

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2006/07

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Council's Asset Management Plan 2006/07 (AMP) for Members' formal approval. This document is one of the key policies identified in the work programme approved by Council in February 2006 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 (AMP). Having previously been assessed by the Government Office – East as “good”, the plan is now a key document in the Council's Annual Efficiency Statement and a “key line of enquiry” is centred around management of the asset base. The AMP is attached to this report at Appendix 1.
- 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. Following recommendations from the External Auditor with regard to the Use of Resources Judgement 2005/6, some sections have been expanded upon. It is proposed to improve and revise the layout and presentation of information in the next version.
- 2.3 Elsewhere on this agenda, the Highways and Property Services Manager has provided members with information and revisions on Property Performance Indicators and local performance measures. These have been included in the current AMP.

3 OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (ODPM) – CASE STUDY

- 3.1 Members will recall that Rochford District Council was selected as one of 12 authorities to be the subject of a case study by York Consulting on behalf of ODPM. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the development and implementation of Corporate Capital Strategies and Asset Management Plans by local authorities.
- 3.2 Earlier this year, York Consulting provided information and recommendations from their findings. These have also been included in the current AMP.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 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 miss-management and potential loss.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The AMP 2006/07 is required for the better management of resources.

5.2 The principal cost to the authority in producing the plan is officer time.

6 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To endorse the Asset Management Plan 2006/07

John Honey

Corporate Director (Internal Services)

Background Papers:-

York Consulting Case Study No 27. January 2006

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Rochford District Council

Asset Management Plan

2006/07

PART 1. OVERVIEW

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 held within the Housing Revenue Account, and one small agricultural tenancy.

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

The most significant asset is the Housing stock, for which a stock option appraisal process has been completed. The Council is now working with a chosen partner RSL to move towards transfer of the stock in 2007. However, the Council now has less than 1800 properties for rent including 665 units in 12 sheltered housing schemes, which have also been reviewed as part of the stock option appraisal process.

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. Work was completed in September 2005 on improvements to this building, including installation of a lift.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

Following a review of Overview & Scrutiny within Rochford District Council between May 2005 and April 2006, as part of the Council's Improvement Planning process, a revised committee structure has been agreed. This structure will contribute to a more focused approach to the overview of corporate plans such as the Asset Management Plan.

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, Holmes Place Plc, 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 Holmes Place as part of the contract.

The Council has also developed a new purpose built sports centre as part of a joint initiative with Holmes Place Plc 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. If the recommendation of the Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board to transfer the housing stock is endorsed by tenant ballot further rationalisation of office use will follow. Following opening of a new Reception area at the Rochford Offices in November 2004, the former Reception has been converted to a meeting area and training facility. Refurbishment of areas of the Civic Suite has improved staff and member meeting facilities in Rayleigh.

In line with an identified need in the County Structure Plan, 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.

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.

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. A formal partnership will be signed with the National Trust on 1 June 2006 and they will work with the Rayleigh Antiquarian Society to provide a much improved learning and resource facility.

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.

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 IT Strategy which already provides electronic delivery of Land Charge Searches, Planning Applications and payment and interrogation of Council Tax on-line.

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 Operational 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 14th 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 land 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 to manage as possible 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 very limited 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

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. Combined with responsibility as the Corporate Property Officer, the Corporate Director (Internal Services) is in a position to ensure that decisions are taken in line with the corporate property strategy while the Property Maintenance & Highways Manager has a 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 is being repeated in 2006 and results will inform the progress made over that period. The original survey was based on best practice identified through the Chartered Institute of Public Finance's Asset Management Planning Network. Categories assessed included image, accessibility, flexibility of use, condition, environment, suitability, location and health and safety issues.

The main Council Offices, situated in South Street, Rochford and comprising a number of former residential buildings converted to office accommodation, were considered attractive externally, but not entirely suitable for use as modern offices. Heating and ventilation was indicated to be a major problem, with users complaining of lack of air conditioning and that when windows are opened to provide ventilation traffic noise is unacceptable. A managed programme has seen the roll out of portable air conditioning units to the worst affected areas.

