

## Land and Property Strategy 2024-29

To: Asset & Procurement Committee

Meeting Date: 21 March 2024

From: Executive Director Finance and Resource

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2024/053

Executive Summary: The Committee is asked to approve the Land and Property Strategy 2024-2029. The strategy will provide the framework for property to align with the vision and ambitions of the council's Strategic Framework.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) approve the Land and Property Strategy 2024-29.

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# 1. Creating a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire

- 1.1 The Land and Property Strategy 2024-29 will deliver a property portfolio which will mean every service area can deliver their functions effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the residents and communities of Cambridgeshire.
- 1.2 The strategy is aligned and contributes to the vision and seven ambitions of the councils Strategic Framework by managing property strategically as a corporate asset.
- 1.3 The land and property portfolio directly and indirectly support each of the seven council ambitions.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) is currently without an up-to-date committee approved Land and Property Strategy.
- 2.2 CCC own and lease a diverse portfolio of land and property and the way we manage these assets have a direct impact on the quality of services that we deliver for the community.
- 2.3 In the context of national, regional, and local change post pandemic, the council requires a new Corporate Land and Property Strategy. The council's move to an agile way of working has changed the dynamic and need for some elements of the property portfolio and this strategy will address the requirements of the portfolio through asset challenge and the refreshing and embedding the corporate landlord model of asset management.
- 2.4 The council previously commissioned The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to carry out a Property Asset Management Health Check within CCC, and the report was received in May 2021. It highlighted actions for change and improvement. The Land and Property Strategy will provide the framework to both address the actions and required changes which remain.
- 2.5 The cost implications of the Land and Property Strategy are part of the business planning process and associated targets for the Accommodation Improvement Programme are agreed within the Business and Financial Plan 2024-2029.

## 3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to approve the Land and Property Strategy 2024-2029. This strategy will enable property decisions to be made in line with the council's Strategic Framework. Property decisions need to be transparent and subject to challenge. They need to be effective at both operational and strategic level and have a clear governance process.
- 3.2 Land and property work is carried out in accordance with recognised industry guidance and statutory and compliance legislative requirements. The buildings are maintained in a safe and compliant manner. However, the lack of an overarching strategic framework, means the approach to commissioning repair and maintenance work within the operational portfolio

has been predominantly reactive. The strategy will provide the structure to move the focus of investment to a more planned preventative model.

- 3.3 The strategy will provide an effective framework to enable the council to prudently target its investments through the Corporate Landlord model and align this with the strategic principles.
- 3.4 The strategy details how it will align and contribute to other key enabling strategies within the council, notably the Council People Strategy, Climate Change and Environment Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, IT and Digital Strategy, Capital Strategy and Sustainable Procurement Strategy.
- 3.5 The strategy has four guiding principles which will drive the policy and delivery of the council's land and property portfolio to ensure it is fit for purpose for the needs of the council and its communities. The strategy informs what we intend to do, and what we will achieve by applying the principles.
- 3.6 The strategy details the strategic fit and how this aligns within the decision-making governance of the council. A Strategic Property Board which will oversee the delivery of the strategy and an operational Corporate Landlord Stakeholder Group will be constituted to ensure property is linked cross council both strategically and operationally. These groups will have cross council membership at officer level and report through the decision-making governance process shown within the strategy document.
- 3.7 The strategy endorses the approach that property and assets are a corporate resource, and they are delivered through an appropriate and embedded corporate landlord model, which centralises the decision making and budgetary responsibilities to the Landlord (Property) with service areas tenants within our assets.
- 3.8 Property is an enabler for the council to embrace new ways of working through agile, flexible, and efficient use of assets. The requirement within the Business and Financial Plan is that revenue costs will reduce, and capital receipts achieved via a reduction in our portfolio. This will be realised through the delivery of the Accommodation Improvement Programme which is part of the councils Corporate Change Programme. The programme will deliver a Hub, Spoke and Satellite model.
- 3.9 The key operational areas which as part of the Corporate Landlord model, will deliver the strategic outcomes are explained within Appendix A of the strategy. These are headlined as:
  - Measuring Performance and Delivery
  - Asset Challenge Process
  - Maintaining the Assets
  - Working with Partners
  - Engaging with our Communities
  - De-Carbonisation Carbon Net Zero
  - Enabling Service Areas to maximise Delivery.
- 3,10 The strategy will provide the framework to:
  - Effectively manage the commercial investment portfolio.

