme

Introduction and Objectives

- 5.1.1 West Berkshire Council has a strong track record in the delivery of its capital programme, whether through its own capital funds, grant or section 106/CIL monies.

The five year capital programme 2018/19 to 2022/23 proposes expenditure of a further £155m on a diverse range of projects to benefit highways, countryside, education and adult social care.

Strategy for Delivery

- 5.1.2 A significant amount of the capital programme is delivered by the transport and Countryside Service for the highways improvement programme, with the majority of building related projects managed by the Property Services team.
- 5.1.3 Projects are managed using a formal Project Management Methodology (PMM) based on industry accepted Prince2 process methodology.
This offers consistency of method and best opportunity for a positive outcome.

The management of projects is supported by the use of the appointment of external specialist consultants, such as architects, cost consultants, services engineers and health & safety specialists.
- 5.1.4 The appointment of external consultants and contractors is conducted in accordance with public sector procurement legislation and the West Berkshire Council constitution.
This can be by way of open tendering or through the use of public sector frameworks.

5.1.5 Governance of capital projects is carried out through Project Boards which monitor performance of individual projects and the progress of all projects on the capital programme is monitored by the Capital Strategy Group to ensure spend is being directed in a timely fashion.

5.2 Maintaining the estate

The built asset environment can be expressed in terms of the education estate and the non-education or corporate estate.

5.2.1 In the case of schools, the Education Service conducts needs based assessments of sufficiency, suitability and condition. The Education Service continues to be successful in achieving capital grant allocations to address capital maintenance in schools.

5.2.2 Additionally a number of successful bids has resulted in significant condition issues in some schools being addressed through the Priority Schools Building Programme 2.

5.2.3 For the non-education estate, conditions surveys of all council owned buildings drives the basis for capital maintenance funding, which is distributed to the Services accordingly.

5.3 Corporate Offices

5.3.1 Introduction and objectives

The council has adopted a Mobile and Flexible Working Policy ('Timelord'), which aims to reduce accommodation costs, reduce time for employees spent travelling, and improve face-to-face time for our customers. Employees are provided with the technology to work from the office, at home or from other locations.

This working practice was adopted following a successful project to implement new flexible working practices to offer the benefits:

1. For West Berkshire Council
 - Increased productivity for flexible staff
 - Reduced travel and expense
 - Reduced office foot print
 - Savings in revenue and capital costs
2. For customer
 - Increased face to face advisory time available
 - Quicker and easier for customers to contact WBC staff
3. For staff
 - Improved staff satisfaction
 - Reduced travel time and cost
 - Improved work/home life balance
 - Reduced stress and sickness

The flexible working policy has enabled the council to reduce its office footprint by approximately 30% from the pre-project baseline.

The core corporate buildings the council operates from are Market Street (Newbury), West Street House (Newbury) and Turnhams Green (Calcot) with some services based in West Point (Newbury) as well as other smaller satellite accommodation.

5.3.2 Strategy for Delivery

- The flexible working policy has been operating for some time now and has settled into being 'business as usual'
- The continued efficient use of the corporate office space is monitored through an Accommodation Group, which examines space requirements
- The council will continue to explore opportunities for joint working with partners and the potential for rationalisation of the public estate.
- Exploring opportunities for service partners to benefit from using council office space to deliver services benefitting the people of West Berkshire.

5.4 Commercial property

5.4.1 Traditionally local authority property acquisition has been for the direct purpose of operational delivery of services. West Berkshire Council's property estate largely comprises properties necessary to deliver public services and has a reasonably small commercial property portfolio located on the London Road Industrial Estate in Newbury and the Kennet Enterprise Centre in Hungerford.

However increasing financial pressures combined with significantly reduced resources means that West Berkshire Council needs to consider the potential opportunities available to it to generate new revenue income streams.

5.4.2 The business case for investment in commercial property is:

- WBC Medium Term Financial Strategy states the need for WBC to close the gap between expenditure and income including by means of income generation.

It is expected the management of a balanced commercial property portfolio, acquired through affordable, sustainable and value for money means from capital borrowed through the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB), will meet the objectives of WBC.

- Powers within legislation affording local authorities the opportunity to borrow and invest for the prudent management of the Council's financial affairs
- Over time, commercial real estate has produced strong returns with low volatility compared to other investment classes and has generated consistent income returns.

5.4.3 On 09th May 2017 the Council approved as an addendum to the Treasury Management Strategy for financial year 2017/18 a Property Investment Strategy to invest £50m of capital funds for the purchase of commercial property.

5.4.4 It is expected, based on low borrowing rates that once fully invested, the capital investment will realise a long term revenue income of £950,000 per year.

5.4.5 The acquisition process will be managed in accordance with a set of strict criteria assessed by specialist property asset consultants and scrutinised by a formal governance group (Property Investment Board).

The selection criteria includes:

1. Minimum lot size of £3m and maximum of £10m;
2. Achieving a minimum yield for a property of 5%;
3. The portfolio once fully invested is to achieve a yield of 6%;

4. Maximum of 35% of the spend in any one region and 25% in any town;
5. Maximum of 10% of total income to be with any one tenant;
6. Maximum of 30% of the portfolio in any sector (eg: offices, retail).

5.4.6 Since the approval of the strategy in May 2017, the council has (at November 2017) achieved completion on a high street retail property in Eastbourne and exchanged on a warehouse retail unit, and continues to bid on new properties on a regular basis.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix A: Service plans/strategies

6.1.1 Adult Social Care

Awaiting data from Service

6.1.2 Children and Family Service

Service objectives

The *vision* for Children and Family Service in West Berkshire is:

1. 'For our most vulnerable children, including those that are Looked After by the local authority, to achieve outcomes that are every bit as good as their peers across all areas of their lives'.
2. 'a service that is, at the very least, 'good', if not outstanding. To achieve this we will build on existing strengths and on the principles already established in our Brilliant West Berkshire programme focused on building communities together'.

We know that West Berkshire is a great place for children to grow up. Generally West Berkshire's children and young people do well. Our *aim* is for those children to be safe and healthy, achieve high educational standards through attending good schools, and move on into higher education or employment and a secure and prosperous future.

To achieve our aims and vision the objectives of the Children and Family Services are embedded in strong partnership and collaborative approaches which focuses on communities and families, as well as individual children and young people to improve the delivery of services.

