

## **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2007/08 (FORWARD PLAN REF NO: 3/07)**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Council's Asset Management Plan 2007/08 (AMP) for consideration and Executive Board approval. This document is one of the key policies identified in the work programme approved by Council in February 2007 and together with the Capital Strategy forms the basis for management of the Council's asset base.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 For a number of years the Council has maintained and regularly updated its Asset Management Plan. Having previously been assessed by the Government Office - East as "good", the plan is now a key document in the annual assessment of the Council's Use of Resources and a "key line of enquiry" is centred round management of the asset base.
- 2.2 The AMP follows the same format as in previous years and details existing asset management arrangements, outcomes and planned actions to improve corporate asset use. The AMP is attached to this report at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Elsewhere on this agenda, the Highways and Property Services Manager has provided the Executive Board with information and revisions on Property Performance Indicators and local performance measures. These have been included in the AMP.

### **3 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The purpose of the AMP is to ensure that assets are properly managed and that use of resource is maximised. Failure to produce a plan would increase the risk of mis-management and potential loss.

### **4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The AMP 2007/08 is required for the better management of resources.
- 4.2 The principal cost to the authority in producing the plan is officer time.

### **5 RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Executive Board **RESOLVES**  
To endorse the Asset Management Plan 2007/08.

John Honey

Corporate Director (Internal Services)

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**Background Papers:-**

None

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If you would like this report in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

# **Rochford District Council**

## **Asset Management Plan**

**2007/8**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Council's vision for the District is to make Rochford the place of choice in Essex to live, work and visit. The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for the planning and monitoring of physical assets (land & buildings) during their usefulness to the authority to provide the best possible match of assets with service delivery strategies and help make the vision a reality.

Rochford is a relatively small authority employing approximately 238 FTE staff. The Council's asset base is equally small and comprises principally of operational, direct service property. The district covers 65 square miles with approximately 783 acres of owned/managed open space and children's playgrounds and 7 fee paying car parks. The only commercial property owned by the Council is three shops with residential accommodation over and one small agricultural tenancy. The shops are currently being disposed of.

Management and maintenance of the Council's sports centres, swimming pool and 3 public halls is the responsibility of Virgin Active (formerly Holmes Place Plc) under the terms of a 20 year Leisure Services Contract, currently in year 4.

The most significant asset is the housing stock. However, the Council now has less than 1800 properties for rent including 665 units in 12 sheltered housing schemes. Following a stock option appraisal process and successful tenants ballot, the Council expects to transfer its housing stock to its chosen partner, Rochford Housing Association, in July 2007.

The Council Offices are situated in South Street, Rochford and comprise a number of former residential buildings converted to office accommodation. The Council Chamber and Committee Rooms are located at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh and accommodation is provided in these premises for the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages and a local charity, Mayday Mobile.

### **1.2 Overview Of Progress**

As part of the Council's Improvement Planning process, a new political decision making structure has been agreed. The Council is no longer a "fourth option" authority but is operating a Leader and Executive system of governance. This, together with improvements to the operation of overview and scrutiny within the authority, is expected to contribute to a more focused approach to the use of assets.

In January 2006, York Consulting Limited completed a study of Asset Management at Rochford on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The recommendations arising out of the study have informed the development of this Plan and the Council's Capital Strategy.

The leisure management contractor, Virgin Media, manage the Council's leisure facilities under a twenty-year contract which includes provision for capital investment of £7 million over the term. This has allowed a major refurbishment of the principal leisure facility at Clements Hall, completed in October 2004. The main public hall, The Mill, in Rayleigh has also been completely refurbished. Maintenance of the leisure buildings is now the responsibility of Virgin as part of the contract.

## Appendix 1

The Council has also developed a new purpose built sports centre as part of a joint initiative with Virgin Active on the former Park School site in west Rayleigh. This development provides a mix of leisure facilities including a skateboard park, indoor bowls and catering facilities. It opened to the public as planned on 13 May 2006.

The Council continues to keep office accommodation under review in accordance with its corporate property strategy. Following internal restructuring of divisions within the Council in 2006, a programme of office moves was undertaken to maximise the use of available accommodation. The Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the housing stock together with staff will lead to further rationalisation of office use during 2007/8.

Planning permission for the temporary reception area at the Rochford Offices, opened in November 2004, has been extended to 2011. Proposals to create a permanent reception within the ground floor area of No 3 South Street will be considered over the coming year. The former Reception has been converted to a much used meeting area and training facility. Refurbishment of areas of the Civic Suite has improved meeting facilities in Rayleigh and air conditioning has been installed in the principal committee room and adjacent office.

In line with an identified need in the County Structure Plan and considerable public support and petitions, the Council has created the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park from 103 acres of land at Blatches Farm, Eastwood, acquired from Essex County Council. The Council is now in the process of developing the leisure and recreational potential of the Country Park and improving access through the acquisition of a further 117 acres of adjacent land to enlarge the park facility. It is intended to use compulsory purchase powers to achieve the extension if negotiation with landowners proves unsuccessful.

35-39 West Street, Rochford have been acquired by compulsory purchase and transferred to Southend Building Preservation Trust who are in the process of restoring these historic buildings as part of the Council's initiative to enhance the town. This work is almost complete.

The Council has concluded its programme for refurbishment of public toilets with the exception of Great Wakering and won a national award for work carried out at its facility at Crown Hill, Rayleigh. Toilets now include emergency alarms within the disabled units.

Major restoration work has been completed on the Windmill, Rayleigh with funding obtained from the Thames Gateway South Essex partnership. This landmark building, within the curtilage of Mill Hall, is unusual in that it is a mill occupying a town centre site. For many years it has been licensed to the Rayleigh Antiquarian Society and used to store and display antiquities and memorabilia. In June 2006 a formal partnership was entered into with the National Trust and they are working with the Rayleigh Antiquarian Society to provide a much improved learning and resource facility. As part of this project, an area of unused land to the rear of the Windmill has been developed as a Sensory Garden. This will add to the facilities available at the Windmill.