Where refurbishment of offices and reuse of former storerooms has taken place in order to increase capacity, much has been done to consult with staff on finishes and other issues which affect their wellbeing, to improve working conditions.

Limited parking is available at the South Street offices and cannot accommodate all employees. Parking available at the Freight House was not considered to be satisfactory by some users. Operational Management Team undertook a review of staff parking arrangements in 2005 and the recently formed Staffing & Resources Management Team now keeps arrangements under review.

Signage of the Council Offices was generally considered to be poor. New signage has been installed as part of the new Reception refurbishment following consultation with the Conservation Officer at ECC due to the nature of the buildings in Rochford.

Items describe as good or excellent included public transport accessibility, staff parking, internal decoration, lighting, vandalism record, meeting rooms, appearance of the buildings, cleanliness and level of maintenance.

Some problems associated with specific buildings were identified, for example the adequacy of IT connectivity in sheltered schemes. This has been addressed and all areas now have access to the Council's intranet.

Leisure buildings managed by Holmes Place were found to be good, with the exception of Great Wakering Sports Centre. Serious vandalism experienced at the Centre gave rise to problems for staff and customers. Much work with youth in the area has reduced this problem significantly and increased usage of the sports centre. Public transport accessibility was considered to be unsatisfactory and signage, suitability of external lighting, safety & security of staff and public, welfare facilities, interview facilities and meeting rooms were considered to be poor. These issues need to be addressed in partnership with Holmes Place plc.

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

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	
Objectives of the proposal Describe; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> property needs arising out of the proposal community benefits risks of ownership other options considered for achieving same objectives 		
Contribution to Service Improvement Identify how the proposal contributes to the delivery of the Council's Community Strategy and Corporate Improvement Plan		
Contribution to Strategic Priorities Identify how the proposal contributes to the delivery of BVPP/Improvement Plan Strategic Priorities.		
Evidence of Need <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 & Safety</u> Show how the project meets a statutory obligation and/or Health & Safety requirements		
Financial 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		
Consultation Identify consultation undertaken		

PART 2. STRUCTURE FOR MANAGEMENT OF ASSETS

<p>2.1 Corporate Property Officer</p>	<p>John Honey. Corporate Director (Internal Services) Date of appointment: 7 December 2000</p>
<p>Deputy Corporate Property Officer</p>	<p>David Timson. Property Maintenance and Highways Manager Date of appointment. 13 February 2003</p>
<p>2.2 Role & responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>2.3 Asset Management Group (Officers)</p>	<p>Staffing & Resources Management Team Date of Appointment 1 April 2006</p>
<p>2.4 Terms of reference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee

Councillors: T.G. Cutmore (Chairman), D. Merrick (Vice Chairman), K.A. Gibbs, J.E. Grey, C.A. Hungate, Mrs. J.A. Mockford, R.A. Oatham, C.G. Seagers, Mrs. M.A. Starke, M.G.B. Starke, J. Thomass

Date of appointment: 16 May 2006

2.6 Terms of reference

To exercise the Council's functions in relation to all matters not otherwise reserved to Council or the responsibility of another committee with particular reference to Corporate Strategy, Strategic Performance, Finance, Council Budget and Support Services including the formulation and implementation of the policy framework and management of the budget in respect of these

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

Report from	to	Frequency
Corporate Property Officer	Staffing & Resources Management Team (Officers)	Fortnightly
	Senior Management Team	As necessary
	Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee	As necessary
Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee	Council	As necessary but with a strategic review of the AMP annually in July
Deputy Corporate Property Officer	Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee	(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 April 2007.

PART 3. PROGRAMME AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

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 Council are subject to a committee monitoring process that ensures members are provided with an update of progress in each cycle of meetings.