We collaborate with partners through innovation and reconfiguration of services allowing us to focus on communities, families, individual children and young people to allow access to quality interventions important for their health and wellbeing.

We recognise that parents, carers and families have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that their children's needs are met, but we will work with them where there is an assessed level of need, to ensure their children get the best start in life.

Early identification of children, young people and families in need of support or assistance is done through universal services, such as, nurseries, schools, health visitors and third sector organisations working in communities. We in West Berkshire, along with our partners, recognise this as a joint responsibility.

As Corporate Parents we have responsibilities for all children in care, from birth and frequently beyond the point when they cease to be looked after. Whether they are in: foster care, residential care, secure care, kinship care or looked after at home, or children and young people who have a disability for whom we provide short breaks.

Our Corporate Parenting responsibilities extend to those leaving care who are looked after for a number of weeks prior to their 16th birthday and can be extended to age 25 years.

We understand children in the context of their families and communities and we prioritise supporting vulnerable families and working with communities so that our children can do well and be safe within their own family whenever possible.

Where children or young people cannot remain with their birth or extended families, despite high quality support, and are Looked After by the local authority, we want them to know that we are ambitious, driven and committed 'Corporate Parents', striving to help them reach their full potential. For those children and young people we prioritise finding the best permanent home for them, so that they can have a stable base from which to build a secure future. We support them whilst in our care, to be safe, stay healthy, achieve academically and fulfil their potential.

Strategy for delivery

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will always be at the centre of our work including delivering our corporate parenting responsibilities. The child's needs are paramount and the needs and wishes of each child known to the service, be they an infant or older child, will be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before any challenges they face escalate to a level of concern.

What we do is often as important as how we do it and to this end we have identified the following standards that will run through our practice:

1. We will promote and drive lasting outcomes for children in West Berkshire so that they will see quicker and fairer decisions about where they will live, who will care for them and, have the opportunity to achieve at school and in the community;
2. Children and young people will feel safe in their homes and communities and supported in their journey by trusted adults who they can rely on to provide an unerring focus on their needs;
3. We will encourage participation and engagement so that children will know that their wishes, feelings and experiences are heard and acted upon in their welfare;
4. We will raise the standards in our practice so that children and young people are confident that their Social Workers are always striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for them;
5. We are committed to professional development and the promotion of a strong value base so that our children and families will experience professionals who are: I interested

M measured

P purposeful

A accountable

C curious

T tenacious

Children & Family Services estate

Children and Family Services are driven to ensure its services are accessible and able to deliver a range of accommodation options for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.

This is developed in collaboration with partners to ensure there is an accommodation sufficiency to cover a range of needs.

This includes Children with Disabilities, foster adoptive homes, accessibility to residential provision and a range of supported lodgings options to help our older young people transition to adulthood in a safe and supportive way.

We are committed, wherever possible, to supporting families to stay together but recognise where this is not safe or possible we will endeavour to ensure the child's needs are prioritised and any accommodation required meets their needs. This includes the recognition of local connections, education and work opportunities alongside the wishes and feelings of the children and young people.

6.1.3 Education Service

Service objectives

The Education Service vision is 'Our ambition is to enable all children and young people and learners to maximise their potential, while intervening positively to ensure that the most vulnerable have an equal opportunity to succeed'.

The key Education Service aims:

- To ensure that all schools and other education/training settings are providing a high quality of education for all children, young people and adult learners;
- All schools and other education/training settings to be graded Good or better by Ofsted;
- To ensure every school aged child has a school place and every 16/17 year old a suitable place in education or training;
- To ensure children and young adults with special needs receive appropriate education and support;
- To further develop the capital infrastructure to improve learning and achievement.

Strategy for Delivery

The Education Service is located within the Communities Directorate sitting alongside Adult Social Care, Children and Family Services, Public Health and Prevention & Safeguarding.

It has responsibility for 81 schools (including PRU's and ten academies) and circa 25,500 pupils, 3,500 16 and 17 year olds, 1731 adult learners, about 800 school governors and approximately 3,900 teachers and non teachers working within schools.

The Service is delivered through a number of teams and functions:

School Improvement & Governance, Access Planning and Trading, SEN Inclusion and Disabled Children, Educational Psychology and Wellbeing, early Years/Vulnerable Learners & Families, Education Welfare Service, Education Planning & Development, Post 16/Adult & Community Learning and Education Contract Management.

These teams deal with a wide range of Education activities including addressing current national and local issues (for 2017/18) including, the introduction of the additional 15 hours of free childcare, the development of sufficiency to meet the increased demand for quality childcare places, the development of family hubs, and the provision of places to meet the demand due to demographic growth.

The Education Estate

The education estate comprises the following:

Academy (Primary)	3
Academy (Secondary)	7
VA (Primary)	15
VA (Secondary)	1
Community	55
Total:	81

Education Asset Management

The EAMP is a strategic document which details the methodology for data collection and analysis, and the criteria used to make objective and transparent decisions on school premises capital investment. The EAMP summarises and prioritises the identified need for capital investment in the school estate and makes the business case for bids on the 5-year capital programme.

The purpose of the EAMP can be summarised as follows:

- To provide a statement of identified need for building works for each LA maintained school;
- To provide a basis for prioritisation of funding between schools, which is fair and transparent;
- To help schools prioritise capital investment from their devolved budgets;
- To form part of the business case for bids for capital funding;
- To link in with the objectives of the Council's Corporate AMP;
- To contribute to the delivery of high quality public services in West Berkshire;
- To ensure Best Value in the use of resources.

Our strategic management of the estate falls under three main headings – Condition, Suitability (fitness for purpose – buildings and site) and Sufficiency (basic need, new housing, right size schools in the right location, planning area reviews, school closures, etc).

6.1.4 Development and Planning

The Development and Planning Service, whilst offering Planning Policy and Development Control, from an asset management perspective is responsible for the strategic and operational delivery of the council's Housing services.

Service objectives

The vision is to offer housing services that:

1. Provide **Quality** housing;
2. Deliver **Appropriate** housing services– meeting a range of needs, tenures and sizes, with high levels of accessibility to reflect people's changing needs;
3. Are **Affordable** – not just in terms of our housing costs but also in respect of running costs;
4. Offer **Support** – to ensure that vulnerable households are able to sustain their homes;
5. Are **Sustainable** – in terms of the environment, community and meeting future needs; and
6. Are **Safe and Secure** – building communities that are inclusive and where people have a sense of belonging.