A programme of works has been completed following a full Disability Discrimination survey to implement necessary improvements to the Council's public buildings to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. Other minor works to improve Disability access to open spaces and other facilities are ongoing.

In accordance with the Council's E-Government Strategy, software upgrades have been introduced in Estates Management, Local Land Charges, Development and Building Control, GIS and various minor systems to allow web access to corporate information. Land related information is currently available on the Council's intranet only but will be extended in accordance with the Council's Access to Services and ICT Strategies that already provides electronic delivery of Land Charge Searches, Planning Applications and various on-line payments.

### Energy and Water Policy for Council Buildings

The Executive Board will be invited to consider a policy document for energy and water for council buildings at their meeting in July 2007. The objectives of the policy are:

- To improve the energy efficiency of the Council's buildings and internal systems through the normal maintenance programme of works
- To raise staff awareness of the need to be energy conscious
- To reduce energy consumption, minimize expenditure and reduce environmental pollution, in particular CO2 emissions
- To ensure energy and water are procured in an appropriate way to ensure value for money.

### York Consulting Report

In January 2006 York Consulting carried out a case study at Rochford District Council on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Their report was written on the basis of a visit to the authority in July 2005 involving a meeting with the Management Team and individual interviews with Officers and the Leader of the Council.

The case study included a review of the position of the Authority in relation to 14 good practice processes in the evaluation framework for the development and implementation of corporate capital strategies and asset management plans. It highlighted the process outputs and outcomes generated by the Authority and drew conclusions and made recommendations.

Progress on the recommendations is included at Part 5. p33.

### The Quirk Review

In May 2007 the Department of Communities and Local Government launched "Making Assets Work" – the findings of the Quirk review of community management and ownership of assets. The proposals arising from this report are likely to be incorporated into the legislation expected later in 2007. The three principal findings of the review are that:

1. asset transfer should take place where it can realise social or community benefits, without risking wider public interest concerns
2. the benefits of community ownership of assets can outweigh the risks involved, in appropriate circumstances, and
3. risks can be minimised and managed by drawing on the experience of others.

Rochford District Council has managed its community assets based on similar principles over a considerable number of years. Areas of public open spaces and play areas have been transferred from district control to local parish councils or where more appropriate to national charitable trusts such as the National Playing Fields Association and Woodlands Trust to the benefit of all its residents and the locality. Land has been acquired where appropriate from developers and on occasion government departments or other authorities for the public benefit. Community buildings, provided through the Council, have been managed locally by agreement and the Council will continue to work in partnership with all agencies in its area to maximise the benefit of community assets within the district by all such means.

### 1.3 Corporate Objectives

Asset management planning is the systematic preparation of an overall plan to optimise the use of assets in terms of service benefits and financial return in order to meet corporate objectives. In recent years the Council has developed a number of linked plans and strategies that draw together to form a business plan and strategy for the improvement of services. The Asset Management Plan links with these plans and strategies to ensure that assets are considered as a strategic resource supporting effective service delivery and the achievement of the overall business plan.

• Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy	• Capital Programme
• Food Law Enforcement Service Plan	• Corporate Plan & Best Value Performance Plan
• Housing Strategy	• IS/ICT Strategy
• District Transport Strategy	• Corporate Consultation Strategy
• Woodlands Strategy	• Rochford District Local Plan
• The Community Strategy	• Rochford Economic Development Strategy

### 1.4 Programme Of Continuous Improvement.

Rochford's asset base is small and Heads of Service have an intimate knowledge of all property used in connection with service delivery in their own areas and most have a general knowledge of all property owned by the Council. Corporate Property is a standing item on the agenda for monthly meetings of the Staffing and Resources Management Team.

Assets are not perceived to be ring-fenced within any given services with the exception of Housing Revenue Account property. Some services have a clearly defined role as custodian but because the authority is smaller in total than the departments in many larger authorities all property is viewed as a corporate asset and decisions made accordingly.

The council offices consist of a row of converted houses in South Street, Rochford comprising listed Georgian and Victorian buildings and one 14<sup>th</sup> century Meeting House. All services are based here. Because of their location and design there is little or no requirement for formal arrangements for shared or cross-service use of assets.

Nevertheless, decisions taken in connection with service delivery must include the following guiding principles to be applied to all decisions involving property.

- ◆ assets held by the authority are recognised as service inputs similar to IT, staff resources and finance and are aligned to services in the same way
- ◆ asset management decisions are integrated with strategic planning
- ◆ asset planning decisions are based on evaluation of alternatives which consider acquisition, operation and disposal costs and the benefit and risks of ownership
- ◆ accountability is established for the condition, use and performance of assets
- ◆ disposals are based on analysis of the methods that achieve the best net return to the authority taken in the context of the Authority's overall aims and objectives
- ◆ an effective internal control structure has been established for asset policies and procedures
- ◆ use of information systems provide reliable, relevant and timely data with which to make informed decisions

## 1.5 **Corporate Property Strategy**

### Acquisitions

The Council will identify the need for land for operational purposes and identify opportunities which either represent exceptional value to the Council or which due to location or type are worth purchasing to assist with strategic, policy or regenerative objectives.

The Council will consider the use of Compulsory Purchase Powers to assist with land assembly where there is a clear community benefit.

The Council will seek to acquire land through the Town and Country planning process by the use of S.106 or other Agreements where these can be justified and where they result in a clear community benefit. The Council will not accept land under such Agreements without a commuted sum with which to maintain such land unless there is an overriding reason to do so. The Council will not accept lands under such Agreements for which there is no practical use and which do not result in a clear community benefit.

The Corporate Property Officer (CPO) must be consulted prior to any agreement to acquire land arising from planning considerations.

Where it has the opportunity to accept or refuse, the Council will not accept any land or buildings as Trustee unless there is a clear community benefit and/or an endowment or other sums with which to maintain such land or buildings.

Where land is accepted as Trustee, the Council will try to ensure that the trust document provides as broad a discretion as possible to manage it within the constraints of charitable law and the intended purpose.

### Management

The Council will maintain up to date, informative and user friendly property information systems that allow the generation of management information to aid the decision making process.