Corporate Priority	Action	Responsible Officer	Capital Strategy	Time Scale	Notes
Development of Asset Management	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	June 2006	Members agreed new local performance indicators in June 2003. These were monitored and reviewed in July 2004. New indicators are being developed and will be reported to Members in July 2006.
	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. Benchmaking 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 2006/07

	<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 & D</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Improved reception facilities at Rochford Offices completed.</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>
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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	Oct 2004	<p>Temporary reception arrangements at Rochford comply with full DDA requirements. Permanent solution to be investigated.</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
Provision of affordable homes to meet local needs	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	Older Persons scheme completed Autumn 2005

	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
Leisure Facilities And Tourism	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	<p>Corporate Property Strategy. Work completed September 2005.</p> <p>Open to the public from 4 June 2006. Ongoing development of museum and educational facilities in 2006/07</p> <p>Grants obtained for the Rayleigh Historical Society for Archiving of materials and purchase of hardware and software.</p> <p>Further grant funding being sought for display materials within the Windmill.</p> <p>A Sensory garden adjacent to the Windmill also open to the public June 2006</p>

	3. We will seek opportunities to develop and extend Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park in line with local district plan policies and our own aspirations.	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	
Property Survey	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 worst 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.
	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	Initial review completed by OMT September 2005. SRMT to keep arrangements under review.

	3. Signage will be reviewed and included as part of the improvement of our main Reception	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager	C	Sept 2005	Signage format agreed and implemented
	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	A user survey will be undertaken by the Grounds Maintenance Contractor in Summer 2005.

PART 4. PERFORMANCE

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

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

REPORT OF DEPUTY CORPORATE PROPERTY OFFICER

New Performance Indicators For 2006/07

Background

A meeting was convened to look at redefining the Local Performance Indicators for buildings in the light of York Consulting's Report on Rochford District Council (on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) – *Corporate Capital Strategies and Asset Management Plans – Case Study No. 27, January 2006* - and the need to replace some indicators that have reached the end of their useful life.

The current National Indicators reported annually will be retained but some of the reported information may need refining to ensure we discriminate between backlog repairs and improvements. This affects indicator 1b.

The Local Indicators have been used to ensure programmes of work related to particular projects have been delivered. These principally relate to;

- Implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act. Public Access points and public conveniences.
- To reduce energy costs of the Council's buildings by measuring the performance of each of the two principal offices.
- To reduce the building maintenance costs for the individual operational buildings
- To measure the space utilisation of the Council's offices

DDA works are substantially complete, the New Reception building at Rochford Offices, as are public conveniences with the exception of Great Wakering Public toilets, where there is an ongoing issue of criminal damage.

Energy costs have been identified and reported, but these have been overtaken by the volatile energy market, and costs are no longer a good indicator. This is an area where specific indicators on energy usage will be developed.

Building maintenance costs have included works related to improvement. This is to be refined to separate repair from improvement and provide more informative figures.

Space utilisation does not change very much bearing in mind the Council works with only two main buildings, Rochford Offices and the Civic Suite. However as we already have detailed information about individual office usage this will be used to indicate more specific indicators about underutilised space / overcrowded space, and unused space, all of which will assist in management of space utilisation.

New Property Indicators

It is proposed to initiate a new suite of Indicators that will assist in management of the property portfolio, recognising that it is unlikely in the short / medium term that the Council will move from the existing offices. This does not however preclude the reduction in space required as future actions in terms of LSVT, partnership working etc. impact on the organisation.

The Performance Indicators will concentrate on the following issues

1. Energy Consumption and the impact of improvements on consumption. It is difficult to provide a normal model for energy consumption due to the age and complexity of the offices, but we do have records of usage built up over the past year.
2. Space utilisation and the effects of under utilisation / overcrowding / unused space.
3. Condition of space (part of the national PIs) but working down to a local level indicating the requirement for improvement. This will build on the existing refurbishment / improvements that have already been carried out to provide more suitable office / staff accommodation.
4. Costs of refurbishment / improvement
5. Are there any impediments to service delivery

Energy Consumption

All the existing electricity meters have been identified and regular readings are taken, establishing usage and patterns at each.

