

## **ASSET MANAGEMENT – BEST VALUE REVIEW (Min 470/99 )**

### **1 SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide a synopsis of the Best Value Review of Asset Management providing an overview with recommendations. Full documentation for the Review has been placed in the Members' Rooms at Rochford and Rayleigh. The content of this documentation is listed at Appendix 1 to this report.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

The responsibility for asset management currently lies across several discrete services. Decisions on major repairs, maintenance, use, etc. are usually taken corporately through detailed consideration of the Capital Programme, the Repairs and Maintenance programme and, less frequently, when considering Organisational and Structural issues. Day to day management lies with individual service departments.

Parameters were established “to review the management of the ownership and usage of the Council’s buildings, housing stock, open spaces, car parks & cemeteries to optimise the utilisation of those assets in terms of service benefits and financial return”.

The Best Value Review Team comprised seven Officers. Four Members joined the Team at a key stage to consider the principles and options identified and the challenges to be addressed.

#### **Methodology**

The review followed a generic methodology agreed prior to the production of the Best Value Performance Plan. The methodology was to have been tested through two Best Value trial Reviews before implementation of the Plan. In the event, the Asset Management Review has been completed ahead of the trial reviews and one outcome is some suggested amendment to the methodology.

Essentially, the work undertaken comprised:

- A review of the present arrangements,

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- Gathering in data on each part of the service,
  - Consideration of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the existing service,
  - Undertaking an extensive consultation exercise,
  - Dealing with the immediate requirement for a draft Asset Management Plan as part of the Single Capital Pot – Dry Run,
  - Identification of options for the service,
  - Challenge of the existing service and of the options,
  - proposing recommendations.

### **3 THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS**

Detailed information is available with the documentation referred to in Appendix 1.

Briefly, current arrangements for the day to day management of assets are as follows:

Asset types:

Managed by:

Administration Buildings	Property Services/Various Depts.
Housing Stock	Property Services/Housing/Housing Management
Leisure Buildings	Property Services/Leisure Unit
Woodlands	Woodlands Unit
Parks	Parks Officer/Leisure Unit
Play Areas	Engineers/Leisure Unit
Cemeteries	Legal Services
Public Conveniences	Property Services
Shops	Housing Management /Finance/Legal
Miscellaneous Land	Legal Services/Various Depts.

#### Staff Resource

Between 12 and 15 full time equivalents from the above departments are involved in the management and administration of Assets. Some of these posts also have other duties. A profile of the Service is contained in the full review.

#### Financial Resources

The profile of the service indicates that over and above the cost of the staff resource the annual spend in relation to assets is approximately £3.3m. This is broken down as follows:

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	HRA £	G/F £
Revenue Programme	1,120,000	360,000
Capital Programme	652,000	521,700
Grounds Maintenance		616,500
	<u>1,772,000</u>	<u>1,498,200</u>

Note: Capital Programme G/F as follows:-

	£
Play Spaces	102,000
Mill Hall Site	284,600
Public Conveniences	135,100
	<u>521,700</u>

Revenue Costs are overseen on an annual basis through the Budget process with Service departments managing day to day budgets. Capital Costs are managed through Capital Programme and the Repairs and Maintenance Programme.

### Corporate Overview

The Council commissioned a comprehensive asset review in 1992. This was revisited in 1999. The Council has therefore effectively carried out two corporate asset reviews in the last 10 years. Individual issues affecting assets have been dealt with by reports to Committee on an ad hoc basis as the need has arisen.

## **4 SURVEY INFORMATION**

### Householder Survey

The Review Group carried out a survey of 3000 randomly selected households. The Questionnaire was devised by the Group and achieved a credible 24% response. Questions covered each of the discrete areas of Asset Management. A breakdown of the results of this survey is annexed at Appendix 2. In general the survey indicates that residents are more satisfied than dissatisfied with the Council's performance.

Considerable additional information was received as residents took the opportunity to comment on the service. This data has been extracted and made available to all Heads of Service. Each Division will now disseminate

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the information relating to its services and use that information to help guide its future decision making and actions, with appropriate reports to Committee where issues and themes are identified. A central database is also being created to collate and disseminate information on each Best Value consultation. The information should then be available and taken into consideration in all future Best Value and Process reviews.

A transcription of comments is included in the Review documentation and runs to 54 pages.

#### Stakeholder Survey

A separate survey of 105 local organisations using, or likely to use, Council assets was undertaken. The Questionnaire was a less detailed version of the Householder Survey and achieved a 40% response, also with detailed comments. Again the survey indicates that users are more satisfied than dissatisfied. The result of this survey is annexed as Appendix 3. Comments received will be included with the data extracted from the Householder Survey to be dealt with in the same way.

