



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

**to
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
14 MARCH 2024**

ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present for consideration an Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029 ('the Strategy') which outlines the rationale and approach for how the council will manage its estate for the next 5 years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That Members note that it is proposed to consolidate the Corporate Projects Working Group (CPWG) and the Asset Management Working Group (AMEG) into one working group; The Strategic Assets Working Group, subject to ratification by the Council in May 2024;

To the Council:

- (ii) That the Asset Management Strategy 2024-29 (**APPENDIX 1**) be approved;

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Council's estate is made up of a diverse range of land, buildings and parks and open spaces. In addition to this the Council has further assets that are under lease or licence to commercial or community partners, as well as moorings and berths throughout the Blackwater.
- 3.2 Property assets form the foundations on which a council delivers its services, playing a key role in shaping the social, environmental, and economic wellbeing of the local community and influencing the quality of life for local people. This Strategy sets the framework for the Council's estate operations over the next five years.
- 3.3 The Strategy responds to recommendations made within the 2021 / 22 'Management of Property' internal audit to ensure the review and approval process for assets is properly documented, including:
- A) *The Council should establish an Asset Strategy to enable them to succinctly define the benefits of their assets and introduce processes that allow them to identify potential users / uses of such assets, expectations from keeping them, costs of maintaining etc.*
- B) *As part of A) above, the Council should review the assets it holds to identify unused or underutilised resources with a view to redeploying or disposing. Regular (potentially annual) meetings should be undertaken specifically to*

review the assets and ensure these are being efficiently utilised in line with the strategy. These meetings should be minuted and hold an action plan.

- 3.4 Currently the Council's Member led Corporate Projects Working Group and Asset Management Working Group have some cross-over in the objectives they are trying to achieve. Therefore it is proposed to bring the two groups together in a new 'Strategic Assets Working Group' to provide a more efficient process for both members and officers.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This Strategy sets out the rationale and approach for the Council in how it manages its assets for the next five years, with a vision statement as follows:

"To ensure that the Council's assets continue to meet its own strategic, operational, and financial objectives, as well as those of its partners, residents and visitors, through optimising asset performance, sustainability, and cost effectiveness across its estate."

- 4.2 The Strategy provides a governance approach for decision making and prioritisation of assets to be considered for future change initiatives. The governance sets out how officers and Members will work together via the Strategic Assets Working Group and how deliverables will be monitored going forward.
- 4.2 The Council is committed to developing an increased level of financial return by utilising its estate more effectively, but also seeks to ensure that positive social outcomes continue to be delivered via partner organisations who may occupy space within its assets. The Strategy provides clarity on how the Council will work in collaboration with its partners across its estate.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

- 5.1 The approach adopted by the Strategy sets out to achieve outcomes in all of the key priority areas set out in the corporate plan.

5.2 Supporting our communities

- 5.2.1 The Strategy will look to deliver initiatives aligned with the Council's Community Strategy and corporate goals that will have a positive impact on residents, businesses, and community groups within the district.

5.3 Enhancing and connecting our place

- 5.3.1 Make our assets work better for us – Setting up a Working Group tasked with the prioritisation and review of the Council's assets on cyclical basis and by delivering commercial income, reducing costs and the potential disposal of assets that are not of strategic importance to the Council.

5.4 Helping the economy to thrive

- 5.4.1 The Strategy will look to encourage new business investment and operations across the Council's estate, supporting both the local economy as well as the Council's commercial ambitions.

5.5 Smarter finances

- 5.5.1 Deliver projects in the Commercial Strategy – Implementation of the Strategy will support the delivery of and opportunity to develop new projects as part of the Commercial Strategy. Asset review and prioritisation will be based initially on asset value and likely financial return to support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

5.6 A greener future

- 5.6.1 The Strategy seeks to identify options for consideration regarding the Council's approach to asset development and investment to ensure that (where possible) investments the Council makes contribute towards its aspiration of achieving carbon neutrality.
- 5.6.2 Environmental impacts will be assessed on each initiative; all business cases will include options regarding value for money and green investments for members to consider in the decision-making process. Where possible environmental impact is reduced without compromising quality.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The Council is committed to delivering an effective and efficient estate to benefit the residents, visitors, and businesses of Maldon District. The estate is essential in delivering front line service and supporting the back-office functions of the council operational activities. This Strategy supports investment (where criteria are met) to ensure the estate is retained and developed to deliver excellent customer services.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Equalities Impact Assessments will be undertaken as appropriate for any identified projects. These will be presented with business cases for any future initiatives to ensure that impact on equalities is considered and addressed where necessary.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – Clear identification of risks and issues in relation to any projects will be identified and mitigated via a joined-up approach with officers and Members via the Strategic Assets Working Group. Officers will adopt project management tools and techniques to ensure these are logged, mitigated and reported on via the programme management office on a monthly basis.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – The Strategy sets out how assets will be considered for development, disposal or where strategically viable acquisitions will be considered. The strategy prioritises income generation for the Council, however it should be recognised that in most instances invest to save approaches will be required to progress initiatives.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Where additional resources are required or change initiatives impact on existing resource these will be identified as part of the business case development.

Background papers: None.

Enquiries to: Steven Butcher, Commercial Manager.