



WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**STRATEGIC
ASSET
MANAGEMENT
PLAN**

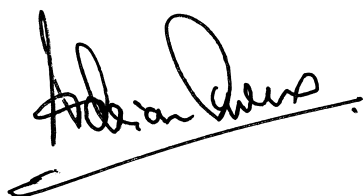
FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce the latest Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) for West Lancashire.

Most people use public assets, such as allotments, leisure centres and parks on a regular basis. They are fundamental to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the community and neighbouring areas. They help shape the character of local areas and influence the quality of life for local people.

In addition, property is second only to staffing costs as an outgoing for the Council and it is more imperative than ever, that the Corporate and Investment Estate premises perform at optimum levels. This will ensure that the front line services are delivered from premises that are fit for purpose and that the investment estate produces an income which supports the Council's aims and objectives.

The SAMP details the corporate priorities and explains the governance by which decisions about land and property are made and I am confident that this will provide the framework which will enable the Council to drive forward a more focused and sustainable property portfolio for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Owens', with a horizontal line underneath.

Adrian Owens
Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Estates



CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Profile of West Lancashire
3. The Corporate Estate
4. Organisational Arrangements
5. Achieving the Council's objectives
6. Benchmarking
7. Data Management
8. Asset Management Action Plan
9. Consultation

1. INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) for West Lancashire Borough Council details the history of the corporate property estate, the current arrangements and the plans for the future.

It is perhaps true to say that in the past, asset management plans were worthy but dull documents. It is sincerely hoped that this SAMP proves to be informative for those with a detailed background in property and those for whom involvement in the subject is more recent.

West Lancashire's Strategic Asset Management Plan will provide the:-

"Implementation of the government's proposals to raise awareness of the financial resources invested in property assets and will develop strategies and programmes to ensure that they are deployed in the most effective way to meet the Authority's corporate and service objectives."

West Lancashire Borough Council currently owns a varied portfolio of land and buildings, which are a valuable resource to the Council both generating income and providing services. The Authority's Regeneration and Estates priorities have been set by the Council and are as follows:-

- Maximising the Commercial Assets
- Supporting the Rural Economy
- Connecting Local People to Jobs (Improving Skills, Tackling Worklessness and barriers to employment)
- Supporting Inward Investment & Indigenous Business (Quality Employment Sites/Premises)
- Supporting Priority Sectors/Creating Growth Points
- Developing an Enterprise Culture (including Social Enterprises)

2. PROFILE OF WEST LANCASHIRE

West Lancashire is strategically positioned in the north west region of Great Britain. The area is located both within the Mersey Belt and is part of the North-South transport spine formed by the M6 motorway and the West Coast mainline. As a discrete area, West Lancashire was created following Local Government reorganisation in 1974, bringing together the towns of Ormskirk, Skelmersdale/Upholland and Burscough and the surrounding agricultural villages, under one administration.

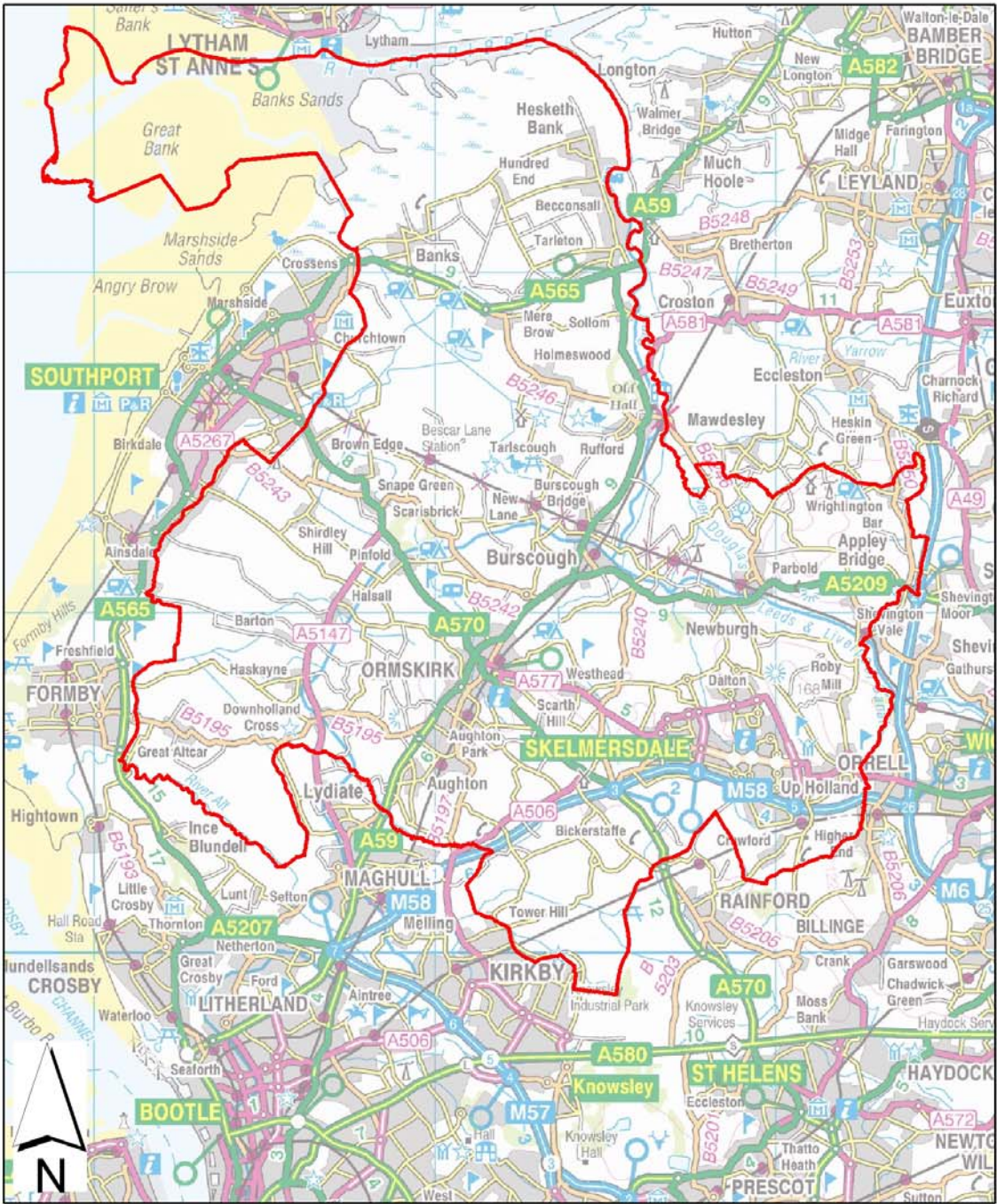
It has a population of 108,378 persons (2001 Census) and covers an area of 34,688 hectares. Due to the mix of rural and new town environments, there is considerable diversity in aspects such as affluence, property values, deprivation, unemployment rates, and these factors must be managed sensitively.

In 2008 the Council submitted a petition praying for the grant of a Royal Charter by Her Majesty the Queen conferring on the District the status of a Borough. The petition was granted and the Charter was sealed. The District Council became West Lancashire Borough Council on 20 May 2009

Located in the south west corner of Lancashire the area maintains strong links to the Merseyside metropolitan area and also to Greater Manchester. To the south and west of West Lancashire lie the Merseyside boroughs of Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens. To the east the area is bordered by the Greater Manchester Borough of Wigan and to the north east by the Lancashire districts of Chorley and South Ribble.

The Merseyrail line to Ormskirk, together with the development of the New Town of Skelmersdale and the associated M58 motorway, have fostered strong links to the Merseyside area as well as providing rapid links to the Liverpool Seaport and the wider motorway network.

Unemployment in the District fell steadily through the nineties and reached a low of 4.1% in 2006. However, it has since fluctuated and risen in line with national trends and stands at 8.6% as at September 2009.



West Lancashire Borough Council

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Scale 1:150,000

3. THE CORPORATE ESTATE

The Corporate Estate of West Lancashire is made up of a diverse collection of land and properties ranging from grass verges to development sites of up to 7 acres and from small industrial units to the West Lancashire Investment Centre.