The actions identified within the Housing Strategy will reflect, and contribute towards achievement of, this vision. In particular, the Council will prioritise activities that contribute to the following:

1. **Prevention** of homelessness by early and proactive intervention;
2. **Provision** of new affordable housing to meet urgent and immediate identified needs;
3. **Green and Sustainable** activities that reduce fuel poverty and minimise domestic CO2 emissions;
4. **Focus** on meeting the needs of our **Rural Communities**;
5. **Partnership** working to maximise efficiencies, deliver holistic solutions and share risks and
6. **Performance** management to monitor, review and improve our delivery of the action plan.

This set of priorities provides the framework for the Housing Strategy.

Strategy for Delivery

West Berkshire Council delivers statutory functions such as the Common Housing Register, housing advice, homelessness and managing the disabled facilities grant.

The Common Housing Register acts as the waiting list for social housing, acting as a single point of contact with strict eligibility and qualifying criteria.

Advice and assistance is provided free of charge to all residents, with the main reasons for those seeking advice including searching for a first home, threatened with homelessness, domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, and rent arrears.

The Housing team is involved in a number of options and solutions when assisting individuals, including:

- Staying in the home (mediation, Family Group Conference, Social Needs);
- Private rented accommodation;
- Help with the mortgage;
- Mutual exchange;
- Transfers;
- Housing register;
- Refuge.

When tackling homelessness, the overwhelming priority is that of prevention, with a strategic approach which:

- Prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies;
- Mitigating negative impact of welfare and housing reforms;
- Making best use of the districts stock;
- Improving life chances of homelessness people;
- Working with partners to provide a co-ordinated approach.

The Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant offering up to £30,000 on a means tested basis to meet the cost of home improvements to enable independence and contributes to reducing falls and hospital admissions.

The Housing Team receives approximately one hundred and sixty applications per year with an average cost of £7,195.

[Housing Asset Management](#)

The council is a non stock holding authority, its housing stock having been transferred to Sovereign Housing Association. So generally the council has an enabling role working with providers to deliver homes that meet the needs of the population. Generally all new affordable housing is delivered by Registered Provider partners.

West Berks however has existing stock and is investing in new property to use as temporary accommodation to avoid the use of Bed and Breakfast for homeless families. The Council is also buying back DIYSO (do it yourself shared ownership) properties as they arise for sale.

It is illegal to allow families to remain in Bed and Breakfast for more than 6 weeks, and at the moment B & B is still used so the aim is to buy sufficient units to no longer use B & B. This would then allow the Council's housing service to apply for gold standard with the NPSS (see below).

The Council registered with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) as a Registered Provider and have just been advised that West Berkshire is a development partner. Therefore, there is no reason why the Council could not develop new affordable housing in the future and bid to the HCA for funding to do so.

The Council negotiates with developers on planning applications and sometimes financial contributions are accepted in lieu of affordable housing. There is therefore a pot of commuted sum funds which can be used to purchase/develop housing. In the past this has been used to buy DIYSO properties or as grants to Sovereign Housing Association. However, there is scope to use this for new affordable housing.

The housing service also manages a gypsy site for which capital funding has been allocated in order to redevelop the site.

6.1.5 Public Protection and Culture

Service objectives

In 2018 West Berkshire remains an attractive place to live. The successful partnership between the district council, Natural England, English Heritage and local voluntary groups has increased awareness of the value of our countryside. The number of active conservation volunteers has reached record levels. Access to the countryside has been improved by the work of these groups. This is greatly appreciated by the increased numbers of visitors who now sustain a robust rural tourist economy.

Out of school programmes for young people are flourishing. Young people themselves are actively involved in the provision and development of services. The percentage of young people who now choose to play sport, play in a band, read for pleasure, join a painting group, join a drama club or undertake some other sort of positive voluntary activity, means that the districts teenagers are amongst the most active across the whole of the country.

Much has been done to ensure that disadvantaged and disaffected young people are just as able to access these opportunities as those who are already engaged and achieving. Close links between West Berkshire Council's services, and voluntary sector organisations have resulted in far higher participation rates for these groups than had previously been the case. The increase in participation in diversionary activity is linked to reductions in the levels of anti-social behaviour attributed to young people.

The growing population of over 60's is also benefiting from the improved cultural offer. In their early retirement years they value their participation in culture for its own sake. They take up new activities that they have never had the time to try. For many, membership of clubs and societies becomes an important part of their retirement lifestyle. Later on, their participation starts to contribute to the maintenance of their physical and mental health and their ability to live independently. For them, and for those who have experienced health difficulties earlier in life, their participation keeps them in regular contact with friends and neighbours, stimulates them intellectually, and keeps them mobile.

Strategy for Delivery

There are two main ways of valuing participation in cultural activities:

1. For its intrinsic value, the self expression, fun and sense of fulfilment they provide - this is integral to the role that cultural services play in enhancing personal well being. When people develop new interests they:-
 - Learn transferable technical and social skills.
 - Increase their self confidence and self-esteem.
 - Improve their physical and mental health.
2. For its instrumental value, the contribution they make to economic development, educational attainment, community cohesion and community safety. When a wide range of opportunities exist for all residents to participate

In cultural activity the communities in which they live:-

- Are more likely to be socially cohesive with low levels of social isolation and a stronger sense of local identity.
- Experience lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Benefit from the economic impact and employment opportunities generated by the sector.

However, the key to releasing the potential of cultural activity to achieve these outcomes lies in expanding the number of people who engage in such activity.

The vision of West Berkshire in 2025, described in the sustainable community strategy, is based

There are five key thematic outcomes to create a district that is:

1. Employment and Prosperity

Employment in the sector accounts for approximately 13% of the regional workforce and also generates significant levels of voluntary opportunities, which can act as a route into permanent employment.

2. Accessible

With the offer of a wide range of cultural activities comes the need to keep the public well informed of the opportunities available to them. We ensure that a network of facilities is established and maintained fit for purpose and provide ease of access (geographically, physically and operationally).

3. Greener

Through sharing knowledge with partnering organisations we are able to better understand the countryside and environment of West Berkshire, shaped culturally and historically through farming, industry, transport, leisure and settlement. This also enables West Berkshire Council to protect, develop and expand the range of opportunities to enjoy the rural environment and to increase the numbers who become actively engaged in conservation and management programmes. Increasing participation levels in this way makes a significant contribution to a greener West Berkshire.