The Council has designated a Corporate Property Officer whose functions are to develop the corporate asset management process.

It will manage its property so as to achieve the relevant objectives and will continually review its property stock through the Corporate Property Group which will comprise the Staffing & Resources Management Team and such Heads of Service, or their representatives, as are concerned in the acquisition, management or disposal of property.

The Council will manage its property as a corporate resource and service occupiers will be required to submit matters of change of use, under-occupation and major repair or improvement to the Corporate Property Group for consideration (housing stock excluded).

The Council will consider use of a procedure for concessionary rent in order to deliver effective services via third parties where this can be related directly to the aims and objectives of the Council.

### Buildings and Alterations

The Council has developed and will maintain a forward funded five year programme of repair and maintenance with adequate budgetary provision to ensure standards are met appropriate to the purposes for which the property is held and compliance with all statutory requirements.

The Council will continue to financially vet all proposed capital schemes and to monitor scheme outcomes.

The Council will develop and maintain appropriate information systems to allow the analysis of data for the purposes of monitoring property performance.

### Operational Property

The Corporate Property Group will carry out a biennial review of all property holdings to ensure that property remains suitable for the service to which it is put and that demand exists to a level justifying the cost of retaining the asset.

The Council will ensure that maintenance standards are suitable for the purposes to which the property is put.

The Council will seek to minimise costs in use and optimise the utilisation of all property.

### Investment Portfolio

The Council has a negligible investment portfolio but will seek to manage it effectively and to maximize income but in any event to ensure a rate of return acceptable in the prevailing economic climate.

### Disposals

The Council will seek to minimise vacant and non-productive property within its portfolio.

Disposal of a property should not be considered if:

- it is required for operational purposes or
- it is strategic to economic regeneration or
- it provides significant community benefit or
- it provides significant net rental income or

The Council will once a property has been declared surplus to requirements dispose of it at the earliest opportunity in accordance with Standing Orders and with a view to maximising the return on the property subject to any lawfully overriding policy considerations.

Disposals should not outstrip acquisitions to the extent that this adversely affects the Council's flexibility of operations and the ability to shape and carry out its strategic aims.

### Data Collection

The Council will maintain suitable sources of data in order to develop performance measures against which the cost of holding both operational and non-operational properties can be judged.

The Council will develop and fund an appropriate data collection programme appropriate to the five year maintenance plan.

The Property Management Group will:

- review the Property Strategy on an annual basis in light of the Council's overall strategy, aims and objectives
- continually review the property holdings and consider property needs, changes of use, under-occupation and major improvement schemes
- develop review and implement the asset management plan
- ensure the Council's objectives continue to be met

### **1.6 Corporate Property Officer**

Currently the Corporate Director (Internal Services) is the Corporate Property Officer. The Property Maintenance & Highways Manager is deputy Corporate Property Officer with particular responsibility for development of meaningful and useful local Property Performance Indicators directly linked to corporate objectives. The Council receives information on all performance indicators on a quarterly basis and specifically review property performance indicators annually in July.

The overarching nature of the Corporate Director's role requires involvement in most, if not all, relevant corporate and business planning groups at officer level. However, the Property Maintenance & Highways Manager has day to day responsibility for operational property maintenance and oversees performance.

### **1.7 Consultation/User Surveys**

A formal consultation was undertaken in November 2003 to assess the fitness for purpose of all Council accommodation including that managed externally. This exercise was repeated in June 2006 using a Property Suitability Questionnaire based on best practice identified through the Chartered Institute of Public Finance's Asset Management Planning Network. A 24 page report was produced in January 2007

and results have been used to inform the progress made over that period. Categories assessed for suitability included location, image, accessibility, space, environment, fixtures and fittings, service delivery, safety and security and general comments.

The main Council Offices are situated in South Street, Rochford and comprise a number of former residential buildings converted to office accommodation. Problems with this situation were highlighted in the 2003 survey in that, although the buildings maintain an attractive exterior, conversion of the interior to offices is not entirely suitable. At that time it was also apparent that heating and ventilation of the offices created major problems. In 2003 there was no air conditioning in the South Street office buildings and if windows were opened to provide ventilation the traffic noise became a problem. As a result, many offices are now equipped with portable air conditioning units. The Training Room has now had an air conditioning system installed. However, control and suitability of heating and ventilation systems in some areas continues to be a problem. The lack of meeting rooms also continues to cause difficulties.

Accessibility of all offices for people with special needs is considered to be a problem for some, as we would be unable to employ anyone who is unable to climb stairs. Although accessibility to Acacia House, for people with special needs, is difficult, the new main reception is now fully compliant and visitors can be met there instead.

External signage has improved since 2003. However, internal signage could be improved to assist staff.

Parking at the South Street offices has been reviewed and space allocation updated. Parking, for staff and the public, is generally considered to be good, although concerns have been raised for the safety of staff using the Freight House facility during the winter, due to poor lighting and youth presence. Lighting is being addressed as part of the 2007/08 Capital programme. Also, there is limited parking at the Rochford offices, which means that it is difficult for visitors to park.

In 2003, IT adequacy was widely felt to be poor. However, with the roll-out of the thin client solution and VPN, this situation has improved although problems still exist in some areas.

Safety and security of the environment for staff is generally felt to be satisfactory. However, comment has been made that no real check is made of who may follow staff through the security doors. Improvements to the door entry system are planned for 2007.

Information obtained from the survey has also been used to inform development of the capital strategy and action plan.

### Office Moves

A survey of the 44 staff involved was undertaken following the offices moves arising out of the 2006 restructuring of divisions. 34% (15) responded. Despite wider consultation than in previous moves and full information provided in advance on the intranet, some staff felt insufficiently informed. Most staff felt that communications improved as the moves got underway and were happier with their new office accommodation and location as a result of the reorganisation. Some commented that 'freshen-up' decorating would have been welcome. However, some staff were not as

happy and commented on lack of storage space and insufficient lighting. The results of this consultation will aid planning for further moves following LSVT. Appendix 1

## **1.8 Value For Money**

One of the principal aims of an Asset Management Plan is to ensure that the opportunity cost of having resources tied up in land and buildings is kept to a minimum and that expenditure (whether it be capital or revenue) is used effectively and efficiently to provide value-for-money. The land and property assets, which a local authority holds, are there to support the business of the local authority, that is, to provide services. The unlikely exception to that main rationale is where land and buildings are used for investment purposes, in which case the emphasis instead is to be on ensuring that the resource provides a maximum financial return.

