

STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN – 2021-2024

Ward: Borough wide

1. Summary

- 1.1 To adopt the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2024 and to seek delegated authority for in-year amendments to the Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2024, at Appendix A to the report, be adopted.
- 2.2 That the Director for Growth and Community be granted delegated authority to make in-year amendments to the adopted Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2024.

3. Background and Discussion

- 3.1. Asset management is about delivering the corporate objectives and priorities of an organisation through the management of assets. Strategic asset management should cut across the whole organisation and include objectives and actions that are required of many different services and not just the property service.
- 3.2. Government and CIPFA guidance strongly recommend that local authorities develop an asset management plan. The [draft] Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2024 (SAMP), at Appendix A to the report, is based on CIPFA's Guide to Local Authority and Public Sector Asset Management.¹
- 3.3. The SAMP provides an overview of the Council's land and property portfolio (excluding the Housing Revenue Account, housing stock and amenity land) and sets out the key strategic aims for the Council's approach to asset management and explains in more detail, how this will be achieved through the use, maintenance and management of the Council's property assets (land and buildings) over the lifetime of the SAMP.
- 3.4. The Corporate Plan² sets out the Council's corporate vision 'To make Dartford "the place of quality and choice, a place where people choose to live, work and enjoy their leisure time" applying the following objectives:
- Economic Development and Regeneration;
 - Health and Wellbeing;
 - Safer Communities;

¹December 2020

² 2017 – 2020 and under review

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- Environment and Sustainability;
- Housing and Stronger Communities,

which are underpinned by the following core values:

- Ensuring Value for Money;
- Transparency in Decision Making;
- Delivering Accessible Services;
- Valuing our Heritage;
- Valuing our Staff;
- Working in Partnership.

Other key policies and strategies with asset management implications include the Capital Strategy, Capital Budget and Core Strategy 2011-2026.

The Council's property portfolio has a significant and growing value and represents a means to drive investment and resources despite the significant pressures on public finances. The SAMP is at the heart of delivering the corporate vision and the Council's policies and programmes going forward.

- 3.5. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the local economy, the severity of which will be influenced by how long normal business is interrupted. The risks to the Council's property portfolio have been identified in the Strategic Risk Register (CP15) [Audit Board 21.01.2021: Min.No:69] and will be kept under review.
- 3.6. Adopting an asset management approach brings benefits to the Council. Although Officers have a good understanding of some of the benefits of adopting an asset management approach, to date, limited professional resources has resulted in not linking asset management to the wider strategic objectives of the Council, no targets and the lack of awareness of how an asset management approach can improve value for money in the use of resources.

On 12 October 2020 [Min.No: 105], the General Assembly of the Council agreed the directorates' restructure and the appointment of two new Directors, including the Director of Growth and Community. A key responsibility for this Director will be to oversee, through a 'Landlord Corporate Model', an integrated client property management service across the Council, which centralises estate related budgets, decision making and activities within a central team, managed by the Property Services Manager (to be recruited) under the direction of the Director of Growth and Community.

- 3.7. **Subsidy control:** Pursuant to the State Aid (Revocations and Amendments) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, EU State aid rules no longer apply to funding and other forms of support measures granted to business by UK public authorities.

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The concept of 'subsidy' replaces 'State aid'.

While the UK is no longer bound by the EU State aid rules, it is likely to take at least six months before public authorities and business have a clearer idea as to precisely what rules apply to any given situation. It is therefore understandable that many granting authorities will continue to use the EU State aid case law principles as a reference point when assessing whether grant funding or other support applies, pending the introduction of a more comprehensive UK domestic subsidy regime, which is currently been consulted on.

- 3.8. It is recommended that the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2024, at Appendix A to the report, be adopted and that the Director of Growth and Community be granted delegated authority to make in year amendments to the SAMP.

4. Relationship to the Corporate Plan

As discussed in para. 3.4 above.

5. Financial, legal, staffing and other implications and risk assessments*

Financial Implications	There are some financial commitments in the SAMP Action Plan Schedule which will be met from existing resources.
Legal Implications	None as a result of this report
Equalities	The Council's public buildings must be in a condition that does not reasonably prevent any person from accessing Council services or using Council provided facilities. This ranges from ensuring the physical fabric of buildings is in good condition to ensuring that appropriate facilities are provided, which both allows and encourages disadvantaged members of the public to access and use Council facilities. A Customer Access Review has been undertaken. The SAMP Action Plan requires a rolling programme of equality act audits.
Staffing Implications	The establishment of a property services team in the new financial year, under the direction of the Director of Growth and Community.
Administrative Implications	As discussed in the SAMP.
Risk Assessment	As identified in the Strategic Risk Register.

6. Details of Exempt Information Category

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Not applicable for the report.

7. Appendices

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

<u>Documents consulted</u>	<u>Date / File Ref</u>	<u>Report Author</u>	<u>Section and Directorate</u>	<u>Exempt Information Category</u>
		Marie Kelly-Stone	Legal Services Strategic Directorate (Internal Services)	N/A