Water consumption is measured by meters.

Gas consumption, although relatively small, is metered and measured.

PROPOSED INDICATORS:

E1 KWh of electricity consumed

E2 Cu.M of water consumed

E3 Therms of Gas consumed

E4 Predicted percentage reduction in consumption of energy per sq.m. due to refurbishment programme

- *Gas*
- *Electricity*
- *Water*

Meter readings to be collected quarterly and the figures monitored quarterly and annually. Energy consumption changes should be considered as part of any refurbishment and the potential changes identified as part of the project development. I.e. for the staff toilet refurbishment programme the water consumption reductions can be predicted and should be monitored against the overall consumption.

Space Utilisation

Office space has already been measured and occupancy levels established in 2004. These will need to be refreshed as some movement of staff has taken place in the last two years.

The current performance is reported as a global occupancy level. What has not been done to date has been to identify where occupancy levels are above / below target space utilisation figures of 5m²/person or 11m³ per person.

Also it is particularly relevant where future changes are likely and detailed information is required for considering future options.

PROPOSED INDICATORS

- SU1 The percentage of office space which are occupied at a rate lower than 5m² or 11cu.m per person (overcrowded)
- SU2 The percentage of office space which are occupied at a rate higher than 5m² or 11cu.m per person (underutilised)
- SU3 The percentage of office space that is used for storage only
- SU4 The percentage of office space refurbished during the current year
- SU5 The percentage of office space which meets modern office requirements
 - Adequate for Computer station to meet H&S regulations
 - Lighting meets computer requirements
 - Adequate arrangements for ventilation

Cost

As the Council is actively refurbishing and improving offices following the building of the new reception it will be useful to monitor the costs per sq m of refurbishment, and the type of improvements that have been incorporated. These costs will exclude IT.

PROPOSED INDICATORS

- C1 Cost of refurbishing office space per sq.m.
- C2 Cost of refurbishing toilets per sq.m.
- C3 Cost of other refurbishment per sq.m.

Operational Property – Condition and Performance Indicators 2005/6

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	2003/04 Performance % in each category	2004/05 Performance % in each category	2005/06 Performance % in each category
1A % 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	70.3 26.8 1.1 0.2	74.4 23.3 1.2 0	68.2 31.8 0 0
1B(i) Backlog of maintenance costs expressed as total value	This is the figure identified works required. 2004/05 included completion of the public conveniences and changing pavilions	£354,000	£269,000	£306,200
1B(ii) Backlog of maintenance costs expressed 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.	28% 36% 36%	47% 43% 9%	26% 37% 37%
3A Total annual management costs / square m. for operational property		£12.96	£14.85	£14.56
3B Total annual management costs per square metre for non operational property	RDC does not have non-operational property			
4A Repair and maintenance costs		£24.70	£33.19	£31.59

per square metre GIA				
4B Energy costs per square metre GIA	Energy costs are subject to market prices	£5.44	£7.40	£12.50
4C Water costs per sq. metre GIA	Subject to market prices	£2.09	£2.22	£1.87
4D To measure CO ² emissions in tonnes of carbon dioxide per square metre		Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
5A 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 £100,00	100%	50%
5B 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 2006 (includes full year cumulative)

Number	Description	Target	Previous Year			Current Year	
	Statutory Indicators	2005/6	This Quarter	Cum.	Full Year	This Quarter	Cum.
BVPI 63	Energy efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	65	63	65	65	64	64
BVPI 156	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%
BVPI 184	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