Some of the holdings date from when local government re-organisation brought together the assets of each former urban and rural district Councils whilst others have been acquired more recently.

The method of acquisition frequently determines the use to which the authority is able to put the asset as some are burdened by restrictive covenants such as the playing fields of Up Holland which were donated by a local landowner in 1933 to be used as 'pleasure gardens'. Still others are bound by conditions imposed when the acquisition took place such as the former Langtree Estate which was bought with money from the North West Development Agency (NWDA) and which has a stipulation that the income produced must be used for economic regeneration or to enhance employment opportunities. If these properties are sold the capital receipt must be returned to the Government.

A large tranche of properties were passed to the Council from the former Commission for the New Towns and are subject to clawback payments. These again are payable to Government agencies and West Lancashire Borough Council can be liable for payments if it wishes to change the use of the land or property as in the case of the proposed new allotments in Digmoor.

The corporate estate must be revalued a minimum of every 5 years to meet the requirements of the International Finance Regulations and the most recent valuation showed a value of £44.7 million. This excludes Housing properties which are dealt with under a separate scheme.

A summary detailing the types of assets which the Council holds is shown in the table below for information.

Summary of West Lancashire Borough Council Assets

Description	No.	GIA (sqm)
Sports Centres & Pools	5	11,436
Community Centres, Chapel Gallery & Civic Hall	7	3,947
Meeting Rooms, pavilions, changing rooms, rangers	20	3,595
Depot & stores including Stanley Depot	3	2,870
Public Conveniences	6	268
Car Parks	46	n/a
Main Offices not inc Sandy Lane, including Investment Centre	4	5,847
Burscough Old Stables	1	257
Ormskirk Bus Station	1	80
Shopmobility, Ormskirk	1	54
Burscough Library	1	150
Beacon Golf Club	1	1,034
Delf House	1	7,246
Silver Birch PH, ground lease	1	n/a
Plot N, Burscough ground lease	1	n/a
Shops & offices at Sandy Lane Centre & Digmaor Parade	43	3,778
Industrial Units	61	24,248
Workshop units including 42 Westgate	43	1,833
White Moss Business Park 7 acres development land	1	n/a
Burscough Hall, Mart Lane	1	216
Mart Lane, garage, Burscough	1	56
Abbey Lakes, fishing waters, Upholland	1	n/a
43 Burscough Street, Ormskirk - residential lease	1	n/a
3/5 Sandy Lane, Skelmersdale - residential lease	1	n/a
Total Assets	252	66,915

4. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

General

The expenditure on property is second only to staff as a cost to the Authority. As such it is important that the outgoings are minimised whilst a high standard of maintenance is undertaken to ensure that front line service requirements are met.

West Lancashire Borough Council continues to hold land and property for several reasons:-

- a. to provide amenities such as public open space
- b. to support services such as the Robert Hodge Centre at Stanley
- c. to secure an income.
- d. to drive strategic development as in the case of the land held at Whitemoss, Skelmersdale
- e. to facilitate large schemes by inputting land

The Executive Managers for Community Services and Housing and Property Services have responsibility for land and buildings within their control utilising the Estates Section in the role of property agent. Generally reports for Cabinet about these areas are made jointly with the Executive Manager of Regeneration and Estates and the appropriate Executive Manager.

The Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates under the constitution has delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders and the Leader of the Council, to act in matters concerning the Council's commercial property holdings. Contentious and unusual situation are reported to Cabinet and/or Council for consideration.

The post of Executive Manager Regeneration & Estates is also the Council's designated Corporate Property Officer.

Staff Accommodation

There have been a number of methods by which the needs of the Council for staff accommodation have previously been determined but these have become somewhat ad hoc and a new more strategically focused process will be produced.

In the past Executive Managers were encouraged to identify areas of underperforming premises and advise of future needs by way of the Services Action Plans (SAPs) which were produced annually. The Corporate Property Officer would use this information to plan and manage the Council's property assets.

SAP's are now being streamlined and the opportunity to identify shortfalls and changing requirements will not be as readily available from this source. It is proposed that the former system is replaced with and informed by :-

- a. the new corporate 3-year Business Plan when produced, and
- b. a standard item on the fortnightly Corporate Management Board agenda to enable the Corporate Property Officer to ascertain relevant information from senior management team members. (See Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1

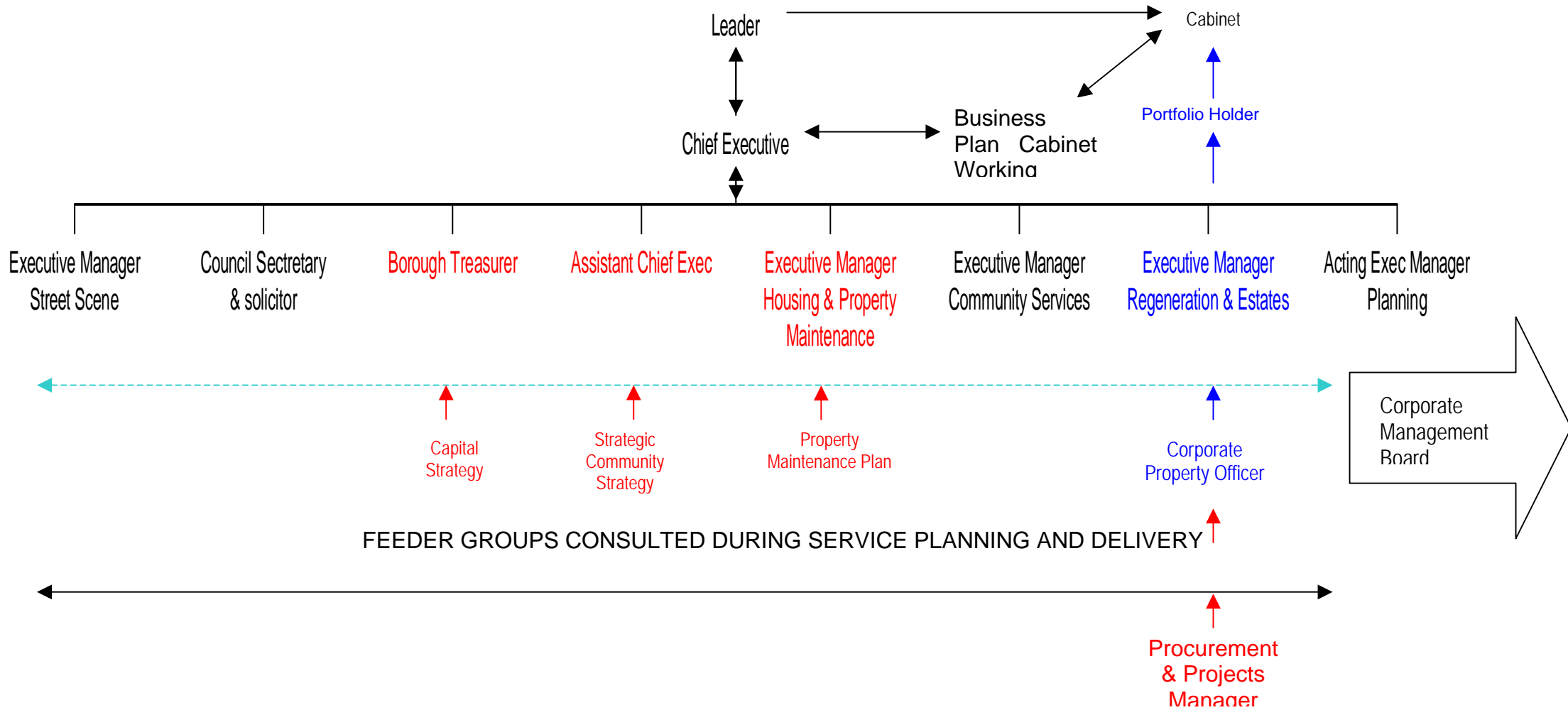
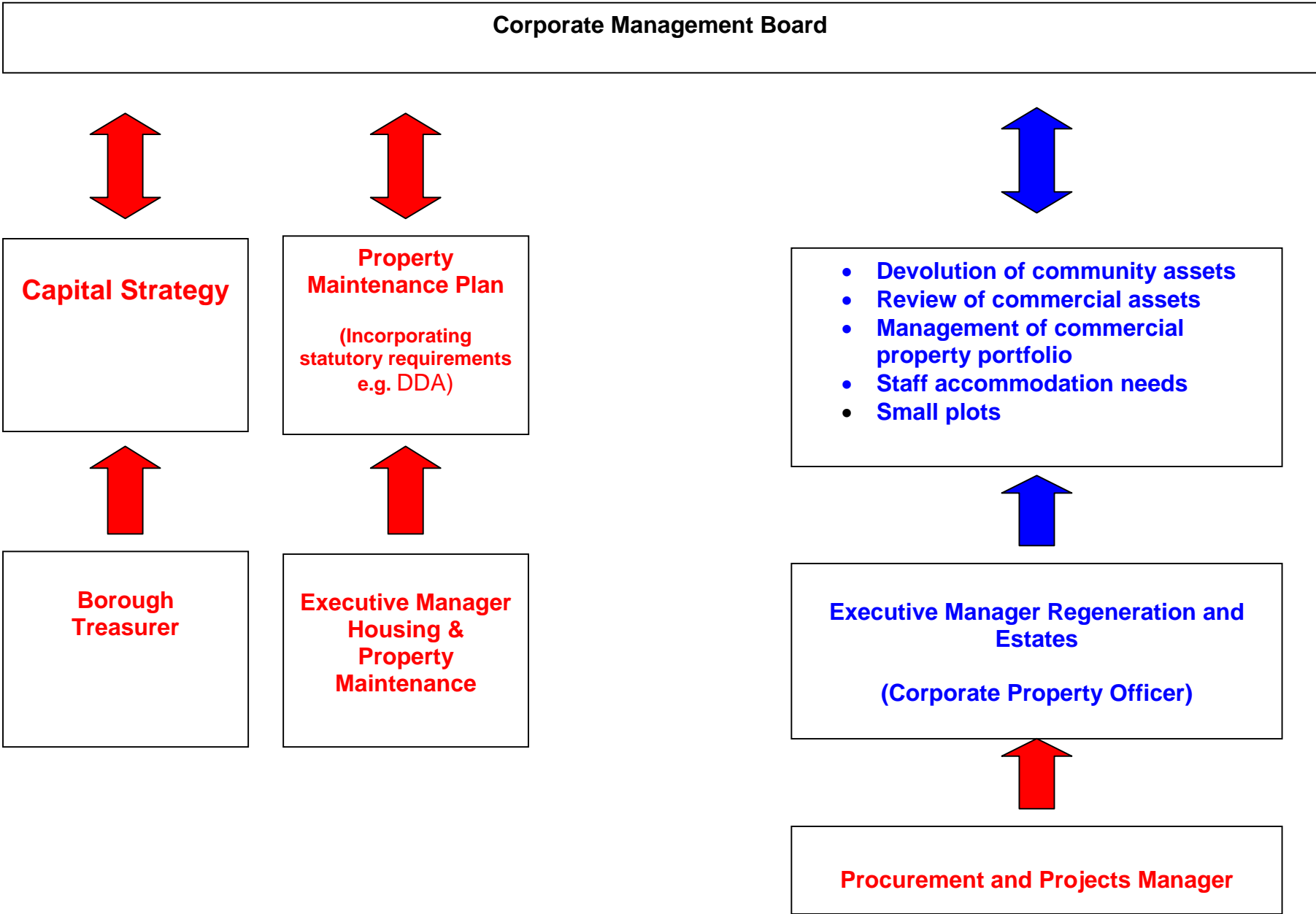