4. Safer

It is key to offer recreational leisure time activities and facilities for 13 – 19 year olds to ensure proper engagement of young people for their benefit and to reduce antisocial behaviour. Additionally increased participation of the elderly in leisure activities improves safety and wellbeing.

5. Stronger

The cultural sector is increasingly recognised as making a crucial contribution to both improving the quality of the built environment and providing a diverse range of social activities, which help new and existing communities to flourish and live together cohesively. Working with partners and encouraging the contribution of the network of voluntary and community groups that provides the social interaction is also key to stronger communities. Recognising communities that need additional support and making specific provision to target the work of cultural practitioners into these communities is also important.

6.1.6 Transport and Countryside

Service objectives

West Berkshire Council has a statutory duty to maintain and manage its highway network. A well-maintained network is not only a valuable asset to the community but is also fundamental to achieving the strategic objectives of the Council. It is also essential in order to deliver the transport goals of the Local Transport Plan.

Good transport is vital for a thriving economy, providing access to employment and education as well as to the services and supplies that people need. Maintenance of the highway network is essential to enable it to share the burden as a key part of the overall transport network.

The Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) details the Council's Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy and the Plan provides guidance on the delivery of value for money highway maintenance services, consistent with the aims and ambitions of the Council Strategy where 'Focus on carrying out essential highways maintenance' is defined as a key outcome under the 'A stronger local economy' aim. The HAMP seeks to do this by providing a safer highway network, improved travelling conditions for all highway users, and ensuring greater care of the local environment.

The size and value of the Council's key highway assets are summarised below:

Asset type	Quantity
Carriageways	1,280 km
Structures	570
Footways and cycle tracks	825 km
Drainage and flood defence	650 km**
Street lighting	12,839 units
Street furniture	26,041 units*
Traffic signals and intelligent traffic signs	382

* Estimate (Based on Derbyshire Model within WGA)

** Current estimate based on 20% of the network surveyed

Key objectives are:

Across the whole highways asset portfolio:

- we will continue to prepare work programmes in line with asset management principles and undertake major and minor maintenance projects on an annual basis;
- We will continue to collect asset condition and inventory data in line with our Highway Asset Management Plan to ensure the information we hold against our key highway assets is accurate and up to date in order to deliver life cycle planning, performance monitoring and Whole Government Accounts reports.

For *carriageways*:

- We aim to use and increase the use of cost effective treatments like surface dressing and micro asphalt to prolong the life of carriageway assets;
- We aim to use proprietary joint sealing treatments to restore the integrity of concrete roads and roads displaying longitudinal and transverse cracks.
- We will only resurface roads where asset management analysis shows this to be the most cost effective treatment and only undertake temporary repairs where there is a safety risk to road users. Where there is no risk to safety, a permanent repair will be undertaken in accordance with national guidelines.

For *structures*:

- We will carry out the following routine inspections on an annual basis:
 - 190 General (visual) Inspections
 - 95 Principal (in- depth) Inspections annually
 - 25 Structural Reviews annually.

For *footways*:

- We will apply cost effective treatments such as slurry sealing (wherever possible). This treatment seals the footway against the elements extending their lifespan.
- We will develop a footway slurry sealing programme over the next 5 years.
- We aim to replace precast concrete slabs where they pose a hazard to pedestrians and are becoming costly to maintain on a priority/risk basis with flexible (bituminous material) pavement surfaces subject to town centre planning and conservation considerations.
- We will continually seek to find alternative and innovative treatments for footways which provide effective long term treatment and value for money.

For *Drainage and flood defence*:

- We aim to cleanse all gullies and kerb weirs on a cyclic basis over a two year period where the frequency of cleanse is determined by the risk of flooding.
- We will continue to collect drainage asset data as part of the ongoing cyclic cleanse programme to maintain an electronic map based inventory of gullies and kerb weirs.
- We will continue to collect system data electronically in conjunction with jetting works to help map our highway drainage systems.
- We will continue to electronically record all new drainage systems.

For *street lighting, illuminated bollards and signs*:

- We will carry out the following routine inspections:
 - General (visual) Inspections at every visit.
 - Principal (in- depth) Inspections every 3 years
 - Electrical Test every 6 Years
 - Structural Reviews annually.
 - Structural Testing as per recommended 'next test date' on any previous structural test.
- We will also continue to seek alternative and innovative apparatus to improve our service.

Strategy for delivery:

The West Berkshire Road network is regularly inspected to assess its safety, serviceability and integrity as well as to ensure that all works are carried out within the prescribed regulatory standards. Dependent upon the degree of deficiency found, defined processes are then followed to provide effective solutions. In the selection of materials and treatments, the HAMP considers the key issues of environment, quality and value. This aims to maximise the contribution made by highway maintenance to sustaining West Berkshire's biodiversity and character.

The HAMP's foundation policy and strategy utilises a logical and systematic approach in accordance with 'value for money' and 'asset management principles', and continuous improvement. Essential elements include statutory obligations, responsiveness to needs of the community and maintaining asset value. Regard is given to the relevance of condition standards and the key issues of Safety, Serviceability and Sustainability. HAMP policies, objectives and standards have been formulated for each maintenance activity and will be reviewed on a periodic

basis to ensure that they remain compliant with national objectives and respond to changes brought about by new legislation and technology.

The HAMP defines the key elements of the highway asset describing appropriate levels of service depending on the position in the network hierarchy and the understanding and management of the impact of risk. This enables priority for maintenance within the available budget to be established.

The funding of an appropriate highway maintenance service is made possible by the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, whilst larger scale highway improvement projects are funded through the Capital Programme. These essential forward planning documents have enabled the Highway and Transport Service to develop a Three Year Highway Improvement Programme which not only enables its proposals for a better road network to be well publicised in advance, thus helping to manage expectations, but which has also resulted in a gradual improvement in road condition across the network.

6.2 Appendix B: Asset Management Strategy - Delivery

This Asset Management Strategy and the Service Plans which support it, contribute to the wider aims and objectives of the organisation.

To manage its assets in the most effective and efficient manner, the following actions are proposed (note – reference numbers relate to those within the strategy document).