Indicator	Buildings monitored	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Definition of Indicator
<p>Number of Public Access points to Council services that are fully accessible for people with disabilities and percentage of facilities provided.</p> <p>Percentage is a function of the number of the defined elements that are in place.</p>	Civic Suite	55%	89%	100%	<p>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.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wheelchair Access 2. An external means of summoning service for someone who is unable to enter the building 3. Public facilities at appropriate levels for wheelchair users 4. That the route is clearly signed visually, and with tactile signs. 5. There is disabled parking within a reasonable distance. 6. Doors have appropriate visibility panels. 7. Doors controls are easy to operate by people with mobility disabilities. 8. That reception areas are fitted with hearing loops 9. Levels of lighting are sufficient to aid people with sight disabilities.
	Rochford Offices	55%	100%	100%	
	The Mill	77%	100%	100%	
	Clements Hall	55%	100%	100%	
	Great Wakering Sports Centre	55%	79%	79%	
	Rayleigh Windmill		N/A	100%	
	Rayleigh Leisure Centre		N/A	100%	

Number of Public Conveniences that meet the requirements of people with disabilities And percentage of facilities provided.	The Mill	64%	100%	100%	<p>Each of the items is 16% of the Indicator, achieving all 6 items will provide 100% accessibility.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	£10.72	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	£12.87	
To reduce the building maintenance costs for individual Council operational buildings.	Civic Suite	£44.02* (14.82)	£21.67	£11.56	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	£24.19	

ENERGY

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

SPACE UTILISATION

Building	Area	Sq.m/ person	Sq.m/ person	Sq.m/ person
	Sq.m.	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
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			
Average space per person	12.55sq.m.			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 ² or 11cu.m per person	Rochford Offices	59% 46 rooms			Over utilised space 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 ² or 11cu.m per person	Rochford Offices	5.1% 4 rooms			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			Implementation of Comino document imaging to reduce storage
SU4 The percentage of office space refurbished during the current	Rochford Offices	12% 14 rooms			Influenced by the Council re-structuring as rooms may be revamped to suit new arrangements
SU5 The percentage of office space which meets modern office requirements	Rochford Offices	16% 19 rooms			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
C1 Cost of refurbishing office space per sq.m.	Rochford Offices Civic Suite	£75			Refurb. carpets,decoration, minor upgrading.
C2 Cost of refurbishing toilets per sq.m.	Rochford Offices Civic Suite	£308			This is for office toilets only.
C3 Cost of other refurbishment per sq.m.	Rochford Offices Civic Suite	None this year			
C4 No of planned schemes completed within budget	All Buildings	76%			
C5 %age of planned schemes completed within budget	All Buildings	50%			

TIME

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

PART 5. REPORT BY YORK CONSULTING: “Corporate Capital Strategies and Asset Management Plans – Case Study No. 27 – January 2006”

5.1 INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, York Consulting carried out a case study at Rochford District Council. Their report was written on the basis of a visit to the authority in July 2005 involving a meeting with the Operational 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 the 14 good practice processes in the evaluation framework for the development and implementation of corporate capital strategies and asset management plans.
- highlighting the Process Outputs and Outcomes generated by the Authority.
- York Consulting’s conclusions and recommendations emerging from their report

5.2 DEALING WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS PUT FORWARD BY YORK CONSULTING

How Rochford District Council will deal with the recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION
<p>RECOMMENDATION 1</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Section 1.5 describing Corporate Property Strategy has been considerably expanded to provide a clearer statement of intent. However, development of the AMP 2007 will further address this issue.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 2</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Terms of reference of the Financial Programmes Group will be broadened to include responsibility for operational issues and will report direct to the Staffing & Resources Management Team (S&RMT). Strategic issues will be dealt with by S&RMT. Issues arising out of either group requiring policy decisions will be referred to Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 3</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>See 1 above</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 4</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>See pro forma at p9</p>

RECOMMENDATION 5

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.

This approach will be developed within the AMP 2007

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.

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?
- 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?