Figure 2



5. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

West Lancashire Borough Council currently owns a diverse portfolio of land and properties. The Strategic Asset Management Plan will ensure that our vision, values and priorities are considered throughout the process of managing assets.

Our vision

We've made a promise to put services first and to build a borough second to none.

Our aim is to make the best use of resources to deliver the best possible services.

Our values

We will deliver our vision by continuing to be an innovative organisation which:

- puts residents and frontline services first
- ensures local services offer the best possible value including embracing partnership as a way of securing greater value for money
- provides leadership by listening to, informing and consulting local people
- is open and accountable in the way we make decisions
- promotes equality of opportunity and values the diversity of our communities
- values and develops our employees.

Our priorities

Our values are at the heart of the way we deliver our six priorities across the borough. In partnership we will:

- deliver cost-effective services that are accessible to all
- protect and improve the environment and keep our streets clean and tidy
- combat crime and the fear of crime
- work to create opportunities for and retain good quality jobs in particular for local people
- improve housing and strive to achieve affordable housing that is available for local people
- provide opportunities for leisure and culture that together with other council services contribute to healthier communities.

These priorities form the overarching strategic framework for West Lancashire Borough Council. All of the work undertaken by the authority, including the SAMP, is with the ultimate aim of achieving these goals. As indicated in figure 3.

Underpinning the Corporate Priorities are those of the Estates & Regeneration Division agreed by the Elected Members in 2008.

Our objective is to manage a property portfolio, within the resources available, that meets corporate objectives and service delivery requirements through the implementation of effective asset management.

The six corporate property objectives are as follows :-

- CPO1:** Property assets should be suitable, sufficient and in a condition to help achieve the Council's vision and other corporate/service objectives.
- CPO2:** Property assets should comply with all statutory/regulatory requirements.
- CPO3:** The property-related costs of service delivery should be minimised and the utilisation of assets maximised, having regard to the full range of corporate objectives, including sustainability.
- CPO4:** The benefits of property ownership, or alternative methods of property provision, should be maximised. This includes the disposal of surplus property, the facilitating of development schemes to achieve wider corporate objectives and seeking appropriate opportunities for shared use/transfer of assets with partner agencies and the 3rd Sector.
- CPO5:** Repair and maintenance programmes should be informed by condition surveys and suitability/sufficiency assessments in consultation with services.
- CPO6:** Capital projects should be delivered on time, within budget and in accordance with the Capital Programme/Strategy.

CPO1: Property assets should be suitable, sufficient and in a condition to help achieve the Council's vision and other corporate/service objectives
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Corporate Property Strategy

The Corporate Property Strategy has the objective of improving the Council's property portfolio to better meet service delivery requirements in the future. It is recognised that the Council's present lack of financial resources and the less than satisfactory nature of our operational property portfolio may impact on the achievement of this objective and care must be taken that improvements are not incremental and opportunistic. The financial resources will be planned for and monitored accordingly through the mechanisms detailed in this document.

A major review of the Council's office accommodation is underway. The main strategic aims are to:-

- More effectively align the Council's office accommodation portfolio with service delivery requirements, including flexible working
- Provide a good quality working environment for staff
- Reduce maintenance liabilities

This will be achieved by careful consideration of the office space required by the Council both short, medium and long-term. A report has been prepared for the consideration of the elected Members and will ultimately form part of the Strategic Asset Management Plan.

In addition to the Corporate Property the investment estate provides a considerable income stream for the Council of approximately £1.8 million which is available to finance delivery of corporate objectives. This portfolio is managed by a small Estates Team who ensure that the tenancies are regulated and that the income is maximised.

The investment assets are spread across several classes which include offices, retail and industrial units. The largest single investment asset is Delf House which is currently let to the Co-op on a lease which is nearing the end of its term.

CPO 2: Property assets should comply with all statutory/regulatory requirements
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We ensure compliance with this CPO by carrying out a variety of property surveys and by developing and implementing Corporate Property Maintenance Fund (CPMF) spending plans. The following list is not exhaustive but highlights some of the main areas of work.

Legionella Risk Assessments and Management Arrangements

New water risk assessments were completed on all premises and the monthly monitoring inspection programme was carried out across the Borough to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Asbestos Surveys and Monitoring Programme

Asbestos surveys are carried out on all operational buildings, and building works are formally monitored.

Copies of the surveys are provided to Council's commercial tenants to allow them to comply with their own statutory duties to their staff, and contractors which may come on site.

Accessibility Audits and Action Plans

The Council's original access audit inspection programme has been revisited in the light of new legislation and the remaining outstanding inspections have been carried out. This has informed the works which were required and which have been completed where it was 'reasonable' to do so.

Electrical Test and Inspection

We have a 5 year rolling programme covering all Council (non domestic) buildings to ensure compliance with IEE Regulations.