These actions will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Ref.	Objective/expected outcome	Action
	Capital Strategy	
	The Asset Management Strategy (AMS) is to be refreshed annually as an appendix to the Capital Programme	Property Services to refresh annually Dec – Mar.
	Council Strategy	
	Asset Management Strategy (AMS) to inform the content of elements of the refresh of the Council Strategy.	Property Services to be inclusive in Council Strategy refresh - 2018
	AMS and Services Asset Management Plans which underpin it are to contribute to the objectives of the Council Strategy	Annual review of the estate to establish contribution to objectives. Dec - Mar
	Decision making	
	Asset Management Group (AMG) to refresh membership and agree revised Terms of Reference	Agree with 2018/19 Asset Management Strategy.
	Standard, routine reporting to AMG of current matters and progress from other asset based groups	Property Services to implement reporting. Feb 2018 on.
	Data Management	
	Property Services to conclude asset update and ensure records maintained.	Property Services to present to Heads of Service. Jan – Apr 2018
	Reviewing the estate	
	New or updated Service Strategies for all Services to enable new/updated Asset Management Plans (AMP)	Property Services to work with Heads of Service to produce. Jan – Oct 2018
	With AMP's in place review of the estate is to be carried out.	Property Services to conduct review. July – Dec 2018
	Working in Partnership	
	Continue to progress with activities related to One Public Estate and Devolution.	Property Services to lead on outcomes
	Continue to engage with Joint Venture feasibility.	Property Services to engage in working group.

6.3 Appendix C: Asset Management Group – Membership and Terms of Reference

AMG membership

Those listed have full membership of the AMG and vote on decisions sought of the group.

Name	Initials	Title/role
Mr. John Ashworth	JA	Corporate Director – Economy and Environment (AMG Chairman)
Mr. Andy Walker	AW	Head of Finance and Property
Mr. Gary Lugg	GL	Head of Development and Planning
Cllr. Dominic Boeck	DB	Council Member for Aldermaston and Executive Portfolio: Culture and Environment
Cllr. Anthony Chadley	AC	Council Member for Birch Copse and Executive Portfolio: Finance, Transformation and
Cllr. Adrian Edwards	AE	Council Member for Falkland
Cllr. Peter Argyle	PA	Council Member for Calcot
Cllr. Tim Metcalfe	TM	Council Member for Purley on Thames

AMG attending officers

Those listed attend to offer reports and supporting knowledge to inform the group, but do not vote on decisions sought of the group.

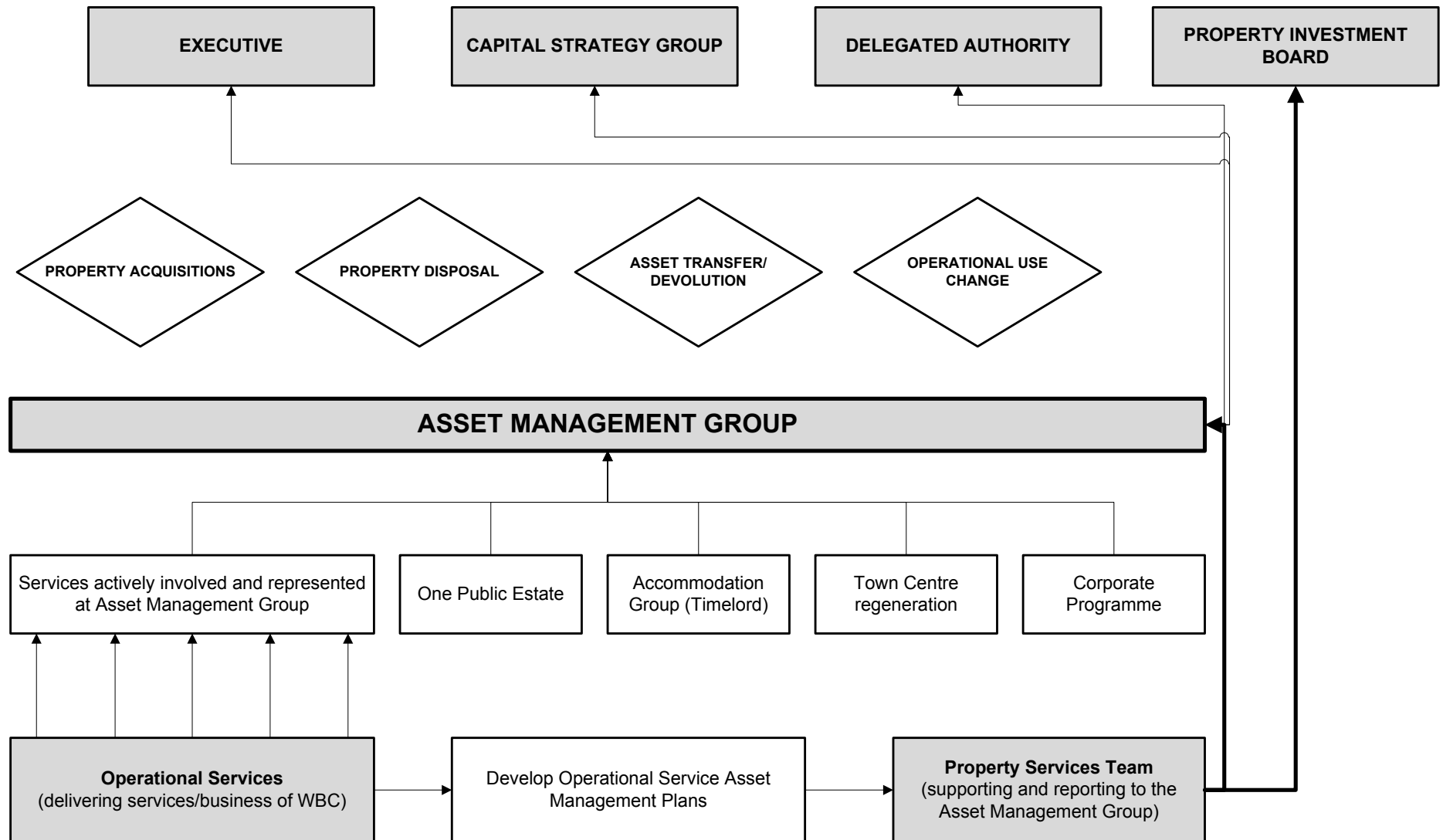
Additional attendance of Officers will be called on for specific reports

Name	Initials	Title/role
Richard Turner	RT	Service Manager - Property
Colin Broughton	CB	Strategic Asset Manager Officer
Gabrielle Esplin	GE	Finance Manager (capital and treasury)
Sally Kelsall	SK	Housing Strategy and Operations Manager
Susan Crocker	SC	Administrative Support Officer (minutes)