#### Occupiers Survey

The Council's External Auditors carried out an independent Occupier Survey as part of the Audit Commission's national Value for Money study on asset Management. In total 30 questionnaires were distributed to a range of staff within the Council. 20 were completed and returned. The results of the survey were provided to and used in the Best Value Review. The results are primarily in graphic form and are included in the Review documentation.

#### Other Survey work

Housing and Leisure surveys have been undertaken as part of Best Value Reviews in those areas. The information obtained has been used as far as possible although the timing of these surveys has provided limited opportunity for detailed consideration.

### **5 BENCHMARKING**

Because of the variation in asset base and the size and diversity of local authorities meaningful benchmarking has been problematic. Meetings have taken place with Castle Point Borough Council to share information and experience. Castle Point also agreed to provide an external challenge to this review.

For the purposes of benchmarking the service, the Review Group extracted information from CIPFA statistics for the "family group" agreed by the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) and the External Auditor. This information is annexed at Appendix 4.

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Work on financial information across all authorities is being aligned to the Best Value regime. This should improve the opportunity for benchmarking. It is recommended that the link established with Castle Point Borough Council is maintained and that Officers continue to develop the acquisition of statistical information from within the identified family group.

## **6 THE DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

In tandem with the Best Value Review, it was necessary as part of the Single Capital Pot – Dry Run to prepare a draft Asset Management Plan. Although required for other reasons, the draft Plan was one of the first outcomes of the Review and is an integral part of the recommendations. Information obtained in profiling the Service was used in preparation of the draft. The Plan identifies current weaknesses, proposes revised corporate structures and sets out a programme of work on Asset Management for the coming year.

The draft Plan suggests the following guiding principles to be used to ensure that assets are used effectively and at the lowest overall cost to the authority;

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

The Asset Management Plan is fundamental to the outcome of the Review and is annexed at Appendix 5.

## **7 OPTIONS**

### **1. Reorganisation/Restructuring**

The DETR Good Practice Guidelines state that “the structure of an authority influences its approach to asset management and the most effective asset management occurs when asset management responsibilities explicitly rest with a separate strategic property unit reporting to a specific committee with corporate-wide terms of reference”.

Arising out of this Review and the preparation of the Asset Management Plan a need has been identified for a single Officer to take responsibility for strategic asset management. This "Corporate Property Officer" will lead an Asset Management Group comprising representatives of all internal stakeholders. This Group will promote the advancement of improved asset management in the authority, ultimately reporting to Corporate Resources Sub Committee.

In the first instance, it is proposed that the Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration) will fulfil the role of Corporate Property Officer and the Asset Management Group will be appointed from Operational Management Team.

The Asset Management Group's role will be to ensure that property decisions are consistent with service requirements, to recommend priorities in line with Corporate Planning objectives, identify opportunities for innovation, income generation or reduced expenditure, to review acquisitions/disposals, and to co-ordinate and assess maintenance Programmes and Capital Programme provision.

Day to day management will remain with the Service departments. However, the Asset Management Group should be tasked to report to Council on the division of responsibilities for assets across the authority.

## **2. Data Management**

The key to good asset management lies in the availability of good quality and accurate data. The Council has a number of databases spread across the authority. Information about property is currently held in various forms by several departments. This includes a paper based terrier system, MS Access database, GIS and a hard copy Property Register. Separate records are kept for Asset Accounting purposes and a significant level of information is contained in the Housing Repairs/Property system. Other sources of useful data are held within the Local Land Charges and Planning Registers. These need to be consolidated and/or cross-referenced.

Current databases:	Form	System
Land Terrier	Map Based - Manual	RDC
"Access" Database	Electronic database	RDC
Property Register	Manual Document	RDC
Repairs & Maintenance	Electronic database	Saffron Systems
Capital Asset Account	Electronic database	RDC
Land Charges Register	Electronic/Map/GIS database	Uniform 2000
Planning Register	Electronic/Map/GIS	Uniform 2000

	database	
TPO Register	Map/GIS	Uniform 2000
Building Control	Electronic database	Uniform 2000
Local Plan	Map & Documentation	RDC
Environmental Health	Electronic database	MKA

**New/Future Requirements for Land Based Data**

Contaminated Land Register	Map/GIS	Uniform 2000
Air Pollution Database	Map/GIS	Uniform 2000
Local Plan	Map/GIS & Documentation	Uniform 2000
Radioactivity Database		Uniform 2000
Property Register	Electronic database	Uniform 2000

The IT/IS Strategy is currently under review. There is continuing demand across service divisions for Arcview (GIS) access. This digital map based system is expected to become the hub for most data held within the authority.