Statutory Register

To meet legislative requirements, "statutory equipment," such as lifts, stairlifts, pressure vessels, lifting equipment, playground equipment etc needs to be inspected and serviced at regular intervals. To monitor this, a Statutory Register of such equipment is maintained.

Display Energy Certificates

All public buildings require a certificate which indicates its energy efficiency. The Council has commissioned all the required certificates.

Fire Regulations

New Fire Risk Assessments for the Housing communal blocks of flats have been completed to the satisfaction of the Fire Officer at Lancashire Fire & Rescue. Housing sheltered blocks are currently being prepared.

Existing Fire Risk Assessments for Corporate properties are in place and current and are available in the Councils Intranet for viewing.

Significant expenditure has been made on items within the residential estates such as heat detectors behind the front doors which are linked to the smoke alarms within communal areas; provision of emergency lighting and improved ventilation which should assist smoke clearance within the communal areas; etc.

CPO3: The property-related costs of service delivery should be minimised and the utilisation of assets should be optimised, having regard to the full range of Corporate objectives, including sustainability

Sustainability

The Council's property related functions have, for a number of years, been delivered with a view for achieving wider sustainability objectives in a number of ways which are detailed more fully in its Climate Change Strategy.

Sustainable development initiatives including resilience to climate change, are considered at the design stage of all new build schemes. Eg, rainwater harvesting schemes, natural ventilation, wind turbines, ground source heat pumps, solar and photovoltaic panels, high efficiency low NOx boilers, close controls for internal environments, low energy lamps with daylight control linking and the use of recycled materials in construction.

Economic

Development and regeneration schemes promoted by the Council, contribute towards leisure, health and economic growth sustainability objectives. Eg by seeking to implement local training and employment initiatives as well as supporting businesses locate and prosper in the Borough.

The Council itself is one of the largest local employees (ranked 4th in 2009)

The Council works to support the social enterprise sector through developing the West Lancashire Social Enterprise Hub to assist the sector build its capacity. This key sector is delivering valuable economic, social, and environmental benefits within the Borough. Several social enterprises are Council tenants.

The Council also works in partnership with members of the social enterprise sector to deliver its services. For example the Bulky waste services, previously delivered within The Council, have been contracted out to a local social enterprise, West Lancashire Community Recycling (WLCR). WLCR engage volunteers as well as individuals supported through apprentices schemes and back to work programmes alongside paid members of staff to operate their business therefore supporting individuals back into the labour market. This partnership working also ensures that the minimum amount of bulky waste removed by the service ends up in landfill with WLCR recycling where possible.

The council works to make support businesses looking to locate and grow in the Borough. Officers in Regeneration work with partners to ensure that businesses looking to relocate into the Borough are provided with streamlined support. Existing businesses also have access to tailored support to assist with their business needs.

Carbon Management Strategy

Since 2006/07, electricity has been purchased on a green (renewable) tariff for 3 corporate buildings (52 Derby Street, Westec House and the Investment Centre). These 3 sites account for around 80% of electricity used in non-leisure corporate buildings for which metered data are available.

An Energy Policy for corporate buildings was adopted by the Council in 2006, along with the first Action Plan for reducing energy use in the main corporate buildings. Action plans are reviewed annually and progress reported to elected Members.

An ongoing programme of energy efficiency measures is underway for Council housing stock, involving insulation, replacement of boilers with energy-efficient condensing combi types (where space permits), and replacement double glazed windows and draught-sealed doors. The majority (99%) of stock now meets current Building Regulations requirements for insulation.

Business Rates

Business rates are levied on all commercial property and reflect the rental value at the antecedent date (presently 1 April 2008) multiplied by the Uniform Business Rate (which in 2010/11 is .417).

This can be a considerable outgoing for an organisation and the Council is no exception.

The invoices for business rates are scrutinised annually and any anomalies corrected to ensure no overpayments are made. This has resulted in considerable savings for the leisure centres and some commercial units.

The government recently introduced empty business rates which are payable for industrial premises with a rateable value of more than £18,000 and which are vacant for more than 3 months. The Estates team has taken steps where possible to mitigate these rates e.g. by the sub division of units to take them below the threshold.

Surface Water Rates

Surface water rates are payable to the water companies for the run off of rainwater from roofs and car parks. The method of calculation has recently changed and on scrutiny some invoices were incorrect as areas of landscaping (which absorb rainwater were included).

This has reduced the outgoings for the Council.

CPO 4: The benefits of property ownership, or alternative methods of property provision, should be maximised. This includes the disposal of surplus property, the facilitating of development schemes to achieve wider corporate objectives, and seeking appropriate opportunities for shared use/transfer of assets with partner agencies and the 3rd Sector.

52 Derby Street, Ormskirk has been the Council's headquarters for many years and is in need of modernisation and upgrading. Land adjacent to the site but in third party ownership offered redevelopment potential and this opportunity has been fully explored. However alternative proposals are now being considered for the Council's land.

The tenanted non residential property produces an income of approximately £1.8 million for the Authority. Some of this income is ringfenced as a condition of the external funding which gave ownership of the properties to the Council, but the majority is not and is available to support frontline service provision. This figure does not include income which is achieved jointly with other Directorates e.g. the TV mast located on Beacon Golf Course.

The disposal of surplus property provides a regular source of income for the Authority. At present sales are reactive i.e. the Estates section responds to enquiries from third parties making application for purchases e.g. sale of small plots policy (Appendix A) or the sale of Pingwood Lane in Kirkby to an adjoining owner for £77,000.

West Lancashire Borough Council has explored a number of different ways of exploiting the benefits of alternative methods of property provision particularly in the option of sharing occupation with partner agencies and the transfer of assets to the third sector.

The Council arranged for the installation of a police point in an office which was previously occupied solely by the local Estate Management Board. This allowed both parties to share the facilities and utility costs. Since the original letting, two further police points have been put into Council owned property resulting in reduced costs for both agencies and an enhanced security presence for the area.

The former meeting rooms in Skelmersdale are another example of the Authority being in the vanguard of transferring its assets to the third sector. These premises were built at the same time as the housing estates when the majority of communal activity took place within a small locality. The policy of the Council to have 'fewer but better community centres' meant that the cost to upkeep the meeting rooms could not be justified. The Council undertook an exercise to transfer the surplus meeting rooms to the third sector by way of long leases. All but two properties are now let with negotiations ongoing for one of these two, Heversham meeting rooms, to be let to a boxing club. The club are presently seeking external funding to meet some of the costs refurbishment with the balance of the works being carried out by the members of the club themselves.

CPO 5: Repair and maintenance programmes should be informed by condition surveys and suitability/sufficiency assessments in consultation with services

The Council's Property Services Department has carried out detailed condition surveys for the Corporate buildings which belong to the Council. As a result of these annual reports the limited funding available can be targeted into the areas which provide the most benefit and/or preserve the asset of the property.

The properties are graded A – D with the premises requiring the most works scoring D. In addition the buildings receive numbering from 1 - 3 which denotes the urgency of the repairs.

The results of the most recent survey detail which premises would benefit from investment and which are too expensive or uneconomic to repair/refurbish. A report will be prepared which advises the elected members of the outcome of this exercise.