- Baseline the current carbon footprint of all assets and programme the decarbonisation of the assets in a prioritised manner to reduce their impact.
- Generate capital receipts to support the capital programme.
- Manage all assets strategically and corporately.
- Through asset challenge retain only those suitable and sufficient assets which are supporting council ambitions.
- Maximise opportunities for partnership through One Public Estate (OPE) programme. Working with public sector partners remains a key driver to enable innovation across the public estate and create real opportunities for savings linked to new shared ways of working.
- To support change management programmes which enable the council to work more flexibly and efficiently, aligning with new delivery models.
- To reduce revenue impacts across the portfolio.
- Populate the new Computer Aided Facilities Management (CAFM) Concerto system to hold all property data within one platform and utilise this to report and measure performance and make decisions based on evidential data.
- To work closer with communities to empower them to thrive. Work with communities to improve their resilience by allowing the use of Council assets by the community to deliver change and social value.

3.11 A delivery action plan is included within Appendix B of the strategy.

3.12 The strategy has a strong focus on community and partnership working:

- (a) Consider all options to share assets with other public bodies and explore all OPE opportunities.
- (b) Continuing to communicate and consider with communities and elected members potential for Community Asset Transfer where it delivers the best outcomes for all parties.

3.13 There has been service area consultation and two member workshops as engagement.

## 4. Alternative Options Considered

4.1 The alternative option would be to do nothing and continue to manage and operate our land and property estate without an up-to-date relevant Property Strategy. This is not recommended as development and management of land and property without alignment to the council's Strategic Framework, and the vision and ambitions within in, would increase the risk of an inefficient and ineffective estate and poor service delivery. The council would also not fully maximise opportunities to increase income and reduce revenue cost within the portfolio.

## 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 The opportunities to strategically use our land and property to support the council vision and ambitions are significant and the strategy will provide the corporate framework to enable our portfolio to be:

- Suitable and Effective
- Place Shaping
- Sustainable and Greener
- Work closer with Communities and Partners

## 6. Significant Implications

### 6.1 Finance Implications

There are no direct financial implications connected with the adoption of the strategy.

However, the proposed Land and Property Strategy will enable an evidenced based need for the current property portfolio and provide asset challenge, this process alongside the change programme will enable asset rationalisation to be realised which will reduce revenue spend, deliver capital receipts, and reduce the carbon footprint of the portfolio.

There is a savings target included within the Business and Financial Plan 2024-29. This will be achieved through the delivery of the Asset Improvement Programme.

### 6.2 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications connected with the adoption of the strategy, although, the Land and Property Strategy will improve the governance processes and will be viewed from a strategic and corporate perspective. Improved procurement and legal adherence will be an outcome from taking a more strategic, one council and long-term planned outcome focused approach.

### 6.3 Risk Implications

The current strategic risk in not setting and approving a coherent strategy to deliver a corporately owned property portfolio is that property will not be aligned and supporting the council vision and ambitions contained within the Strategic Framework. The portfolio will not be efficient and effective and financial revenue savings and income contributions will not be delivered. The councils Corporate Landlord model would not be embedded and the contributions to the carbon net zero targets will not be corporately focused. We would not maximise the opportunities of partnering with other public bodies or local communities.

## 6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The Strategy will provide the framework for corporate property decision making. The equality implications for each individual project will be assessed and recorded on a specific project-by-project basis.

## 6.5 Climate Change and Environment Implications

Sustainable and Greener assets is one of the four clear guiding principles within the strategy by which we will shape and manage our land and buildings.

To ensure our current property and future estate portfolio is sustainable and net carbon zero in design, construction, operation, and final disposal and meet the 2030 ambitions of the council:

- We will ensure that property is as sustainable as possible in design, construction, operation, and maintenance to contribute to the Councils net carbon zero ambitions.
- We will aim to reduce energy and water consumption, and CO2 emissions, using renewable energy where appropriate.
- Minimise waste.
- Use whole life considerations in our business case developments for construction projects reducing energy and water consumption and carbon emissions.
- Invest in our portfolio to minimise the carbon impact and decarbonise.
- Align with the Climate Change and Environment Strategy.
- We will understand the property portfolio carbon baseline impact and the financial impact of decarbonisation and achieving net zero.
- Identify opportunities to invest in innovative technologies and maximise opportunities within our Rural Estate.
- Look at community energy opportunities.

## 7. Source Documents

### 7.1 None