A number of land based registers and databases already run in Uniform 2000. Recent upgrades to the system include the embedding of Arcview within the system.

The Property Register clearly lends itself to a GIS solution. This can be provided through introduction of the Uniform 2000 Estates Management module. The module is available for a nominal sum as the Council already holds a 40 User license for the system. In the meantime the existing Register can be improved with additional fields to improve accessibility and the usefulness of the information.

The current Property Register is divided into Direct Service Property, Indirect Service Property, Office and Administration buildings, Council Housing Stock, Non Operational Assets and Infrastructure. Core Data Fields include Unique Reference, Address, User, Tenure, Responsible Officer and Remarks.

In line with Government requirements the Council is proceeding towards a Local Land & Property Gazetteer to be linked to a National system. Data sets are required to be BS7666 compliant and work has commenced cleaning and matching data for this purpose. Property is to be allocated a Unique Property Reference Numbers nationally and this will be used for reference in the Property Register in due course.

Work done in connection with the condition surveys for the Leisure Buildings and Council Housing Stock should also be included in the revised Property Register. This should be augmented by a rolling programme of condition

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surveys for all assets. The information gathered will then be included as intermediate data in the Register.

The Asset Management Group will be required to maintain and monitor the Property Register on a regular basis as part of their ongoing asset management role.

As a wider issue, the Review Group believes that consideration should be given to the pooling of administrative resources to create a Data Centre around the GIS system. Such a Centre would develop a depository of expertise and provide information and administrative resource for the benefit of the whole Council.

### **3. Use of the Intranet**

The Council's Web site and Intranet are expected to become a principal means of dissemination of information. Initially, the existing Property Register can be made available on the Intranet making information on land ownership widely available. Access to confidential information concerning valuation, use, condition, etc. could be restricted as appropriate.

Improvements to the network (cabling) are required to increase data flow, in particular "browser access" to the GIS system. Such access will vastly improve the availability of user friendly information. At present data tends to be confined within departments.

Aerial photographs of the District taken this year should be available by December. These can be viewed with an "ER Mapper" browser which can be provided to each Service Department (at no cost) and placed on the computer in the Members Lounge to provide Managers and Members access to this resource. Such data will be useful in a number of service areas.

### **4. Facilities Management /Competition /Privatisation**

The Review Group has considered information from a number of companies offering facilities management in all aspects of property services from design & build to maintenance and management. However, until the long-term future of principal services such as Housing and Leisure is decided it is unlikely that a suitable and attractive contract could be offered for tender in the private sector. The Review Group recommend further review of Facilities Management, Competition, Partnership and Privatisation within 12 months following the outcome of Best Value Reviews and Contract negotiations in those areas.



5. “Hot Property” - Issues from the Audit Commission

In this publication the Audit Commission has endeavoured to provide practical recommendations to enable authorities to review the use of property and the services provided or procured in relation to this.

The Review Group would have welcomed the opportunity to consider these issues. However, the principal task was to concentrate on the strategic policy issues of asset management within the authority. It is therefore proposed that the Asset Management Group with Member representation should timetable a series of meetings specifically to address the matters raised in this document.

Some examples of matters to be addressed include:

- Administrative Buildings – reducing permanently the total cost of accommodating staff.
- Non-operational property. Why have we got it?
- Financial responsibilities - alignment with operational responsibilities.
- Political parochialism. Public and political opposition to change.
- Legal restraints – barriers to better use?
- Joint use. Sharing Offices with other agencies
- Innovation and imagination in service delivery
- Home working/Hot desking

Addressing “Hot Property” issues will involve philosophical, cultural and strategic considerations for the authority. It is recommended that a series of reviews is undertaken by the Asset Management Group. Because of the nature of these reviews the Group should be extended to include cross party Member representation similar to this Best Value Review. The Minutes of meetings and any reports arising will then be presented to Corporate Resources Sub-Committee for wider consideration.

6. Miscellaneous opportunities/options

A number of minor recommendations have arisen out of information gained in the course of the Review.

- Early preparation of a Best Value checklist for future Reviews to ensure consideration is given to the principles of asset management.
- Use of an inexpensive Global Positioning System for the accurate plotting of data, in particular the position of trees for Tree Preservation Orders.
- Preparation and wide availability of a central record of “stakeholders” who use Council assets.

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- Reconsideration of the methodology for carrying out Best Value Reviews in the light of the first year's experience. An overview will be submitted to Finance & General Purposes Committee in February together with a programme for future reviews. As an outcome of this review it is likely that this will include provision for the co-option of Member representatives onto the Review Groups at key stages.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

The Best Value Review Group believes that adoption of the recommendations contained in this report will assist the Council to understand, account for and maximise the value gained from the ownership of physical assets and to achieve a positive impact on the delivery of services to the community.