Any proposal for the acquisition, disposal or change of use of property must have regard to the principles of continuous improvement, the corporate property strategy and value for money set out in this plan. This includes decisions taken within internal service and best value reviews. The officer responsible for any such proposal is required to complete and return the following pro forma to the Corporate Property Officer confirming that these matters have been properly considered.

DECISIONS AFFECTING PROPERTY		
Project Appraisal	Description of Proposal	
Service Area:		
Ref:		
Lead officer:		
Requirements	Evidence that requirements met	
<b>Objectives of the proposal</b> Describe; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>property needs arising out of the proposal</li> <li>community benefits</li> <li>risks of ownership</li> <li>other options considered for achieving same objectives</li> </ul>		
<b>Contribution to Service Improvement</b> Identify how the proposal contributes to the delivery of the Council's Community Strategy and Corporate Improvement Plan		
<b>Contribution to Strategic Priorities</b> Identify how the proposal contributes to the delivery of BVPP/Improvement Plan Strategic Priorities.		
<b>Evidence of Need</b> <u>Service Improvement Plan</u> Show how the project is identified in any Service Improvement Plan and it's contribution to Service Improvement <u>Performance Indicators</u> What impact does the project have on performance indicators <u>Statutory Obligations/ Health &amp; Safety</u> Show how the project meets a statutory obligation and/or Health & Safety requirements		
<b>Financial</b> Acquisition, operation and disposal costs <u>Capital Cost</u> Land/construction/furnishings/professional fees/statutory charges <u>Revenue Costs</u> Staffing/running costs <u>Whole-life cost (including revenue consequences)</u> <u>Funding</u> Internal Capital Internal Revenue External		
<b>Consultation</b> Identify consultation undertaken		

## PART 2. STRUCTURE FOR MANAGEMENT OF ASSETS Appendix 1

### 2.1 Corporate Property Officer

John Honey.	Corporate Director (Internal Services)
Date of appointment: 7 December 2000	

### Deputy Corporate Property Officer

David Timson.	Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
Date of appointment. 13 February 2003	

### 2.2 Role & responsibilities

- Strategic overview of asset management
- Preparation and maintenance of the Asset Management Plan
- Maintenance of the Property Register
- Establishment and maintenance of a Performance Measurement system
- Monitoring of Best Value and Process Reviews to ensure consideration is given to the principles of asset planning
- Identification of under-used or surplus assets as part of the rolling review in consultation with Heads of Service
- Fortnightly update to Staffing & Resources Management Team and as necessary to Senior Management Team

### 2.3 Asset Management Group (Officers)

Staffing & Resources Management Team
Date of Appointment 1 April 2006

### 2.4 Terms of reference

- to ensure that property decisions are consistent with service requirements
- to recommend priorities in line with Corporate Planning objectives
- to identify opportunities for innovation, income generation or to reduce expenditure
- to review acquisitions/disposals
- to co-ordinate and assess maintenance programmes and Capital Programme provision
- to maintain and monitor the property register
- to review and revise performance measurement in line with Good Practice Guidelines
- to undertake a systematic rolling review of existing assets
- to identify unused and underused assets

## 2.5 Executive Board

Appendix 1

Councillors: T.G. Cutmore (Chairman), P.M. Hudson (Vice Chairman), K.J. Gordon, J.M. Pullen, C.G. Seagers, D.G. Stansby, M.G.B. Starke, Mrs M.J. Webster, P.F.A. Webster (Finance & Resources Champion)

Date of appointment: 15 May 2007

## 2.6 Terms of reference

To make recommendations to the Council in relation to the functions contained in Part A to Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

Subject to those matters reserved to the Council in Part A to Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, the Review Committee functions and with the exception of those Council (non-Executive) powers specifically delegated to other forums set out in Parts A and C to Part 3 of the Constitution, the Executive has full power to act in respect of every other function.

To refer at its discretion, any issue to the Review Committee for detailed consideration and report.

To consider the recommendations of the Review Committee either arising from an issue referred to it as above, or where the latter Committee has "called-in" a decision of the Executive for review.

## 2.7 Asset Register

Comprehensive property register available to:

- All Managers as Word document in shared directory G:\LPA\LGS\Shared\ASSET REGISTER
- Register is currently being transferred to GIS linked Uniform Spacial 7 Estates Management system.
- Specific planning information is also available via "Public Access" on the Council's Web site

## 2.8 Reports on Property Performance

<b>Report from</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Corporate Property Officer	Staffing & Resources Management Team (Officers)	Fortnightly
	Senior Management Team	As necessary
	Executive Board	As necessary but with strategic review of the AMP annually in July
Executive Board	Review Committee and Council	As necessary with regard to the Budget and Policy Framework
Deputy Corporate Property Officer	Executive Board	(Property Performance Indicators) Annually in July

## 2.9 Core Data

Information on assets is available as a corporate resource. However, core data is held in several discrete systems providing information for different purposes. These include central property files, an Asset Register maintained as a Word document, Land Terrier information in DBase, a Comino Housing Management and Property Maintenance system, a CAPS Uniform 7 Estates Management system and Brandt for financial information.

Information on land and property including the Asset Register and Land Terrier data has largely been transferred to CAPS Uniform 7. This process is one step in the development of a corporate spatial system that already includes development and building control, local plans, land charges, tree preservation and environmental health data. Training has been provided with the introduction of each module. A Uniform management team has been set up to oversee day to day management of the system and identify training needs.

Information available includes;

Address and description and UPRN, Property Type, Tenure, Valuation, Acquisitions & Disposals, Insurance details, Condition Surveys, Leasehold information, Works & Maintenance details, Spatial Information through Uniform 7 linked to planning database.