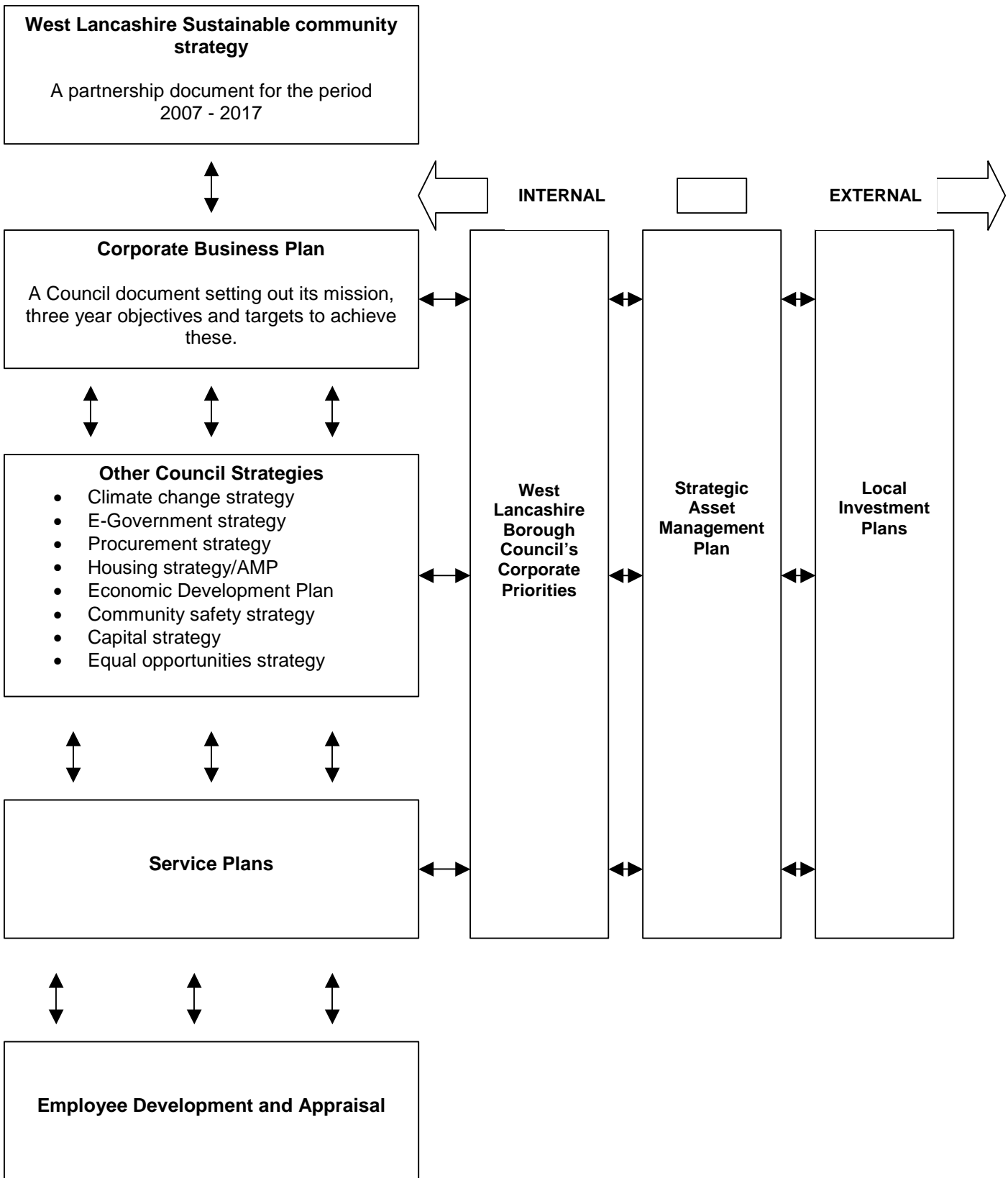
The accommodation of the Council staff is a further important matter for consideration at present. A significant number of staff have recently been decanted from offices both within Ormskirk and from the wider Borough into empty space in the Robert Hodge Centre at Stanley and the Sandy Lane Centre. This has utilised vacant space and centralised staff making the operation more efficient and effective. A survey will be carried out among staff and managers to determine whether the exercise can further improve the suitability and sufficiency of the accommodation for the Council.

CPO 6: Capital projects should be delivered on time, within budget and in accordance with the Capital Programme/Strategy.

The Council's Capital Programme has, to reflect the prevailing economic climate, necessarily been scaled down recently. This does not mean that no works are being carried out, merely that the priorities of the Council are scrutinised even more closely to ensure that the works done are targeted towards, necessary and value for money projects.

The Capital schemes for the property assets of the Council are detailed in Appendix B.

Figure 3



6. BENCHMARKING

Historically the key performance indicators were issued by NAAPMI. The Authority considered feeding into these which were co-ordinated by COPROP a cost was levied to extract information from this system which was not considered cost effective.

Instead, the Regeneration and Estates Division of the Council has begun to benchmark against similar local authorities in the North West by attending the group organised by the Association of Chief Estates Officer (ACES). This will allow the Council to compare its performance with other Councils who hold the same type of property and offer similar front line services. Work has been undertaken to ensure that the benchmarking exercise was credible by standardising the data e.g. initially the water consumption by various authorities covered an incredibly wide range - the data was investigated and it emerged that the discrepancy was caused by some authorities including their swimming pools whilst others did not.

7. DATA MANAGEMENT AND THE ASSET REGISTER

The Council has a property Terrier Management System (devised by Logotech) which holds data and information and supports the management of the Council's property estate.

The Estates Assistant manages the system to ensure that it is accurate and up to date and deals with all the ownership enquiries which arise. These include searches by all the departments in the Council, elected members, the general public and statutory bodies.

The data held on Logotech includes:-

- Address/description of the asset
- Acquisition method - this can impact on the ability of the Council to sell or utilise the site.
- Valuation
- Tenure - including the deed details.
- The lease details such as the termination date, the repairing liability, the rental paid and the date that the rent should be reviewed.

In addition, the estates technician is liable to extract boundary information from the Arc Map GIS system and adoption records from Map Zone which are supplied by Lancashire County Council.

In addition regular reports are produced which give notice of when the leases of the commercial portfolio are due to be renewed or when the rent is to be reviewed.

The Council is currently engaged in an exercise with the former Coal Board about sharing information about industrial mining operations which have taken place in the Borough. This information is to go public next year in the same way that the Environment Agency has published data about the risk of flooding and by early disclose to Local Authorities it is hoped that problems which arose in that situation are mitigated.

The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that its titles to non-housing assets are registered. (Housing assets are already registered.) Consequently, the Estates Technician and Legal Services have worked closely with Land Registry to undertake a programme to work towards this aim.

The Estates Technician has collated data and produced detailed plans to identify these assets, and the registration process has been underway for over 18 months.

The programme is progressing well. The outcome will provide many benefits to the Council, such as assisting in improving the ownership of sites, simplifying and expediting the process of conveyancing and to help defeat the claims of the significant number of trespassers who seek to appropriate the Council's land. In addition it will assist in site assembly for future regeneration projects.

8. ASSET MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

The corporate property objectives may be summarised as 'maintaining a corporate, property portfolio which meets the Council's vision and supports the achievement of its objectives).

The challenge in the future is to drive forward the vision and objectives by extending the project of challenging each and all of the property holdings whilst ensuring that the estate continues to produce an income to support front line services in addition to meeting statutory and corporate requirements.

The Asset Management Project will build and develop the work undertaken so far and will scrutinise all the Council's property assets, challenge the reasons for holding them and, if appropriate, produce a disposal strategy which will maximise the capital receipt for the Council.

The project will be undertaken by a project team, comprising a range of in-house expertise from the Regeneration and Estates Division, including the Estates and Valuation Manager, Economic Regeneration Manager and Principal Planning (Implementation) Officers. The project will be managed by following PRINCE2 methodology, to enable issues such as risks, controls and timescales to be effectively managed. The team will liaise with relevant officers from other Divisions where appropriate.

Each individual asset within the Council's property portfolio will be reviewed and a comprehensive appraisal form will be completed for each one. The appraisal forms will be used to inform the Asset Management Action Plan, which in turn will assist the decision making process as informed by existing delegations. Any proposed acquisitions or disposals exceeding the delegation limits will be referred to Cabinet for a decision.

A geographical approach to delivering the project is proposed, but it is likely that there will be instances when it will be more appropriate for a whole asset class to be explored, for example, similar to the method recently adopted to review allotment provision in the Borough. The appropriate direction will be determined as the project progresses. Council wards have been selected as they provide a natural boundary for each scheme that is known to Elected Members and to enable local Councillors to be consulted. The appraising officers will also be mindful of assets that are external to the particular boundary they are working within to ensure any neighbouring asset is also considered. This may be within, or external to, the West Lancashire boundary and may involve other neighbouring local authorities and public sector bodies.

The Council participates in Team Lancashire, which seeks to deal with asset management in conjunction, where possible, with other agencies such as the Police.