An Action Plan and timetable is attached at appendix 6.

## **7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

It is estimated that the work of the Asset Review Group will involve approximately 24 hours of senior officer time a month.

The cost of introducing the CAPS Solutions Uniform 2000 Estate Management module is £650 including training.

A basic Global Positioning System is available in the region of £500.

Member attendance at Asset Management Group meetings dealing with "Hot Property" issues should be classed as official attendance with the usual allowances.

Resource implications arising from implementation of the Action Plan will be reported as decisions are required.

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

1. Adoption of the Asset Management Plan
2. Appointment of the Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration) as Corporate Property Officer and creation of an Asset Management Group on the basis outlined
3. The appointment of four Members to join with the Asset Management Group in considering issues arising from the Audit Commission publication "Hot Property"
4. Acquisition of the CAPS Solutions Uniform 2000 Estate Management module
5. Acquisition of a basic Global Positioning System
6. Production of a Local Land & Property Gazetteer to be linked to the National system

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7. The review of opportunities for Facilities Management, Partnership working and Competition in Asset Management within the next twelve months following review of the Leisure and Housing Services
  8. Improvement and publication of the Council's Asset Register and creation of a central record of Stakeholders as outlined in the report
  9. Preparation of a Best Value Checklist for future reviews
  10. A further report on the viability of a Data Centre following a process review of data management within the authority
  11. Implementation of the appended Action Plan

R.J.Honey

Corporate Director

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**Background Papers:**

As listed in Appendix 1

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**APPENDIX 1**

**DOCUMENTATION**

1. Methodology for Service Reviews
2. Timetable for Review
3. Profile of Rochford District
4. Profile of Asset Management in Rochford
5. Finance & Usage Figures - Leisure Best Value Review
6. SWOT Analysis
7. Random Occupier Survey  
    Questionnaire  
    Results  
    Comments
8. Pannell Kerr Forster - Occupier Survey Results
9. Stakeholder Survey
10. Benchmarking - Comparison of Financial Information for Family Group
11. Facilities Management - Example of services available
12. Uniform 2000 Estates Management Module – Product Overview
13. Asset Management Planning
  - (a) DETR Guidance - Extract from simplified version - August 2000
  - (b) DETR Checklist
  - (c) What needs to be done. Hot Property - Audit Commission
14. Single Capital Pot - Dry Run
  - (a) DETR Requirements & Timetable
  - (b) DETR Property Performance Indicators
15. RDC Draft Asset Management Plan
16. Minutes of Review Group Meetings
17. Asset Register

**APPENDIX 2**

<b>GENERAL</b>						
1.1	Average Residence in the district (of those who completed this field)				25.15	years
	Shortest Residence				0.30	years
	Longest Residence				88.00	years
1.2	Please indicate your age group.					
	Under 18 years	3	0.4%			
	18 - 25 years	11	1.5%			
	26 - 35 years	78	10.6%			
	36 - 45 years	116	15.8%			
	46 - 60 years	226	30.8%			
	Over 60 years	300	40.9%			
		734				
<b>PLAY SPACES</b>						
2.1	Do you, or your children, use any of Rochford District Council's play spaces?					
	Yes	274	38%			
	No	449	62%			
		723				
2.2	If yes, how frequently?					
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	6 Monthly	Yearly
	Lower Lambricks	2	6	3	1	0
	Doggets	1	3	1	0	0
	Ashingdon	1	7	5	4	0
	Victoria Road	1	1	0	0	0
	Pooles Lane Hull	5	8	8	1	2
	Magnolia Park	1	9	6	1	1
	Sweyne Park	1	11	12	1	0
	Laburnum Grove	2	1	0	0	0
	Rawreth Lane	0	3	7	1	0
	Fairview Grove	2	11	11	5	0
	Clements Hall	3	6	6	2	0
	Daws Heath Road	0	1	0	0	0