The spatial system will be linked to a corporate electronic records management system currently being rolled out across the authority with completion by Autumn 2007.



**3.1 Prioritisation**

The Capital Strategy identifies the following as key priorities to be met before resources are allocated to any project to be funded from the Capital Programme;

- A.** Investment in statutory and priority services to ensure the continuation and improvement of essential services and value for money
- B.** Ensure that landlord and owner responsibilities are undertaken including priority items identified through the asset management plan these include works under the Disabilities Discrimination Act.
- C.** Improve infrastructure that has an influence on economic activity and the well being of the Authority.
- D.** Priority items flowing from key strategy documents including the Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan and Community Plan.

These priorities are reflected in Corporate Property Strategy and identified if applicable in the AMP Action Plan.

**3.2 Action Plan**

The Action Plan links corporate priorities to specific projects or actions and indicates the responsible officer and timeframe. It is updated periodically and reviewed by Members annually. Individual projects agreed by the Executive Board are subject to a monitoring process that ensures all members are provided with an update of progress on a regular basis.

Corporate Priority	Action	Responsible Officer	Capital Strategy	Time Scale	Notes
<b>Development of Asset Management</b>	1. We will continue to gather and refine information and strive to produce meaningful local performance indicators.  We will seek to overcome the difficulties experienced in producing information required for BVPI 180	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager	n/a	On-going	Members agreed a new set of local performance indicators in June 2003. These are monitored and reviewed annually.  The appropriateness of local indicators are kept under review and new indicators will be reported to the Executive Board in July 2007.
	2. We will continue to improve the corporate property database.	Senior Management Team	n/a	On going	Developments in line with ICT/IS Strategy and IEG Statement for improved electronic delivery of this information
	3. We will continue to develop processes to enable the comparison of the performance and competitiveness of property and property services with other similar organisations and other providers	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager	n/a	On going	Use of AMP Network data and nationally published statistics for comparison. Liaison with neighbouring authorities. Best Value report on Housing. Consideration of the service by the Review Committee. Benchmarking with a group of six LA and RSLs shows that RDC's costs for both planned and responsive works is lowest. This process will continue in 2007/08

	<p>4. We will consider the suitability of our corporate assets and set targets to improve service provision across the district including relocation of office accommodation particularly to serve our main centre of population in Rayleigh.</p>	<p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>A,B,C &amp; D</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Improved reception facilities at Rochford Offices completed. Work to commence in 2007/8 on proposals to provide a permanent reception on the ground floor at No 3 South Street in conjunction with development of our Access to Services strategy.</p> <p>Lift installation and refurbishment works at Rayleigh completed September 2005.</p> <p>Revised use of Members' Smoking Room to provide Members' office accommodation, May 2006</p> <p>Space created by new reception building re-designed to improve staff meeting and training facilities - completed.</p> <p>Allocation of office accommodation reviewed in 2006 to take into account new divisional structures. Further review planned following LSVT with the intention of addressing requirements identified in staff survey for additional meeting space.</p>
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	5. We will seek to ensure all our property meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager	A,B,C & D	2008	<p>Temporary reception arrangements at Rochford comply with full DDA requirements. Permanent solution to be investigated in 2007/08</p> <p>Improved access provided to Pavilions with public use. DDA toilets provided to pavilions with public use.</p> <p>Public Conveniences programme completed except for Great Wakering and alarms installed in Disabled toilets</p> <p>DDA principles bedded in to all access provision (Civil and Building)</p> <p>DDA Compliant Play equipment installed at six sites as part of Playspace Rolling programme and will continue</p>
	6. We will seek new ways of working to maximise our use of assets and improve service delivery	Senior Management Team	A,B,C & D	Ongoing	Options for partnership working with neighbouring Districts and County Council to be pursued. Issues arising out of the Quirk Review will be taken into account in consideration of any proposals for the use of assets.
<b>Provision of affordable homes to meet local needs</b>	1. We will oversee completion of refurbishment of Hardwick House to provide 22 homes for rent and 30 new flats for the elderly.	Head of Housing Health & Community Care	B	Sept 2005	Completed

	2. Provide six new homes with support for those with learning difficulties	Head of Housing Health & Community Care	B	Feb 2005	Completed
	3. We will complete a joint project with Castle Point Borough Council to provide 5 new homes for those living in a refuge as a result of domestic violence	Head of Housing Health & Community Care	B & D	Summer 2005	Completed
<b>Leisure Facilities And Tourism</b>	1. We will maintain the timetable for development of new leisure and community facilities at the former Park School site by 2005.	Corporate Director (External Services)	B & D	2005	New Leisure Centre opened 13 May 2006
	2. We will seek new funding opportunities to develop the potential of Rayleigh Windmill as a learning and resource centre.	Corporate Director (External Services)	B & D	Mar 2008	Open to the public from 4 June 2006. Ongoing development of museum and educational facilities in 2007/08 Grants obtained for the Rayleigh Historical Society for Archiving of materials and purchase of hardware and software. Further grant funding being sought for display materials within the Windmill.  A sensory garden adjacent to the Windmill open to the public in June 2006

	3. We will seek opportunities to continue to develop and extend Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park in line with the aspirations of residents, local development framework and our leisure and tourism strategies.	Senior Management Team	D	On-going	Ongoing project to secure land for its expansion and further development
	4. We will explore development opportunities within the Thames Gateway – South Essex associated with a role for the area in relation to leisure, recreation and tourism building on heritage and environmental enhancements to improve our district.	Senior Management Team	B	On-going	Windmill refurbishment funded through Thames Gateway SE  Works to Cherry Orchard Country Park funded through TGSE  Tourism directory and information base currently being prepared
	5. We will review and re-tender our grounds maintenance and Street Cleansing contracts	Corporate Director (External Services)	A	Mar 2008	
<b>Property Survey</b>	1. Portable air conditioning units will be installed in South Street over a period with priority given to offices worst affect by issues of climate control	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager	C	Aug 2004 – Aug 2005	Units have been installed in most affected areas and additional ventilation and air conditioning has been included in the work on reception areas. The new reception building is fully air conditioned.