The ward of Burscough East is suggested for an initial pilot exercise. This ward has been selected as it has an average number of Council assets, which are significantly diverse in nature to challenge the process and hopefully raise

questions and queries that the project team can learn from before embarking on further wards within the Borough. Once the pilot ward has been completed the findings will be reported to Cabinet for further consideration.

The vision for the portfolio is that ultimately every asset will have a defined objective, being either retained, decommissioned, demolished or sold. All retained assets will be reviewed on a regular basis and income streams and capital receipts will be maximised. In addition the review will update and improve the accuracy of the asset register.

A sustainability appraisal and an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the process.

The Strategic Asset Management project will address many of the cross cutting themes within the West Lancashire Community Strategy 2007-2017, including reducing deprivation in our local community and will hopefully help to create more and better quality training and job opportunities to get more people into work. This will be achieved by appraising each property. Officers will be ensuring premises are fit for purpose, including business use which would in turn help to provide employment opportunities. The project would actively consider value for money and use of resources in accordance with Audit Commission requirements.

The proposal will help to support the Sustainable Community Strategy's key objectives for Skelmersdale Vision, Market Towns and the rural economy amongst others.

The proposed exercise will clearly require resources to be a success. Staff input will be significant and it is possible that in order to realise any enhanced value, capital input is needed. This was a consideration when the Council agreed to the restructure of the Division in December 2008. The subsequent O.D. exercise has not impacted on this staff resource provision. However, the volume of work should not be underestimated, as the Council owns hundreds of property assets and the wholesale review (the first of its kind to be undertaken in West Lancashire) could take a number of years. There will be costs associated with progressing the action plan such as the submission of planning applications and the procurement of professional expertise required for habitat surveys, site assembly or estate remodelling. These costs cannot be quantified until site surveys and appraisals have been undertaken. In this regard the results of the pilot scheme should provide the necessary information.

Over the project period, which is anticipated to be five years, there will be instances when resources must be diverted to alternative opportunities which present themselves. These will be dealt with as they arise in the normal manner.

9. CONSULTATION

It is important to the Council that the contents of this document reflect the aspirations and are shared with members of the Local Strategic Partnership and have been invited to comment on the contents.

The LSP is a voluntary partnership involving more than 80 partnerships, organisations and individuals. Its aim is to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the borough of West Lancashire.

The following are members of the LSP.

Lancashire County Council
Parish Council Representatives
Lancashire Constabulary
Lancashire Fire and Rescue
Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust
Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust
MPs for West Lancashire and South Ribble
Local schools
Edge Hill University
Skelmersdale and Ormskirk College
Learning and Skills Council
North West Development Agency
Government Office North West
NHS North West (SHA)
Lesbian, Gay, Trans-Sexual & Bisexual community
West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Services
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Trade and General Workers' Union
South West Lancashire Trade Union Congress
Edge Hill University Students' Union
West Lancashire Crisis and Information Centre
RSL Representative (Plus Dane Group)
West Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
Central Lancashire Adult Mental Health Development Group
Ormskirk, Preston & Southport Travellers' Association
Age Concern
Environment Agency
Natural England
Co-Operative Bank
Training West Lancashire
Karl Vella Group
Advertiser newsgroup
Business Link
Concourse Shopping Centre
Older Peoples Partnership Board
Learning Disability Partnership Board

Physical Disability Partnership Board
Job Centre Plus
Homes and Communities Agency
West Lancashire Faith Network
SSCF Neighbourhood Board
West Lancashire Youth Council
Groundwork
Wildlife Trust
The Prince's Trust
National Farmers' Union
Arriva
Proctor and Gamble
Morgan Training Services Ltd
Bickerstaffe Children's Services
A4e Connect to Work
Ormskirk Community Partnership.



AGENDA ITEM:

CABINET:
16 June 2009

COUNCIL:
15 JULY 2009

Report of: Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Owens

Contact for further information: Mrs R Kneale (Extn. 2611)
(E-mail: rachel.kneale@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: SALE OF SMALL PLOTS OF LAND OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

Borough wide interest:-

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the proposed method of dealing with the sale of small plots of land owned by the Council.
- 1.2 To seek approval for the methodology of such sales.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the methodology for the sale of small parcels of land as set out in Appendices A and B attached to the report be approved.
- 2.2 That receipts up to a ceiling limit of £5,000 from the sale of small plots of land be “ring fenced” for regeneration schemes in the Borough.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council holds a significant amount of land which it has acquired over a number of years by a variety of different methods. These are held by different Divisions of the Council. These land holdings range from large areas of Public Open Space such as Beacon Country Park and Golf Course to areas of landscaping within the urban environment. The latter includes large tracts of structured planting, grassed areas and small parcels of

amenity shrub planting. Most, if not all, were planted as an integral part of the design of residential estates to enhance their visual amenity.

- 3.2 The majority of the land in Skelmersdale was conveyed to the Council by the Skelmersdale Development Corporation in 1984 whilst the remainder across the Borough was already in the Council's ownership or has been acquired subsequently. The situation which presently operates is that when an application to purchase land is received the views of the relevant Executive Manager are sought and if he/she has no objections to the subject land being conveyed the opinions of other Council officers such as those from the Planning and Grounds Maintenance Divisions are sought. If the consensus is that the land should be conveyed, a short report is prepared for the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Leader of the Council detailing the case and the price agreed.
- 3.3 The Regeneration and Estates Division is receiving an increasing volume of enquiries, mainly from residents in Skelmersdale, who wish to acquire land from the Council to incorporate into their housing plot, or to provide private parking and improved security. In addition there are cases in which householders have illegally taken possession of land which is owned by the Council and the Council takes the necessary steps to reclaim the land. There are also cases where householders require vehicular access to their property across land which is in the Council's ownership.
- 3.4 Previously officers have dealt with each request on a case-by-case basis as and when resources permit.
- 3.5 Applications from companies wishing to purchase land for commercial purposes differ to those received from domestic applicants and are subject to an accepted protocol and as such will not form part of this report.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 There is a backlog of requests from local residents seeking to enlarge their current land holding, all of whom have been issued with letters advising them that their application will be dealt with subject to the outcome of a Cabinet report.
- 4.2 The Estates and Valuation Manager believes that the various land holdings which adjoin the residential properties cumulatively have a significant financial value to the Council and should be regarded as capital receipt producing assets. It is likely that the extension of the curtilage of a domestic property by even a modest amount generally results in an increase in the value of that property which may be significant. It is equitable, therefore, that the Council shares in that appreciation.
- 4.3 In addition, the granting of a legal easement which permits vehicular access across Council owned land, subject to the other necessary consents, usually results in an uplift in value for the occupier and the Council should share in this uplift.

- 4.4 The authority to grant easements has been delegated to the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates, however the refusal of a request or the levying of a charge for granting this access can lead to a significant amount of lobbying of elected Members and it was thought appropriate to detail the issues in this report.

5.0 ISSUES

- 5.1 While the sale of open space and landscaped amenity areas inevitably benefit the purchaser, they can also have undesirable environmental, community and land management consequences. The undesirable environmental consequences include adverse affects on the character and appearance of any area; individual and/or cumulative loss of visual amenity and/or wildlife habitat provision; and adverse affects on services (drainage systems, energy supplies etc) and increased grounds maintenance costs. The undesirable community consequences include an increased fear of crime e.g. reduced visibility in the street from fencing off land. Finally, the severing of parcels of Council owned land could create land management problems, including more difficult grounds maintenance and other maintenance operations.
- 5.2 Conversely, some sales may produce environmental benefits e.g. the removal of unsightly shrub beds of poor quality. Similarly, the enclosure of land which was previously the focus of anti social activities can bring about community benefits.
- 5.3 It cannot be guaranteed that the sale of landscaped areas will reduce the Council's liabilities in terms of grounds maintenance costs. Although, some sales may have neutral effects, in that they have no discernable environmental, community or land management effects e.g. the removal of a small shrub bed in a well landscaped setting.
- 5.4 Planning permission is normally required for the change of use of land. The responsibility of obtaining planning permission lies with the prospective purchaser. If planning permission cannot be obtained, there is no point in the applicant proceeding with a sale.

6.0 PROPOSALS

- 6.1 The Council needs to consider whether to adopt a structured and consistent approach for dealing with these requests and consider what is involved in terms of the increased workload.