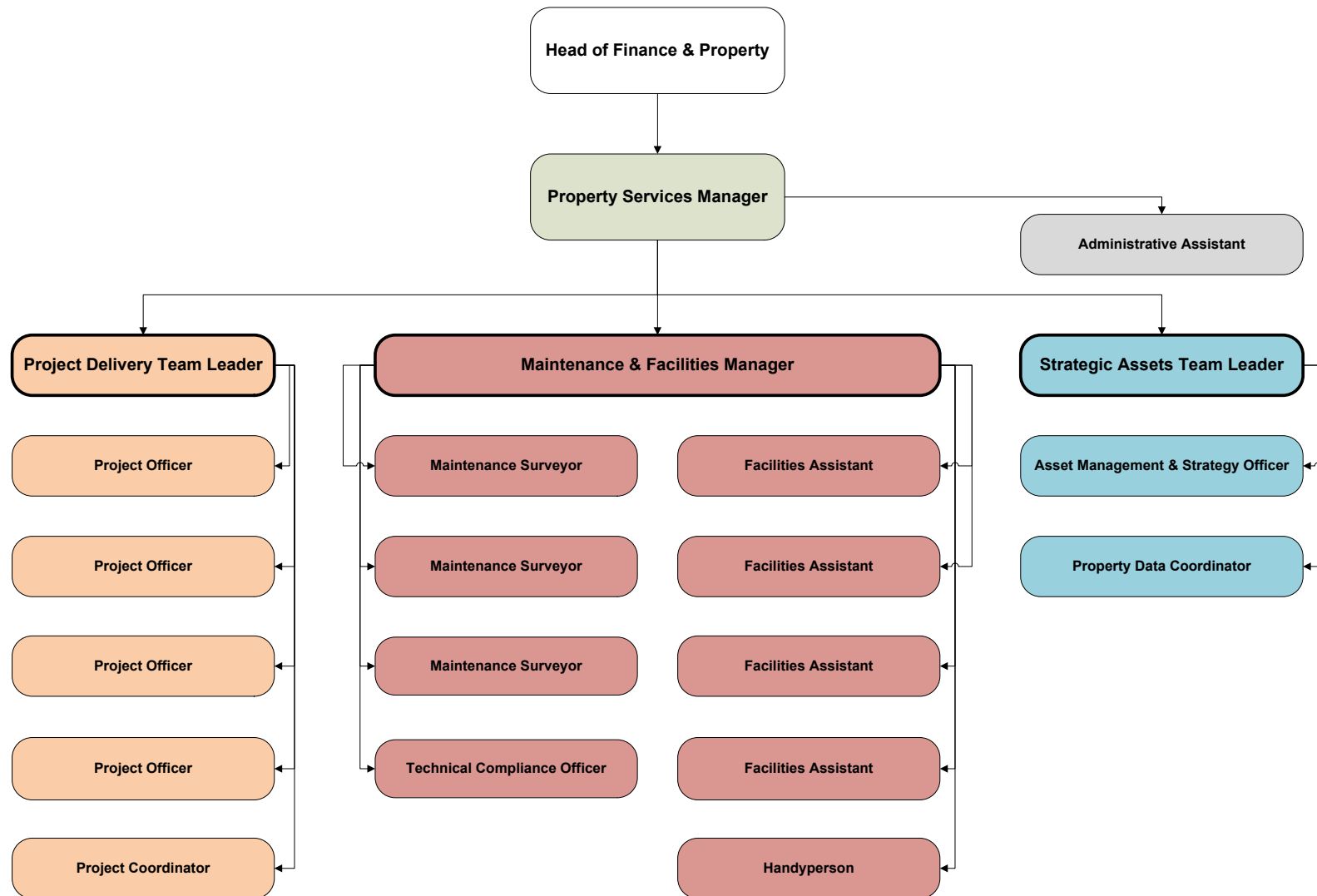
AMG Terms of Reference

Ref:	Objectives (and activities to deliver)	Frequency
1	To act as the primary forum to consider all matters impacting the management of property and land assets of West Berkshire Council.	AMG to meet approximately every 8 weeks on a continuous basis.
2	To advise Capital Strategy Group, Corporate Board, Operations Board and Executive on issues concerning property and land assets, including but not limited to acquisitions, disposal, condition and changing use of assets.	AMG to meet approximately every 8 weeks on a continuous basis.
3	When considering asset proposals, give due regard to the (often competing) priorities of the Council and Council Aims and Objectives.	AMG to meet approximately every 8 weeks on a continuous basis.
4	To be responsible for the production of and regular review of the Asset Management Strategy and the Services Asset Management Plans which support it.	Annually
5	To be responsible for the regular review of asset priorities, having received Officer reports, which includes but not limited to methodology, timescales, data and costs.	Annually
6	Receive as a standing item a report from the Property Service Manager on the current topics coming from other subordinate property/accommodation groups, including but not limited to Devolution Officer Group, Accommodation Group, One Public Estate, Town Centre Programme Group.	AMG to meet approximately every 8 weeks on a continuous basis.
7	Receive as a standing item a report from the Property Service Manager offering the status of assets either approved for or having the potential for disposal/acquisition and those assets subject to transfer through either devolution or community asset transfer.	AMG to meet approximately every 8 weeks on a continuous basis.

6.4 Appendix D: Decision route for property assets



6.5 Appendix E Property Services structure chart



6.6 Appendix F Devolution and Community Asset Transfer policy

Devolution

1.0 What is Devolution?

- 1.1 As part of the Council's strategic priority of "Communities Helping Themselves" a devolution prospectus has been developed. The prospectus includes the transfer of services and assets.
- 1.2 Devolution is about devolving, primarily to Town and Parish Councils, services and assets which the community feel would add value locally.
- 1.3 Devolution does not include statutory services, it is about those services which the Council has had to reduce or stop altogether and which local communities feel should be delivered at the most appropriate level of government.
- 1.4 In relation to the transfer of assets, a formal decision making process has been established. This includes the Devolution Officers Group processing and vetting applications followed by the Asset Management Group and then through the normal Executive cycle.
- 1.5 As part of the Devolution agenda, a Parish Portal has been developed. This Portal provides Parish and Town Councils with a range of information to support both service and asset transfers.