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	2. A review of car parking within the offices will be undertaken to ensure best use of limited resources	Corporate Director (Internal Services)	C	Ongoing	A review undertaken by SRMT following restructuring in April 2006 to be supplemented by further review following LSVT in July 2007.
	3. Signage will be reviewed and included as part of the improvement of our main Reception	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager	C	Sept 2005	Completed
	4. We will undertake a further User Survey to assess the fitness for purpose of all Council accommodation including that managed externally.	Corporate Director (Internal Services) & Property Maintenance & Highways Manager		June 2006	Survey completed. Report presented to SMT in January 2007

## 4.1 Performance Measurement System

Performance measures are included in Quarterly Performance Reports circulated to officers and Members four times each year. Annual statistics including Property Performance Indicators are considered formally as part of the Asset Management Plan development.

Officer	Role	Responsibilities	Action
Corporate Property Officer (CPO)	Establishment of the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementation and operation of the system</li> <li>• proposing the format for performance reporting</li> <li>• advising Members on timetable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Reports to SMT/Members</li> </ul>
Deputy CPO	Identifying Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying authority-wide indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Indicators adopted. Local indicators developed and updated as necessary</li> </ul>
CPO	Data Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining data</li> <li>• Specifying source data</li> <li>• Collecting and collating data, in conjunction with property services team and service departments</li> <li>• Validation of data, in conjunction with property services team and service departments</li> <li>• Compilation of performance indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed.</li> </ul>
Deputy CPO	Benchmarking and Target setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposing performance targets to Members after consultation with property services team and service departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included in Quarterly Performance Measures</li> </ul>
CPO	Analysis of Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation of performance, in conjunction with property services team and departments</li> <li>• Monitoring progress towards targets</li> <li>• Informing all parties of progress</li> <li>• Identifying where targets may not be achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>



CPO	Reporting on Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting performance results to Members</li> <li>• Publicising performance results to interested parties in the authority</li> <li>• Putting in place procedures that will ensure that performance data is valid</li> <li>• Proposing options for remedial action to Members and service departments if under-performance</li> <li>• Advising Members on opportunities to improve performance</li> <li>• Identifying suitable benchmarking organisations</li> </ul>	<p>Appendix 1 – Quarterly – QPIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QPIs circulated to all services.</li> <li>• Audit &amp; Performance Management collate and view info.</li> <li>• Report via SMT who undertake overview of all QPIs</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Membership of AMP Network.</li> </ul>
CPO	Remedial and Continuous Improvement Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommending remedial action to Members</li> <li>• Ensuring agreed improvements are implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Via SMT</li> <li>• Ongoing quarterly review</li> </ul>
Head of Service (HOS)	Identifying Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advising on the practicalities of providing the information for the proposed authority-wide indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
HOS	Data Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advising on data definitions</li> <li>• Advising on source data</li> <li>• Providing data requested by the corporate property officer</li> <li>• Validation of data provided</li> <li>• Providing information requested by the corporate property officer within statutory and local timetables</li> <li>• Providing assistance to service departments to ensure that statutory and local timetables for performance indicators are met</li> <li>• Following procedures on data validation set out by the corporate property officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
HOS	Benchmarking and Target setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advising the corporate property officer on achievable targets and scope for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
HOS	Analysis of Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance to corporate property officer on interpreting performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
HOS	Remedial and Continuous Improvement Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing measures to improve performance</li> <li>• Implementing agreed improvements in conjunction with service departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

## Operational Property – Condition and Performance Indicators 2006/7

The following are National Performance Indicators developed and reported to the IPF Asset Management Network on an annual basis to allow benchmarking of these across the country.

Indicator	Definition	2004/05 Performance % in each category	2005/06 Performance % in each category	2006/07 Performance % in each category
<b>1A</b> %Gross Internal floor space in condition categories A-D	Condition Category A – Good, Performing as intended and operating efficiently B – Satisfactory, As A but with minor deterioration C – Poor, Showing major defects and/or not operating as intended D – Bad, Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure	74.4 23.3 2.2 0	68.2 31.8 0 0	71.3 28.7 0 0
<b>1B</b> Backlog of maintenance costs expressed 1) As total Value	This is the figure of identified works required. 2004/05 included completion of the Public conveniences and changing pavilions.	£269,000	£306,200	£183,000
<b>1B</b> Backlog of maintenance costs expressed 2) As a percentage in priority levels 1-3	Priority levels 1. Urgent works that will prevent immediate closure of premises. Serious Health and safety issues 2. Essential work required within two years that will prevent serious deterioration of the fabric. 3. Desirable work required within 3-5 years	47% 43% 9%	26% 37% 37%	11% 79% 10%
<b>3A</b> Total annual management costs / square m. for Operational property.		£14.85	£14.56	£6.60

<b>4A</b> Repair and maintenance costs per square metre GIA		£33.19	£31.59	£34.82
<b>4B</b> Energy Costs per square metre GIA	Energy costs are subject to market prices.	£7.40	£12.50	£16.75
<b>4C</b> Water costs per square metre GIA	Subject to market prices	£2.22	£1.87	£1.83
<b>4D</b> To measure CO <sup>2</sup> Emissions in tonnes of carbon dioxide per square metre.		Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
<b>5A</b> Percentage of project costs where outturn falls with +/- 5% of the estimated outturn, expressed as a percentage of the total projects completed in that financial year.	Only Capital schemes within that financial year over £100,000.	No projects completed within this financial year over £100,000	50%	50%
<b>5B</b> Percentage of projects falling within +/- 5% of the estimated timescale, expressed as a percentage of the total projects completed in that financial year.		No projects completed within this financial year over £100,000	No projects completed within this financial year over £100,000	50% This does not include HRA projects

## Property Performance Indicators

Quarterly Performance Indicators. January – March 2007 (includes full year cumulative)