- 6.2 To ensure that all applications are considered in a consistent and structured way, all enquiries (to include those received by other Sections of the Council such as Housing and Leisure) will, in the first instance, be referred to the Councils Estates and Valuation Manager, together with confirmation of whether the land is declared surplus by the operational occupier. Upon receipt of this information the Estates and Valuation Manager will send a holding letter to the applicant.
- 6.3 In terms of determining the applications it is proposed that the following criteria be used to assess if the land should be sold:
- Consider the existing function of the land e.g. Leisure use, Public Open Space/Structure tree planting/open grassed area capable of recreational use/Amenity shrub planting
 - Size of site
 - Physical condition of land
 - Service implications
 - Contribution of the land to the character, amenity and wildlife habitat provision of the area
 - Effects on local or wider regeneration objectives/initiatives
 - Crime and disorder issues
 - Maintenance and other legal liabilities

Details of the methodology of assessing and processing sales are set out in Appendices A and B.

- 6.3 The approach set out above has been circulated to the Housing, Street Scene, Community Services and Planning Divisions and no adverse comments have been received. The MAPS team has noted that the notification of a proposed sale would enable consultation with the Police under the Crime and Disorder Act.
- 6.4 As a pre-requisite for a sale, planning permission must be obtained (if required).
- 6.5 All applicants should initially be made aware of the costs which will be incurred if the matter proceeds to completion including surveying, legal and any potential planning or other relevant fees. In addition a non-refundable contribution of £100 towards the costs incurred in producing a valuation must be paid before an inspection is carried out.
- 6.6 There will continue to be a standard fee for the Council's costs for granting an easement together with a premium payable to reflect the uplift in value for the property owner.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 7.1 Some purchases will involve the loss or reduction of existing vegetation. This will marginally reduce wildlife habitats and biodiversity. However, the amount of land involved in the sale of plots is generally small and the

conveyancing document will contain a covenant restricting the use to garden space.

- 7.2 There is concern that an increase in the use of hardstanding is leading to an increased run-off of surface water. The standard easement document will require that this problem be mitigated by the use of cellular re-enforcement. This has the added benefit of retaining the visual amenity of grassed verges and enabling the use of plant by the Street Scene Manager to maintain the area.
- 7.3 With regard to the Community Strategy the sale of land will in many cases improve safety for householders and increase the enjoyment of their properties.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The sale of small plots of land, involves a considerable amount of staff resources. Details of the disposal procedures are shown in Appendix B. The method by which the Council acquired the land determines primarily the financial return, due the potential clawback. If the land has been acquired with a restrictive covenant in place the matter is significantly complicated and there is generally a payment required by the beneficiary of the covenant for its release. This usually renders the sale not financially viable. This is the case when an estate has been privately developed and the landscaped areas have been conveyed to the Council once the properties have been sold.
- 8.2 Even land which is relatively unfettered still requires input on the proposed sale from a number of divisions within the Council together with a site visit by the valuer to determine whether or not there are circumstances which would render a sale inadvisable. These may include matters such as sight lines or amenity value and may require consultation with the Highway Authority (Lancashire County Council).
- 8.3 Whilst there is the potential to raise receipts through these disposals there are not sufficient staff resources available to carry out the work at present. It is proposed that the current applications are passed to a third party such as an external firm of surveyors and Consortium Solicitors, who will carry out the process. The costs of these services will be borne by purchasers. Once the number of outstanding cases has been dealt with and the number of applications is more manageable the process will revert back to the in house surveyors and lawyers, subject to adequate staff resources at that time. To ensure consistency, the fees charged will remain the same whether relating to outsourced or in house work.
- 8.4 The Council also receives applications from owner-occupiers who require vehicular access across Council owned land. This is usually to allow them to park within the curtilage of their property. This seemingly small requirement has significant financial implications for the applicant which is not always initially appreciated. These costs include obtaining consent from the Council

as the Planning Authority, the costs required by Lancashire County Council for the installation of a dropped kerb and finally the legal fees and premium payable to the Council as the landholder. The applicant will be advised of the costs (if known) at the early stages of their request and these should be measured against the benefit to the householder of having an off road car parking space.

- 8.5 The granting of a legal easement which permits a resident to cross Council owned land has two advantages. Firstly, it allows the Council to impose a measure of control over the usage and treatment of the land e.g. where the access is across a grassed area the resident can be required to install green cellular reinforcement within the verge which allows access whilst retaining the grassed amenity. Secondly, it preserves the Council's rights of achieving unfettered ownership of the land should it wish to carry out future development works. The existence of any underground drainage and or utility apparatus would also have to be considered and suitable construction methods adopted that protect and allow access.
- 8.6 I believe that it is possible to deal with the current number of easement requests that it receives within existing staff resource levels.
- 8.7 In respect of land held for housing purposes statute determines that if the sum received from the sale of a small plot of housing land is less than £10,000 it is regarded as de minimus and the Council is able to retain 100% of the receipt. It is anticipated that the vast majority of sales would fall into this category.
- 8.8 Members may wish to ring fence the receipts to undertake small regeneration schemes in the Borough. Although Members will be aware that income from larger disposals is ring fenced for the Abbotsford regeneration project as previously agreed by Members. A ceiling limit of £5,000 is therefore recommended with regards to these small receipts.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The risk of not processing requests for such land purchases may lead to residents incorporating areas into their gardens which will require a greater amount of officer input in dealing with illegal trespass.
- 9.2 There is a risk of inconsistency in the way requests are determined if the policy for dealing with the sale of small plots of land owned by the Council is not in place.
- 9.3 If requests to purchase small plots of Council owned land are not dealt with in a timely and transparent manner there is a risk of increased complaints from applicants.
- 9.4 A further risk is that of a potential loss of capital receipts due to not having the staff resources to progress applications. This could also potentially stifle some small scale regeneration opportunities.

9.5 It is envisaged that control on the use of the land once sold to garden use will be by way of restrictive covenants contained in the conveyancing document. It should be noted that recent caselaw has stated that if an Authority grants planning permission then this may override any covenants the Council, under its land owning function, have imposed on the land.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 The sale of small parcels of land can be beneficial to the Council and prospective purchasers.

10.2 Requests for such sales should be assessed against the criteria in Appendices A and B of the report, and should be subject to the grant of planning permission for the proposed use.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

Appendix A – Land disposal criteria

Appendix B – Disposal procedures

Appendix.B

LOCATION	WORK	BUDGET
BUS RAIL INTERCHANGE	RE-ROOFING	£15,000
MILL LANE LIBRARY	VARIOUS REPAIRS	£35,000
CIVIC HALL	EXTENSIVE REPAIRS ROOF, WINDOWS ETC	£78,500
CIVIC HALL	STAGE LIGHTING	£15,000
CIVIC HALL	STAGE CURTAINS	£20,000
CIVIC HALL	INTERNAL REPAIRS	£30,000
ASHURST MEETING ROOM	ROOF REPAIRS, WINDOWS, FASCIAS	£33,000
ASHURST MEETING ROOM	INTERNAL REPAIRS	£30,000
CEMETARY STORE	REPLACE ROTTED TIMBERS	£1,250
STANLEY DEPOT	EXTERNAL REPAIRS	£13,000
NORTH MEOLS	REPLACEMENT WINDOWS	£12,000
		£282,750

SKEM SPORTS	CONTINGENCY FOR ROOF REPAIRS	£5,000
2 CHURCHFIELDS	EXTENSIVE EXT REPAIRS	£13,500
ORMSKIRK CC	CONTINGENCY	£1,000
TANHOUSE CC	CONTINGENCY	£1,000
DIGMOOR CC	CONTINGENCY	£1,000
WEST SKEM CC	INTERNAL PAINTING	£1,000
WEST SKEM CC	REPLACEMENT HW BOILER KITCHEN	£700
BIRCH GREEN CC	CONTINGENCY	£1,000
BEACON RANGERS	REPLACE CABIN	£5,000
BEACON PARK	ROAD AND CAR PARK LIGHTING	£14,940
BEACON PARK	ALTERATIONS TO METERING	£2,000
SPORTS PAVILLIONS	DECORATION	£2,000
SPORTS PAVILLIONS	DECORATION	£3,000
ABBAY LANE	DECORATION	£3,000
ABBAY LANE	REPAIR FASCIAS	£1,000
SKEM PARK	RE-ROOF	£0
SKEM PARK	REPLACE CARPET TILES	£2,500
MOORGATE TOILETS	REPAIRS TO RENDERING	£3,600
MOORGATE TOILETS	REPAIRS TO FASCIA BOARDS AND GUTTERS	£4,400
MOORGATE TOILETS	EXTERNAL DECORATION	£4,700
TARLETON TOILETS	REDECORATION	£600