**CORPORATE RESOURCES SUB-COMMITTEE -  
28 November 2000**

**Item 13**

	King George's	6	23	19	4	0			
	Hawkwell/Whitehart	0	3	5	0	1			
	Grove Road	1	11	7	1	0			
	Brooklands Gardens	0	1	2	1	0			
	Ferndale P.F	0	1	1	0	0			
	Recreation Ground	0	6	3	0	1			
	Kendal Park	0	1	0	0	0			
	Gt. Wakering	5	5	1	1	0			
		31	118	97	23	5			
	<b>PLAYSPACES (Continued)</b>								
	2.4 If no, why not?								
	No children/children of an appropriate age			395					
	No play spaces close enough to where I live			16					
	Play space is inappropriate to my/my child's needs			10					
	Play space is unsafe			6					
	Other (Listed)			11					
	<b>PUBLIC OPEN SPACES</b>								
	3.1 Which of the Council's public open spaces do you use?								
		PURPOSE			FREQUE NCY				
		Walking/Leis	Walking Dog	Cycling	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Occ.
	Lower Lambricks	3	1	1	1	3	0	1	1
	Hambro Hill	2	1	1	0	3	0	1	0
	Victoria Road	4	1	1	1	3	0	1	1
	Rochford Res.	51	5	2	5	18	16	7	11
	Millview Park	7	2	0	4	4	1	0	0
	Rochford Recreation Grnd.	12	0	1	2	4	5	0	2
	Sweyne Park	35	9	3	11	16	14	1	7
	KG Playing Field	51	6	0	7	24	11	3	12
	Rayleigh Bowls Club	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Rawreth Land	10	2	0	1	3	5	0	3
	Magnolia Road	28	4	1	3	11	11	1	5
	Fairview	40	13	0	7	18	11	8	9
	Plumberow Mount	17	3	0	3	2	8	3	4
	Clements Hall	34	8	0	6	23	4	2	7
	Great Wakering	15	3	0	3	9	2	0	4
	Hawkwell Common	19	1	0	3	10	1	0	4
	Kendal Park	13	2	0	2	4	3	3	3
	Pooles Lane	31	4	2	8	8	10	2	9
	Hollytree Gardens	6	2	0	1	3	2	0	2

	Woodlands Road	1	3	0	3	1	0	0	0
	Spencers	11	3	0	5	5	3	0	1
	Brooklands Gardens	9	1	0	0	3	2	2	3
	Grove Road	29	5	0	8	13	8	1	4
	St John Fisher Field	6	3	0	3	6	1	2	0
	Village Green	4	0	0	0	2	2	0	0
	Ferndale	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
	Stambridge Road	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
		443	83	12	88	198	121	38	94
	<b>PUBLIC OPEN SPACES (continued)</b>								
	3.2 How satisfied are you with the maintenance of the public open space that you use?								
	Excellent	40	9%						
	Good	187	43%						
	As Expected	156	37%						
	Disappointing	34	8%						
	Unacceptable	14	3%						
		431							
	<b>WOODLANDS</b>								
	4.1 Do you use any of the following woodlands?								
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never			
	Kingley Wood	3	2	9	10	133			
	Grove Woods	7	16	29	33	121			
	Betts Wood	4	8	17	19	124			
	Hockley Woods	35	70	199	176	81			
	Beckney Woods	0	1	1	0	14			
	4.2 What do you use the woodlands for?								
	Walking	437	60%						
	Walking Dog	134	19%						
	Cycling	52	7%						
	Horse Riding	20	3%						
	Nature Conservation Aspects	55	8%						
	Other	23	3%						
		721							

<b>WOODLANDS (Continued)</b>						
4.3 What is your overall opinion of the woodlands?						
	Excellent	70	14%			
	Good	273	56%			
	As Expected	128	26%			
	Disappointing	16	3%			
	Unacceptable	6	1%			
		493				
<b>CEMETERIES</b>						
5.1 Have you organised a burial or cremation at any of the Council cemeteries in the last 10 years?						
	Yes	78	12%			
	No	600	88%			
		678				
5.2 Have you visited any Council cemeteries for any reason in the last 10 years?						
	Yes	200	30%			
	No	477	70%			
		677				
5.3 How well do you feel the cemetery is maintained?						
	Excellent	45	21%			
	Good	99	46%			
	As Expected	59	27%			
	Disappointing	12	6%			
	Unacceptable	1	0%			
		216				
<b>CEMETERIES (Continued)</b>						
5.4 Are you always able to gain access to the cemetery at the times you wish to visit?						
	Yes	178	96%			
	No	8	4%			
		186				