Community Asset Transfer Policy

2.0 What is Community Asset Transfer?

- 2.1 Community Asset Transfer is the transfer of the Council's land and buildings to community and voluntary organisations at less than best consideration, normally on a leasehold arrangement.
- 2.2 The policy will apply when either:
 - A community or other voluntary organisation approaches the Council to request the use of a Council property asset, or
 - The Council identifies an asset as being surplus to its requirements and is considering how best to dispose of it.

3.0 Purpose of the Policy

- 3.1 The Council has a disposal policy which is contained in the Asset Management Plan and the general presumption is that disposals will be on the open market for best price. Reference is made in the Asset Management Plan about disposals to not for profit organisations. This community and asset transfer policy is to give

fuller guidance on how to achieve that.

- 3.2 The purpose of the policy is to set out a framework to show how West Berkshire Council will consider requests from the community and voluntary sector to use the Council's land and buildings. It also sets out the information that is required from the community and voluntary sector and the expectations for the transfer fulfilling the Council's strategic objectives and to empower local communities.

4.0 National Policy Context

- 4.1 National Government has, for some time, encouraged local authorities to involve local people in the direct running of their communities and has produced legislation, such as the Local Government Public Involvement Act 2007 and the Localism Act 2011, to create strong communities and deliver better public services through a rebalancing of the relationship between local people and public bodies.
- 4.2 The Localism Act has introduced the concept of the Community Right to Bid. This process allows relevant bodies (e.g. Parish Councils and Community Groups) to ask for assets of community value to be listed. This effectively means that the asset cannot be sold until the relevant body has been given a chance to confirm that they wish to bid for the asset. If so they must also be given sufficient time to submit their bid. A separate process has been introduced to manage this requirement, although the properties and applicants involved are likely to be similar to those affected by the Community Asset Transfer Policy.
- 4.3 The Quirk Review undertaken in 2007 set out the benefits to local groups by the management or ownership of public property assets which, in turn leads to stronger communities. The Quirk review recognised that the voluntary and community groups would need assistance to understand the risks and rewards of community asset transfer.

5.0 Local Context and Links to Council Strategies

- 5.1 Working in partnership with the local voluntary sector should help the Council to achieve some of its own objectives such as those in the Council Strategy including to reshape the way cultural, countryside and other services are delivered, with significantly greater involvement from local communities, the voluntary sector and parish councils and seek to transfer assets and services where these can clearly be delivered more effectively.

6.0 Criteria for community asset requests

- 6.1 When considering requests for a community asset transfer the Council must bear in mind the following in relation to the affected property:
- The need to raise capital receipts.
 - The loss of any income or opportunity costs.
 - Requirements for the property for direct service delivery by the Council.
 - The benefits to all parties by transferring the property.

- That, where the property is needed to deliver a service, additional ongoing revenue costs are not incurred.

6.2 *The Property*

- The property must be owned by the Council, either freehold or leasehold and be legally capable of being transferred.
- It must be surplus to operational requirements.
- The transfer of the property has been approved by the Asset Management Group.
- The transfer will deliver a strategic or operational benefit to the Council.

6.3 *The Use*

- The use will support the Council's strategic priorities set out in the Council Strategy.
- The property will be used for the benefit of the local community to enable local people to have access to services or facilities that meet their local needs.
- The use will be inclusive of a wide and diverse range of people.
- The use will deliver a demonstrable social, economic or environmental benefit to the local community.
- The use is not already provided in the locality.
- The use to be environmentally sustainable and Disability Discrimination Act compliant.

6.4 *The Applicant*

- Interested organisations must be community led with strong local links.
- Be properly constituted and be capable of being a legal entity.
- Not for profit.
- Be financially viable.
- Have good governance through open and accountable processes.
- Have the skills and capacity to deliver the service and manage the property.
- Have a well prepared business case.
- Have a track record of delivering similar projects either as an organisation or by way of key individuals within the organisation.

6.5 *Basis of transfer of property*

- Transfers will usually be on a leasehold basis. This makes it easier to limit the use for community benefit.
- Freehold will be considered if the applicant pays full market value.
- The applicant will be responsible for all management of the property including health and safety matters and all required surveys.
- The use is to be for community benefit and the organisation is to provide continuing evidence of a community benefit on a periodic basis.
- If planning consent is required then the applicant must obtain this.
- The applicant will be expected to meet all the running, maintenance and repair costs of the property.
- Collaboration and sharing of the property with other community or voluntary groups will be encouraged.
- The Council may be prepared to take back the property in cases where the transfer has been unsuccessful.

7.0 **The Community Asset Transfer Process**

- 7.1 A property asset is identified, either by WBC as being surplus to requirements or by a request by a community or voluntary organisation for a particular property. In the latter case the property may be operational so consultation will be required with the service to see if the property could be released from operational use.
- 7.2 Valuation undertaken bearing in mind that the transfer may be at less than best consideration.
- 7.3 Expressions of interest invited from suitable groups.
- 7.4 Expressions of interest appraised by Asset Management Group to include the relevant portfolio holder and recommendation to be made to Management Board.
- 7.5 Short listed groups requested to submit a business case for the transfer.
- 7.6 Business cases appraised by the Asset Management Group and relevant portfolio holder along with the option of an open market disposal. The assessment matrix shown later can be used to assist in the decision making process.
- 7.7 Decision recommended to Executive if outside the delegation of the Head of Legal Services.
- 7.8 Terms agreed with successful applicant and lease completed.
- 7.9 The timescale for applications will vary depending upon the complexity of the proposal, the number of applicants, the route it needs to take through the Council's governance structure and for the completion of the lease. However, applicants should be aware that the process could take 12 months.

8.0 Business Case Requirements

8.1 It is likely that potential applicants for community asset transfer will have limited financial and property management experience so it is important that a robust business case is submitted. The business case can be in any format but should contain the following information and evidence:

- Proposed use and maintenance of the property.
- Details of the local needs that will be met by the proposal and how the benefits will be measured and reported on an annual basis.
- Details of any new jobs that might be created.
- Evidence of local consultation and that there is a demand and local support for the scheme.
- How the scheme fits in with the Council's strategic objectives.
- Evidence of the ability, skills and capacity of the organisation to run the proposed service, including governance details.
- Evidence of the scheme complying with equal opportunity, sustainability and health and safety requirements.
- Financial details of the organisation and how the scheme will be funded, at the outset and going forward.
- Project plan to show likely timescales to set up and fund the scheme.
- A risk assessment and contingency plan in the case that the scheme is not successful.