Number	Description	Target	Previous Year			Current Year	
			This Quarter	Cum.	Full Year	This Quarter	Cum.
	<b>Statutory Indicators</b>	2006/7					
<b>BVPI 63</b>	Energy efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	65	63	65	65	64	64
<b>BVPI 156</b>	The percentage of Authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to the disabled	84%	75%	75%	75%	87.5%	87.5%
<b>BVPI 184</b>	a) The percentage of LA homes which were non-decent at 1/4/04	a) 10	37.36%	37.6%	37.6%	31.79%	31.79%
	b) The percentage change between 1/4/04 and 1/4/05	b) 50	14.9%	14.9%	14.9%	28.34%	28.34%

**Additional Performance Indicators****LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS****BUILDINGS**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Buildings monitored</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/7</b>	<b>Definition of Indicator</b>
Number of Public Access points to Council services that are fully accessible for people with disabilities and percentage of facilities provided.	Civic Suite	89%	100%	100%	Defined as the Publicly accessible areas where there is provision for the following. Each of the items is expressed as 11% of the Indicator, achieving all 9 items will provide 100% accessibility. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wheelchair Access</li> <li>2. An external means of summoning service for someone who is unable to enter the building</li> <li>3. Public facilities at appropriate levels for wheelchair users</li> <li>4. That the route is clearly signed visually, and with tactile signs.</li> <li>5. There is disabled parking within a reasonable distance.</li> <li>6. Doors have appropriate visibility panels.</li> <li>7. Doors controls are easy to operate by people with mobility disabilities.</li> <li>8. That reception areas are fitted with hearing loops</li> <li>9. Levels of lighting are sufficient to aid people with sight disabilities.</li> </ol>
	Rochford Offices	100%	100%	100%	
	The Mill	100%	100%	100%	
	Clements Hall	100%	100%	100%	
	Great Wakering Sports Centre	79%	79%	79%	
	Rayleigh Windmill	N/A	100%	100%	
Percentage is a function of the number of the defined elements that are in place.	Rayleigh Leisure Centre	N/A	100%	100%	

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Number of Public Conveniences that meet the requirements of people with disabilities And percentage of facilities provided.	The Mill	64%	100%	100%	Each of the items is 16% of the Indicator, achieving all 6 items will provide 100% accessibility.  1. Wheelchair Access 2. An internal means of summoning help for someone who is unable to exit the building 3. That the route is clearly signed visually, and with tactile signs. 4. There is disabled parking within a reasonable distance. 5. Doors controls are easy to operate by people with mobility disabilities. 6. The facilities meet the requirements of the Building Regulations
	Crown Hill	64%	100%	100%	
	Back Lane	64%	100%	100%	
	Southend Road	64%	100%	100%	
	Hockley Woods	64%	100%	100%	
	Pooles Lane	64%	100%	100%	
	Great Wakering	64%	84%	84%	
To reduce the energy requirements of individual Council operational buildings by comparing energy usage.	Civic Suite	£6.63	£7.95	£7.47	1.In 2003 identified the individual building energy costs for heating, lighting and other power consumption 2. To compare the unit energy costs per square metre for the Council's main operational buildings and see where savings can be identified
	Rochford Offices	£6.57	£9.16	£16:15	
To reduce the building maintenance costs for individual Council operational buildings.	Civic Suite	£44.02* (14.82)	£21.67	£26.37	1.Building maintenance costs for all building elements  2.The unit maintenance costs per square metre for the Council's main operational buildings
	Rochford Offices	£16.71	£19.61	£31.27	

Indicator	Buildings Monitored	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Definition
<b>E1.</b> KwH of electricity consumed	Rochford Offices  Civic Suite  Rochford Depot	74015  50773  32041	329464  25377**  32683		Consumption as measured through metering of supply to these buildings
<b>E2.</b> CuM of water consumed	Rochford Offices  Civic Suite  Rochford Depot	5062  Not available  608	4445  n/a  706		Consumption as measured through metering of supply to these buildings
<b>E3.</b> Therms of Gas consumed	Rochford Offices  Civic Suite  Rochford Depot	18341  0  20773	12634  0  59161		Consumption as measured through metering of supply to these buildings
<b>E4.</b> Target energy savings due to refurbishment programme	Rochford Offices  Civic Suite  Rochford Depot	5%  0%  0%	5% 2.5% Actual  5%  5%	5%  5%  5%	Refurbishment includes review of facilities to target reductions in energy and water usage

Building	Area	Sq.m/ person	Sq.m/ person	Sq.m/ person
	Sq.m.	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Acacia House	514	13.89	13.89	13.89
3&5 South Street	376	9.40	9.40	9.40
7 South Street	320	17.78	17.78	17.78
9/11 South Street	254	6.35	6.35	6.35
15 South Street	396	13.66	13.66	13.66
17 South Street The Old House	231	25.67	25.67	25.67
19 South Street	382	15.94	15.94	15.94
New Reception building	120	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total Area	2593	2593	2593	2593
Average space per person		12.55	12.55	11.73

Indicator	Buildings Monitored	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Definition
SU1 The percentage of offices which are occupied at a rate lower than 5m <sup>2</sup> or 11cu.m per person	Rochford Offices	59% 46 rooms	59% 46		Over utilised space Total No. of rooms occupied as Offices = 78  Total Number of rooms = 118
SU2 The percentage of offices which are occupied at a rate higher than 5m <sup>2</sup> or 11cu.m per person	Rochford Offices	5.1% 4 rooms	5.1% 4		Under utilised space Note this may be due to various factors related to the configuration of the building, i.e. small fixed offices
SU3 The percentage of office space that is used for storage only	Rochford Offices	11% 13 rooms	11% 13		Implementation of Comino document imaging to reduce storage
SU4 The percentage of office space refurbished during the current year	Rochford Offices	12% 14 rooms	9% 10		Influenced by restructuring. Rooms may be revamped to suit new arrangements
SU5 The percentage of office space which meets modern office requirements	Rochford Offices	16% 19	16% 19		1.Adequate for Computer station to meet H&S regulations 2.Lighting meets computer requirements 3.The office has better than adequate ventilation 4.The room is in satisfactory decorative order

### Cost

Indicator	Buildings Monitored	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Definition
<b>C1</b> Cost of refurbishing office space per sq.m.	Rochford Offices Civic Suite	£75	£75		Refurb. carpets,decoration, minor upgrading.
<b>C2</b> Cost of refurbishing toilets per sq.m.	Rochford Offices Civic Suite	£308	£308		This is for office toilets only.