5.5	Have you considered whether or not you would prefer to be buried or cremated?					
	Buried	106	16%			
	Cremated	369	56%			
	Cremated then buried	90	14%			
	Don't know	92	14%			
		657				
	<b>CAR PARKS</b>					
6.0	Which Rochford District Council Car Parks do you use?					
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
	Back Lane, Rochford	11	78	74	58	76
	Websters Way, Rayleigh	38	238	133	41	41
	Market Car Park, Rayleigh	6	52	84	52	71
	Rayleigh Mill/Mill Hall	11	76	97	65	68
	Hockley Car Park	6	68	70	43	73
	The Approach, Rayleigh	0	10	5	8	124
	Castle Road, Rayleigh	10	83	69	36	80
	Oxford Parade, Rochford	3	12	11	7	120
	Old Ship Lane, Rochford	4	30	28	19	113
	Golden Cross Road	16	59	33	12	99
	<b>CAR PARKS (Continued)</b>					
6.2	Do you find the car parks are easy to use?					
		Excellent	Good	As Expected	Disappointing	Unacceptable
	Access to car parks	19	215	240	63	14
	Availability of parking spaces	25	160	266	74	14
	Maintenance	22	244	238	16	6
	Location of Car Parks	43	267	187	25	4
	<b>COUNCIL OFFICES</b>					
7.1	How frequently do you visit the Council Offices?					
		Weekly	Monthly	6 Monthly	Yearly	Never
	Civic Suite, Rayleigh	3	34	25	92	430
	Council Offices, Rochford	1	25	43	106	412

7.2 What reasons do you have for visiting the Council offices?						
	Planning enquiry		97	21%		
	Building Control enquiry		29	6%		
	Bus Pass		31	6%		
	Benefits enquiry/visit		41	8%		
	Council tax advice		31	6%		
	Payment of bills		67	14%		
	Housing enqs. (repairs etc)		15	3%		
	Homelessness enquiries		2	0%		
	Environmental Health enqs.		12	2%		
	General Information		160	34%		
			485			
<b>COUNCIL OFFICES (Continued)</b>						
7.3 In connection with any of the above, how do you prefer to contact the Council?						
	Personal visit		207	24%		
	Telephone		439	49%		
	Internet/email		40	5%		
	Letter		192	22%		
	Other		2	0%		
			880			
7.4 How do you rate the Council Offices						
		Excellent	Good	As Expected	Disappointing	Unacceptable
	Ease of Access Rayleigh	20	112	94	12	4
	Ease of Access Rochford	20	86	97	24	5
	How easy was it to find - Ray	34	103	79	9	1
	How easy was it to find - Roch	29	93	75	16	3

**APPENDIX 3**

**ASSET MANAGEMENT REVIEW  
STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE**

		Excellent	Good	Average	Disappointing	Unacceptable	N/A
<b>Frequency of use</b>							
	Weekly						12
	Monthly						14
	6 Monthly						2
	Yearly						5
	Never						6
	Other						3

\*NB More than one answer given to some questions which calculate to more than the total number of surveys received.

<b>Rating of Council's facilities</b>							
	Physical Access	7	14	5	5	1	3
	Standard of Maintenance	5	18	8			4
	Availability	10	15	6	2		2
	Matching needs	7	15	8	4	1	1
<b>Service Provided</b>							
	Booking Arrangements	11	9	8	1	2	4
	Discussion of requirements	11	7	12	3		2
	Responding to Complaints	7	5	13	3		8
<b>Contact</b>							
	Letter						22
	Telephone						33
	Email						6
	Personal Visit						17
	Other						5

Questionnaires Sent Out - 105

Questionnaires Returned - 42 - (40%)

**APPENDIX 4**

**CIPFA STATISTICS – COMPARISON WITH FAMILY GROUP**

**APPENDIX 5**

**ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**



**ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the 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.

The Council's asset base is small and comprised principally of operational, direct service property. The most significant asset is the Housing stock. However, with the continued success of the Right to Buy, the Council now has less than 2,000 properties for rent including 14 sheltered housing schemes. There are approximately 680 acres of open space and children's playgrounds, 3 sports centres and a swimming pool, 3 public halls and 7 fee paying car parks. 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 in the Civic Suite, Rayleigh and share the premises with Rayleigh Town Council, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages and a local charity, Mayday Mobile.

The Council has undertaken two major asset reviews in the last 10 years and has dealt with various individual sites on an ad hoc basis in the meantime. As a result there is little or no unused or under-used property that has not been formally reviewed by Members.

**2. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

In recent years the Council has developed a number of linked plans and strategies which draw together to form a 3 year business plan and a 5 year strategy for the improvement of services. These include:

- Corporate Plan
- Best Value Performance Plan
- Capital Programme

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- Corporate Consultation Strategy
  - Rochford District Local Plan
  - LA 21 Strategy
  - District Transport Strategy
  - Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
  - South East Essex Economic Strategy
  - Leisure Strategy
  - Housing Strategy

Other plans and strategies, including a Community Plan, Procurement Strategy and Information Strategy, are in the course of development. The Asset Management Plan will link with these and existing plans to ensure that assets are considered as a strategic resource supporting effective service delivery and the achievement of the business plan.

### **3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The following guiding principles will be used to ensure that assets are used effectively and at the lowest overall cost to the authority.

