

**ENGAGEMENT WITH MEMBERS - REVISED PROTOCOL FOR STRATEGIC ASSETS**

*To:* **General Purposes Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **15 September 2015**

*From:* **Roger Moore Head of Strategic Assets/  
Chris Malyon Head of Finance**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **Not applicable**      *Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **The Committee is being asked to consider a protocol for improved engagement of Members in strategic asset matters.**

*Recommendation:* **To agree the approach proposed.**

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This paper arises from two earlier General Purposes Committees on the 12th March and the 19th May. In March during a discussion on a proposal to let a property at Barton Road in Ely for less than it was worth Members “highlighted the need to review officer delegation for property disposals particularly where revenue streams could exceed the delegation.”
- 1.2 The May meeting which considered officer delegation resolved that “the production of a protocol for improved engagement of Members be drawn up by the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with members of the Treasury Strategy Review Working Group.”
- 1.3 A spreadsheet detailing transactions and current Member engagement was discussed at the Treasury Review Group (aka Investment Review Group) on 17th June. (**Appendix 1**). This was sent to all County Council Members on the 18th June. Five responses were received and they were considered on the 22nd July at IRG.
- 1.4 All five responses suggested that the words “local member consulted” was better than “advised”.

Councillor Count did not think that licences required member involvement unless they were above a certain threshold. Most licences are to playgroups for nil rent and the highest was about £6,000 pa for a Public Health use in Castle Court.

Councillor Count suggested that Members should be consulted on option agreements.

Councillor Count also suggested that the consultation with Members should be “five days prior”.

Councillor Bywater suggested that Members were consulted about easements. Councillor Count was not 100% sure. Easements are registered legal interests used for example gas mains or rights of access. They are usually permanent and attract an upfront payment.

- 1.5 Sales with a capital value over £500,000 currently require Member approval.
- 1.6 Leases with an annual rental greater than £150,000 currently require Member approval.
- 1.7 Leases with a cumulative value over the life of the tenancy more than £500,000 currently require Member approval.
- 1.8 Leases at less than best consideration to community bodies, with a market value greater than £20,000, currently require Member approval.
- 1.9 When Local Members are consulted about disposals of freeholds and long leaseholds over seven years this is recorded on asset management files.
- 1.10 Local Member comments are noted in committee reports and form part of the decision making process.

## **2. REVISED APPROACH**

- 2.1 An updated spreadsheet is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.2 The words “local Member consulted” will be used rather than “advised”.
- 2.3 When consulted Members will be given 5 days to respond.
- 2.4 Local Members will be consulted when Licence fees are above £1,000.
- 2.5 Local Members will be consulted regarding Option and in addition Promotion agreements which are becoming more common. These are usually on high value sites which will most likely have been to GPC to declare surplus already
- 2.6 Local Members will not be consulted regarding easements.
- 2.7 An additional written check will be introduced when the Head of Strategic Assets signs off the instruction to Legal requiring confirmation that Local Members have been consulted.
- 2.8 Since May the Investment Review Group has also considered other property matters such as the housing developments being considered by the Council on its land and it is proposed that other significant property matters will be considered by the group. An example would be the strategic review of the Council’s Farms Estate which previously has heavily involved Members.
- 2.9 Details of the Council’s property assets are available to all on the Council’s website.  
[Web link to maps showing County Council assets in local members areas.](#)
- 2.10 Visits to see property assets have been organised before and will continue to be offered when required.

## **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

### **3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### **3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### **3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

## **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Resource Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

#### **4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

#### **4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### **4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

All Members have been consulted.

#### **4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

All Members have been consulted.

#### **4.6 Public Health Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
GPC reports 12th March and 19th May 2015  Appendix 1 – Spreadsheet showing current Member engagement in property/strategic assets matters.  Appendix 2 – Revised spreadsheet showing current Member engagement in property/strategic assets matters.	Box No: OCT1104 Room No:1st floor Octagon Shire Hall Castle Hill Cambridge CB3 0AP