<b>C3</b> Cost of other refurbishment per sq.m.	Rochford Offices  Civic Suite	None this year	N/a		
<b>C4</b> No of planned schemes completed within budget	All Buildings	76%	95%		
<b>C5</b> %age of planned schemes completed within budget	All Buildings	50%	95%		

### Time

Indicator	Buildings Monitored	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Definition
<b>T1</b> No of planned / Capital schemes completed on time	All Buildings	50%	50%		Schemes over £5000 completed within +/- 10% of the planned implementation
<b>T2</b> Percentage of planned schemes completed on time	All Buildings	62.5%	75%		

**PART 5.****York Consulting Recommendations**

<b>RECOMMENDATION 1</b> The authority should develop a much clearer statement of what it is seeking to achieve through the use of its property and, in particular, how property can impact on the achievement of corporate objectives and support service delivery. This will help in further embedding and integrating the approach to asset planning with corporate and service planning more generally.	Section 1.5 describing Corporate Property Strategy has been considerably expanded to provide a clearer statement of intent.
<b>RECOMMENDATION 2</b> The authority should review the way in which current structure for asset management enable a clear distinction between consideration of strategic and operational issues relating to the property portfolio. Given the size of the authority and its property holdings, it should be possible to achieve this through adaptation of current arrangements, rather than through fundamental changes.	Terms of reference of the Financial Programmes Group have been broadened to include responsibility for operational issues and it reports direct to the Staffing & Resources Management Team (S&RMT). Strategic issues are dealt with by S&RMT. Issues arising out of either group requiring policy decisions will be referred through the Senior Management Team to the Executive Board.
<b>RECOMMENDATION 3</b> The authority should develop a clear set of statements that set out the approach to be adopted to property procurement, disposal, space utilisation and re-location with partners and stakeholders. This will be beneficial in considering the property actions that may need to be taken in response, for example, to contracting out of services, potential voluntary transfer of the authority's housing stock and reorganisation of office accommodation.	See 1 above
<b>RECOMMENDATION 4</b> The authority should develop a clearer framework for its approach to option appraisal that can be used to ensure consistent approaches across potential schemes and can support decision-making on new property investments.	See pro forma at p9
<b>RECOMMENDATION 5</b> The authority should adopt a more formal approach to the prioritisation of potential capital projects which can provide an objective input to decisions regarding future capital spend and the development of the capital programme. We would stress that this should not be seen as a mechanistic system, but should provide a framework to enable consistent comparisons of potential schemes, the outcomes of which will be subject to appropriate moderation and review.	Potential capital projects are considered against priorities identified through the Capital Strategy. Members consider suitable projects in detail within the criteria set out in paragraph 3.1 above. This process continues to be refined to develop a robust framework for consistent comparison.

**APPENDIX****Corporate Property Strategy – Criteria for review of property.**Generally:

Address the need to review the sufficiency, suitability, condition and cost of existing property:

- Do we really need this property?
- What can we do to realise efficiency savings in this area without reducing service quality and effectiveness?
- Do existing arrangements for providing and purchasing property services match up to best value principles?

## Non-operational property:

- Why does the council own this?
- Could this capital be better employed?

## Administrative property:

- Can we make do with less?
- Could we relocate somewhere cheaper?
- Can we share with other agencies?

## Service property:

- Is this building sustainable?
- Would this service be better located elsewhere?
- Are there other (better) means of provision?

## Other Issues:

- Take into account advancing technology when considering service delivery methods.
- Establish a database to support effective asset management planning.

Reviewing and challenging non-operational property holdings:

- Do all properties make a rate of return comparable to other commercial lettings in the area?
- Do we have the data to prove this?
- Do the outputs/outcomes justify the inputs, eg: How many new jobs are created?
- Do the objectives of organisations occupying council property (e.g. voluntary bodies) reflect authority priorities?
- Are there other ways to achieve these outputs (e.g. grants, advice, advertising)?

## Action Plan:

1. Identify and assess potential alternative uses for this capital.
2. Undertake regular option appraisal of capital and revenue consequences of holding/disposing.
3. Set (measurable) targets and dispose of under-performing properties.

- Would open plan be more space efficient than cellular offices?
- It may be more cost effective to demolish existing partition walls than to acquire additional office space.
- Has the authority adopted per capita space standards to guide decisions?
- Staff numbers in particular locations may be constrained by lack of IT connections, toilets or other facilities. Would an upgrade be more cost-effective than acquiring a new building?
- What needs to be stored and for how long?
- Could more use be made of warehousing, electronic storage, or more space-efficient shelving systems?
- Is existing furniture suitable for flexible working methods – for example, wheeled drawer units for hot deskers?
- Does any new furniture acquired make the best use of the space available?
- Do all employees need a desk space?
- Would flexible working hours help free up space?
- What potential is there for sharing space with other departments or with partner organisations?
- Can new staff be accommodated within existing space?
- Can all departments justify their own interview and meeting rooms?
- Are training rooms, canteens, managers' offices etc. used for meetings when not required?
- Are there quantifiable business benefits to retaining dedicated social, sports or catering areas?
- Are there opportunities to use electronic communication to reduce the need for space - for example, using video conferencing to conduct meetings, or allowing staff to work from home using modem links.

What does best value mean for property services?

- Which services do we need to provide in-house?
- Would it be cheaper to buy in some services as and when required?
- Why this departmental structure?
- What do our customers think of our services?
- What do they think we could do better?
- Do we obtain user input when deciding how to procure services?
- Do we benchmark our performance with others, both internally and externally?
- Do we measure outputs and outcomes against inputs?
- What targets can be met to ensure continuous improvement?
- How much do similar services cost elsewhere?
- Have we compared prices with both public and private sector providers?
- Could we still demonstrate competitiveness if services were packaged differently?