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

### **4. PLANNING & CONSULTATION**

Asset Management within the authority is currently the subject of a Best Value Review. This in itself is a cross cutting Review linking with Best Value service reviews on Housing, Leisure and the Council's reception facilities. Consultation exercises have been undertaken as part of each Review and data will be analysed for the purpose of asset planning.

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Arising out of the Best Value Review and the preparation of this plan is the identified need for a Corporate Property Officer leading an Asset Management Group ultimately reporting to Corporate Resources Sub Committee.

In the first instance, the Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration) will fulfil the role of Corporate Property Officer and the Asset Management Group will be appointed from Operational Management Team.

The Asset Management Group's role will be to ensure that property decisions are consistent with service requirements, to recommend priorities in line with Corporate Planning objectives, identify opportunities for innovation, income generation or reduced expenditure, to review acquisitions/disposals, and to co-ordinate and assess maintenance programmes and Capital Programme provision.

## **5. DATA MANAGEMENT**

Information about property is currently held in various forms by several departments. This includes a paper based terrier system, MS Access database, GIS and a hard copy Property Register. Separate records are kept for Asset Accounting purposes and a significant level of information is contained in the Housing Repairs/Property system. Other sources of useful data are held within the Local Land Charges and Planning Registers.

The Council is currently preparing an IT/IS Strategy. There is expected to be an increasing use of GIS and it is proposed to convert the Property Register to an electronic database linked to Arcview with additional fields to include intermediate and transient data including links to the above sources. This will improve the accessibility and usefulness of the information.

The Property Register is currently divided into Direct Service Property, Indirect Service Property, Office and Administration buildings, Council Housing Stock, Non Operational Assets and Infrastructure. Core Data Fields include Unique Reference, Address, User, Tenure, Responsible Officer and Remarks.

The Council is also proceeding with the development of a Local Land & Property Gazetteer to be linked to a National system. Datasets are with Intelligent Addressing for cleaning and matching. The UPRNs used for this purpose will be matched to the Property Register in due course.

The Council has completed a detailed condition survey of its Leisure Buildings in connection with a review of that service. Work has also been done in connection with the condition of the Council's Housing Stock. This information will be included in the revised Property Register. A programmed condition survey will be set up for all property and the information gathered will be included as intermediate data.

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The Asset Management Group will maintain and monitor the Property Register on a regular basis as part of their ongoing asset management role.

## **6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND MEASUREMENT**

The Council undertakes Quarterly Performance Reviews monitoring services across all divisions. These include both Local and National Indicators, a number of which are relevant to the Asset Management Programme.

Implementation of the Asset Management Programme and the recommendations arising out of the Best Value Review will result in shifting roles and responsibilities. One of the first tasks of the Asset Management Group will be to review and revise performance measurement in line with the DETR Good Practice Guideline.

This will include:

- allocation of responsibility for Performance Measurement
- identification of property objectives
- identification of additional Performance Indicators linked to objectives
- comparison and benchmarking
- the development of post completion evaluation criteria

## **7. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

The Asset Management Group will commence with a comprehensive audit and review of the Property Register. As part of this process the Register itself will be developed to include current valuations and priority grading of the condition of each building. This will cross reference with any Capital Programme allocation and the Planned Maintenance Programme. Each asset will also be referenced by link to the Council's Corporate Objectives. The Register itself will be an electronic document with access for all Managers and Members through the Council's Intranet.

Having established a comprehensive database, the Asset Management Group will undertake a systematic review of existing assets. This will be a rolling programme. It will include option appraisal and prioritisation, the fit of existing assets to future needs and investigation of alternatives including shared use. The Property Register will record the date of each review.

While this work proceeds the Asset Management Group will monitor Best Value and Process Reviews to ensure consideration has been given to the principles of asset planning as set out in the Asset Management Plan. In particular, the current Best Value Reviews of the Leisure and Housing Services will impact on the greater part of the Council's asset base. These reviews will provide the Asset Management Group with a long-term strategy



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for approximately 80% of the asset base in financial terms. The reviews will not exclude from scrutiny those assets used to provide reviewed Services.

The Asset Management Group will meet on a regular basis and Minutes of its meetings will be presented to Corporate Management Board. At the end of the first six months, the Asset Management Group will review its progress and report to Corporate Management Board with recommendations for the development of its role and the Asset Management strategy.

Corporate Management Board will approve and/or commission reports to Corporate Resources Sub-committee on recommendations arising out of the Asset Management Group. However, the Corporate Resources Sub-committee will also have a role to play in direct scrutiny of the Asset Management Group itself.

## **8. UNDER-USE AND DISPOSAL**

The Asset Management Group will identify under-used or surplus assets as part of the rolling review. Recommendations will be made to Corporate Management Board as appropriate.