52 DERBY STREET	HEATING, AIR CON, DECORATING ETC	£8,800
CSP THE CONCOURSE	FORMER CASH OFFICE ALTERATIONS	£2,800
SCHOOL LANE TOILETS	DECORATION	£780
PARK ROAD TOILETS	REPAIR ROTTED WINDOWS	£640
PARK ROAD TOILETS	UPGRADE LIGHTING	£200
PARK ROAD TOILETS	REGROUT QUARRY TILES	£420
SCHOOL LANE TOILETS	REPOINT BRICKWORK	£500
SCHOOL LANE TOILETS	REPAIR DAMAGED FASCIAS	£1,040
BUS RAIL INTERCHANGE	FLAGGING AND PAVING	£2,000
TANHOUSE OFFICE	EXTERNAL FLAGGING	£1,000
TANHOUSE OFFICE	UP GRADE FIRE ALARM	£3,000
TANHOUSE OFFICE	CHECK INSULATION	£3,000
PROPERTY ALLOCATION		£42,570
		£137,690
REFURBISHMENT		£150,400
		£570,840

CORONATION PK, SKEM	KITCHEN REFURB	£2,500
CORONATION PK, ORM	CONTINGENCY	£1,000
HALL GREEN	KITCHEN/MAIN HALL REFURB	£7,050
ST HELENS RD PARK	REPLACE RW GOODS & DECORATE	£1,000
SKEM PARK POLICE POINT	REFURBISHMENT	£4,000
CSP	REDECORATION	£3,000
STANLEY DEPOT	CONTINGENCY	£10,000
52 DERBY STREET	CONTINGENCY	£9,000
BUS RAIL INTERCHANGE	CONTINGENCY	£5,000
BURSCOUGH SPORTS CENTRE	CLADDING REPAIRS	£6,000
SKEM SPORTS CENTRE	CLADDING REPAIRS	£5,000
SKEM SPORTS CENTRE	REPLACE RW GOODS	£2,000
PARK POOL	CLADDING REPAIRS	£4,000
NYE BEVAN POOL	WINDOW REPLACEMENT	£3,500
NYE BEVAN POOL	1ST FLR LANDING DOOR	£5,600
NORTH MEOLS	INSTALL CCTV	£1,900
PROPERTY ALLOCATION		£30,000
		£100,550

Across all sites	PAT testing	£10,000
Across all sites	Periodic testing	£10,000
Across all sites	Remedials following periodic testing	£15,000
Across all sites	Asbestos management	£15,000
Across all sites	Gas servicing	£8,000
Across all sites	Work to comply with Gas Regulations	£10,000
Across all sites	Water sampling	£20,000
Across all sites	DDA Audits	£19,500
Across all sites	Air conditioning servicing	£14,000
Across all sites	Air conditioning replacement	£10,000
Across all sites	Servicing of roller shutters and automatic doors	£4,500
Across all sites	Fire alarm and emergency lighting servicing and testing	£6,000
Across all sites	Security systems servicing and testing	£3,000
Across all sites	CCTV servicing and testing	£2,000
Various sites	Improvements to door access system	£3,200
Across all sites	Building condition surveys	£10,000
Across all sites	Fire extinguishers	£3,000
		£163,200

All Sites	Cost of tradesmen / CPS recharge	£37,500
		£37,500

		£872,090
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CENTRAL SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA
ITEM
CABINET

Report of: Economic Development, Estates & Regeneration Manager

Meeting Date: 11th June 2002
1st July 2002

Portfolio Holder: Councillor I Grant

Contact for further information: Heather McManus (ext 74 2204)

SUBJECT: ASSET MANAGEMENT

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Asset Management process, and seek Members' approval to the Asset Management Plan to be submitted to Government Office North West (GONW).

2.0 RECOMMENDATION TO THE CENTRAL SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.1 That the Central Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the report and forward comments to Cabinet.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

3.1 That Members approve the Draft Asset Management Plan, attached to this report, taking into consideration any comments made by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and agree to its submission to Government Office North West.

3.2 Subject to any recommendations or amendments being proposed by the consultation exercise detailed in 7.2, to delegate authority to the Economic Development, Estates & Regeneration Manager, and the relevant portfolio holder, to amend the Asset Management Plan (if required), before submission to GONW.

3.3 Call in is not considered appropriate for this item as it has been referred to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As part of its new agenda for Local Government, the Council submitted its first Asset Management Plan (AMP) to GONW in July 2001, and must re-submit the AMP for 2002 by July 2002.
- 4.2 To facilitate the Asset Management process and deliver an Asset Management Plan for the authority, GONW have requested that a Corporate Property Officer should be appointed by the Authority.
- 4.3 The roles and responsibilities of this key role have been specified by Government Office and can be summarised as follows: -
- (i) The CPO needs to address the role and contribution of the Authority's property assets as a corporate resource supporting the delivery of corporate and service objectives.
 - (ii) There needs to be a clear understanding of the Authority's business and service aims supported by a clarification of how and when the asset base contributes to these aims.
 - (iii) The CPO will also need to consider the major corporate drivers for future change and what are or will be the "knock on" effects for asset management.
 - (iv) The CPO will need to set out a programmed and planned approach for dealing with anticipated changes and put in place a system to ensure that the adopted approach can be achievable, is fully costed and fully appraised.
 - (v) The CPO will be required to plan ahead for the corporate use and provision of the Authority's assets, to the revenue consequences of corporate capital decisions and to consider whole life costs and project appraisal.
 - (vi) The CPO is responsible for putting the necessary asset management processes into place to produce the property performance and outcomes that the Authority needs.
 - (vii) The requirements of the capital strategy and the AMP will drive the CPO to develop and implement performance measures that are directly relevant to the Authority's actual requirements and priorities.
 - (viii) Greater and more efficient use should be made of local performance indicators as well as the national PPIs. These requirements will be reflected in the assessment criteria.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Members are advised that the CPO role within the Authority is held by the Economic Development, Estates & Regeneration Manager and the job description of this post is currently being amended to facilitate this.

- 5.2 The production of the 2002/03 Asset Management Plan has now been completed and is ready to be formally submitted to GONW.

6.0 ISSUES

- 6.1 Despite excellent feedback on the Draft AMP for 2001/02, the formal feedback on the final plan was less favourable.

The details of the feedback are: -

“West Lancashire’s AMP very nearly fulfils the primary requirements. It shows clear evidence that the Council knows what is needed to be done and is planning to do it. The shortfalls are in the evidence of what has already been done in reporting to Members and Chief Officers by the Corporate Property Officer (CPO). In fact the agreed responsibilities of the CPO are not described in any great detail. It would be good to know how old the data from condition surveys are, to be able to judge the accuracy of estimates of backlog. Because of these omissions the AMP must be assessed as Poor.”

7.0 PROPOSALS

- 7.1 In order to achieve a more favourable response from GONW for the 2002/03 AMP, procedures have now been written into the plan to cover all the issues raised.
- 7.2 The conflict of feedback raised between the draft submission of the 2001/02 AMP and the final version of the plan does raise some concern for the CPO.

Considering this the CPO proposes to invite GONW representatives into the Authority to discuss the draft version of the AMP, prior to its formal submission. This should provide the opportunity to identify any possible gaps in the Plan, and these can be subsequently addressed before final submission.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The 2002 AMP has been produced using existing resources within the Economic Development, Estates & Regeneration Division, however, should the plan be adopted, and process recommended by the Action Plan implemented, some restructuring of the Divisions may have financial and resource implications.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The report identifies the current position regarding the Authority’s Asset Management Plan and process, and recommends the formal submission of the 2002/03 AMP to GONW by July 2002.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Appendices

Draft Asset Management Plan 2002/03