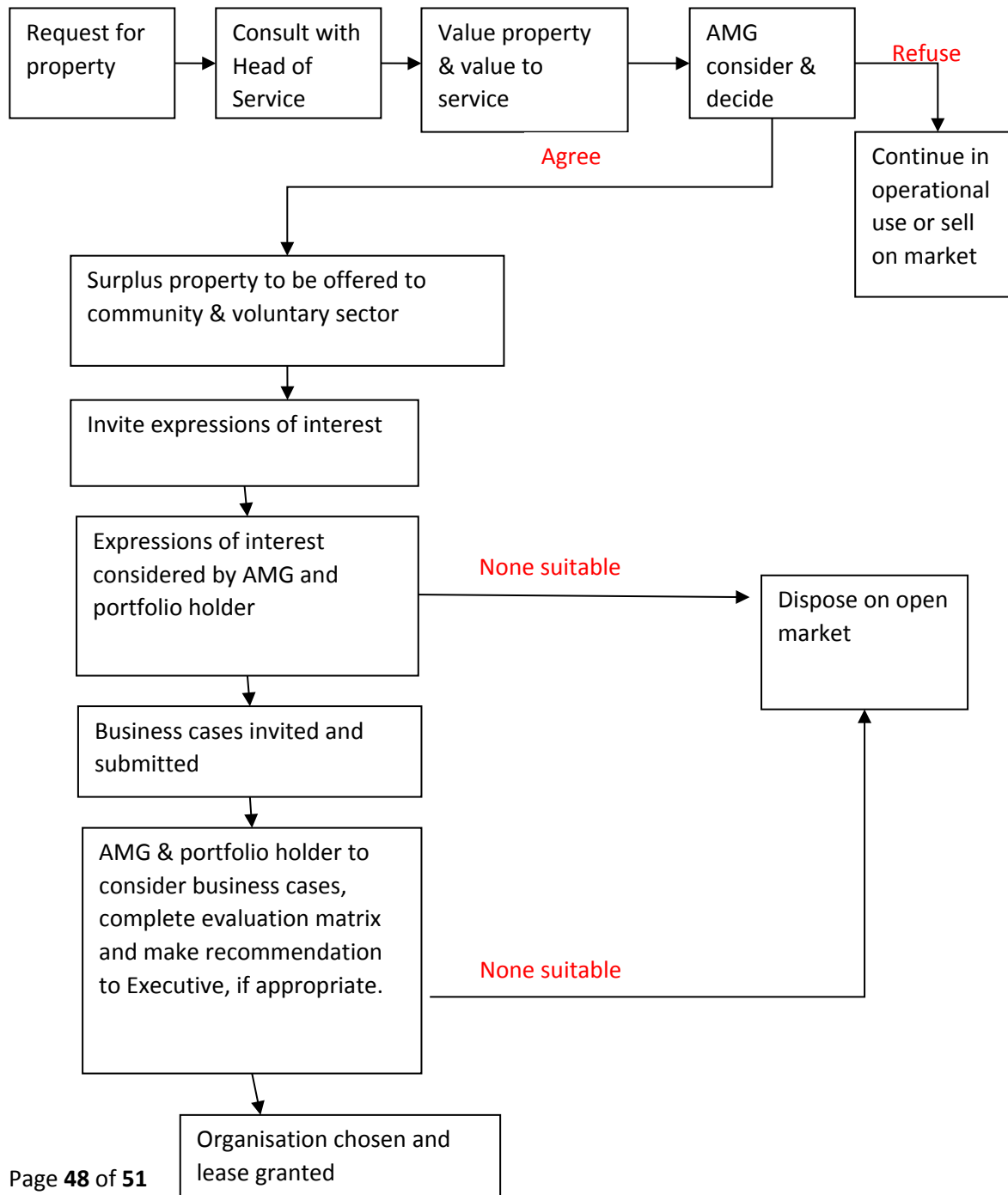
9.0 Risks in Community Asset Transfer

9.1 There is an element of risk in a community asset transfer and the potential risks are listed below. These will need to be considered in conjunction with any application.

- Organisation does not have the capacity or skills to take over the property and provide the service, or loses these at a later date.
- Reliance on key personnel either within the organisation or at the Council, lack of succession planning.
- Organisation cannot fund the proposed scheme either at the outset or at some time in the future.
- Property is not used for community purposes or taken over by a minority interest.
- Transfer contravenes State Aid or procurement regulations.
- Confusion over roles and responsibilities between the Council and the organisation.
- Objectives of the organisation are unclear and not aligned to Council objectives.

- Scheme is not value for money.
- Potential liability for Council if the scheme fails.

9.2 These risks can be reduced by the provision of clear legal documentation and a summary of expectations by each party at the outset.



COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER ASSESSMENT MATRIX

PROPERTY ADDRESS 	CURRENT USE: OPEN MARKET VALUE:
NAME OF APPLICANT/COMMUNITY GROUP: 	PROPOSED USE:

1.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	Score 10	Comments on reasons for score
1.1 Capital receipt or rental offered <i>(compare to market value)</i>		
1.2 Capital costs secured <i>(higher score the greater the percentage)</i>		
1.3 Estimated revenue savings to WBC: <i>(include building and maintenance costs)</i>		
	SUB-TOTAL: /30	

2.0 VIABILITY OF BUSINESS PLAN	Score 10	
2.1 Evidence of projected revenue stream for next 5 years		
2.2 Reliance on revenue grant aid <i>(lower score the greater the reliance)</i>		
2.3 Financial covenant strength of applicant		
2.4 Track record of applicant		
	SUB-TOTAL: /40	
3.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL'S STRATEGY <i>(proposal should contribute to at least one)</i>	Score 10	
3.1 Caring for and protecting the vulnerable		
3.2 Promoting a vibrant district		
3.3 Improving education		
3.4 Protecting the environment		
	SUB TOTAL /40	
4.0 CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL NEEDS	Score 10	
4.1 Which groups will benefit? <i>(e.g. young people, disabled, older people, sports users, unemployed)</i>		
4.2 Involvement of volunteers		

<i>(What will they do and how sustainable is their use?)</i>		
4.3 Number of jobs created (if applicable)		
4.4 Is joint use with other agencies proposed?		
	SUB TOTAL	
	/40	
GRAND TOTAL	/150	

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS
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