## **6. SPENDING AND OUTPUTS / OUTCOMES**

### **The Capital Programme**

The Council operates a three-year rolling Capital Programme. The Financial Programmes Group, comprising Officers from the Finance and Services divisions, oversee this programme. Meeting nine times in each financial year, its terms of reference include:

- (a) monitoring the progress of building works in relation to the approved Capital and Revenue programme for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account
- (b) monitoring related budgets in accordance with policy/directives from Corporate Management Board and Committee and in so doing to identify funds for transfer to and from the Central Reserves
- (c) identifying issues concerning current and future capital and revenue projects within the programme
- (d) reporting to Client Officers, the Financial Services Manager and Corporate Management Board as appropriate.

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Capital receipts.

Capital receipts from the disposal of assets are allocated on a statutory basis between the proportion available for financing capital expenditure (usable) and that required to be set aside to repay debt (reserved).

In accordance with the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (as amended), 75% of Housing Capital Receipts are set aside to repay debt. The remaining useable portion and currently 100% of General Fund Capital Receipts are included within the Useable Capital Receipts Reserve.

Useable Capital Receipts available to the authority at the close of the 1999/2000 financial year were £1.2m.

Members have agreed a three-year Capital Programme. The following table shows the effects of the three-year capital programme on this reserve: -

Useable Capital Receipts	2000/2001 £	2001/2002 £	2002/2003 £
Capital Receipts B/fwd	(1,219,056)	(556,346)	73,154
Received in Year -	(150,000)	(105,000)	(105,000)
Housing			
Use in year	812,710	734,500	488,000
Capital Receipts C/fwd	(556,346)	73,154	456,154

Condition Survey.

The authority engaged the services of consultants during the 1999/2000 financial year to undertake a comprehensive building survey covering:

- Leisure Centres
- Community Facilities
- Public Buildings/Offices
- Pavilions
- Council-owned Buildings leased to other organisations.

As a result of the findings of the survey provision has been included within the three-year capital programme to address works identified.

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2001/2002	£250,000
2002/2003	£125,000

Capital Projects

Key output/outcome targets dependent on capital investment are contained within the Capital Programme.

Best Value Review

A Best Value review of Asset Management is currently underway. The draft report for consideration by Members includes the following recommendations:

- Adoption of this Asset Management Plan
- Appointment of the Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration) as Corporate Property Officer and creation of an Asset Management Group on the basis outlined
- The appointment of four Members to join with the Asset Management Group in considering issues arising from the Audit Commission publication "Hot Property"
- Acquisition of the CAPS Solutions Uniform 2000 Estate Management module
- Creation of a Local Land & Property Gazetteer to be linked to the National system within the next two years
- The review of opportunities for Facilities Management, Partnership working and Competition in Asset Management within the next twelve months and following review of the Leisure and Housing Services
- Improvement and publication of the Council's Asset Register and creation of a central record of Stakeholders
- Preparation of a Best Value Checklist
- A further report on the viability of a Data Centre following a process review of data management within the authority
- Implementation of an agreed Action Plan

**Appendix 6**

**Action Plan**

Appointment of Corporate Property Officer	F&GP 7 December 2000
Appointment of Asset Management Group	OMT December 2000
Adoption of Asset Management Plan	F&GP 7 December 2000
Appointment of Members to Asset Management Group	F&GP 7 December 2000
Identification of Unused & Underused Assets	Ongoing
First Meeting of Officer/Member Group and Timetable for consideration of "Hot Property" issues*	January 2001
Acquisition of Uniform 2000 Estates Management Module	January 2001
Introduction of Aerial Photographic database with access for Managers and Members	January 2001
Preparation of Best Value Checklist for Asset Management	January 2001
Rolling Programme of Condition Survey	Commencing - January 2001
Acquisition of Global Positioning System	January 2001
Publication of Asset Register on Intranet	February 2001
Audit & Review of Property Register as outlined in Asset Management Plan	December 2000 – March 2001
Development of a Central Record of Stakeholders	March 2001
Linkage of Asset Register to Arcview GIS system	May 2001
Interim report on progress of Asset Management Group	May 2001
Review of Performance Measurement in line with DETR guidelines	January – June 2001
Completion of Local Land & Property Gazetteer	June 2001
Process Review of Data Management	February – September 2001
Review of opportunities for Facilities Management, Partnership Working and Competition	December 2001

\* See attached paper re Issues to be addressed

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**Issues rising from *Hot Property* for consideration by the Asset Management Group.**

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

- Do we really need all 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?

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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.

***Reviewing the use and management of office space:***

- 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?

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- 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?