

Central
Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



**TO EACH MEMBER OF THE
CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

17 May 2016

Dear Councillor

**CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Tuesday 24 May
2016**

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following additional report(s):-

2. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 March 2016 and to note actions taken since that meeting.

10. Asset Management Strategy

To receive a report detailing the Asset Management Strategy and to comment on progress to date and provide recommendations to the Executive.

11. Acquisitions Policy

To receive a report detailing the Acquisitions Policy and to comment on progress to date and provide recommendations to the Executive.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact Overview and Scrutiny on
Tel: 0300 300 4193

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Preen
Scrutiny Policy Adviser
email: rebecca.preen@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 22 March 2016.

PRESENT

Cllr P A Duckett (Chairman)
Cllr J Chatterley (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	Mrs A Barker	Cllrs	J Kane
	Mrs C F Chapman MBE		T Swain
	K Ferguson		N Warren

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs R W Johnstone
D McVicar

Substitutes: Cllrs Mrs A Barker

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	S Dixon	Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources
		J G Jamieson	Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
		M A G Versallion	Executive Member for Education and Skills
		R D Wenham	Executive Member for Corporate Resources

Officers in Attendance:	Mrs D Broadbent- Clarke	– Director of Improvement and Corporate Services
	Mr S Girling	– Assistant Director Assets
	Mr T Keaveney	– Assistant Director Housing Services
	Mrs R Preen	– Scrutiny Policy Adviser
	Mr C Warboys	– Chief Finance Officer

Public 0

CR/15/67. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 02 February 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

CR/15/68. **Members' Interests**

None.

CR/15/69. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Committee were informed that at a recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Panel (OSCP) a new approach had been agreed in relation to OSC procedures, that a more concise, cross functional and targeted approach would be adopted to include more overview items as well as scrutiny and that Executive Member updates would be tailored to brief updates centred around policy and strategy.

CR/15/70. Petitions

None.

CR/15/71. Questions, Statements or Deputations

None.

CR/15/72. Call-In

None.

CR/15/73. Requested Items

None.

CR/15/74. Executive Member Update

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources provided the Committee with an update on the Working Smarter project which included planned works to Ground West at Priory House in May 2016. The Executive Member highlighted efficiency savings made through recent IT tenders and that new software and telephony systems within the Customer Contact Centre would soon be live and capture performance in order to monitor efficiencies. The new website was live and had recorded increased traffic, in particular from mobile devices and tablets. Members were reminded that there were several elections taking place later in the year and that they were being encouraged to participate in the paperless trial.

In response to a Member query the Chief Finance Officer and Executive Member confirmed that there had been higher call volumes than usual due to the recent Council Tax billing although quieter than anticipated which was attributed to the detailed information sent to residents prior to the distribution of bills.

A Member queried the back up procedure in the event the Council adopted the Cloud system for IT storage and the Executive Member stated that no final decision had been made but the system would need to meet the Council's disaster recovery strategy and provide a robust service.

CR/15/75. Acquisitions Policy update

The Assistant Director (AD) for Assets delivered a presentation outlining farmland acquisition proposals, highlighting the shrinking agricultural asset base due to the sale of Council land. The presentation proposed that a policy of land acquisition be put in place to allow the Council to replenish its agricultural estate through judicious purchases of farmland where they fit strategically within the current estate. That the current 8 week Committee cycle for decision making was not conducive to timely purchases, hence the need for a more agile and rapid response in relation to farmland acquisition. It was acknowledged that there was no current provision within the Capital Programme for land acquisitions and any proposals would need to be added to the Capital Budget with each purchase requiring an approved business case.

In light of the presentation the Committee agreed that the long term proposals would need to be carefully considered by the Corporate Management Team first before progressing onto the General Purposes Committee and full Council for a final decision. The Chief Finance Officer expressed the view that it may be possible to consider interim Urgency powers as detailed within the Constitution but it would not be appropriate as a long term solution. The Leader of the Council suggested that a sum could be included within the Capital Budget at full Council in April or May 2016 and delivered as policy by the summer of 2016 but stressed the importance of considering any legal implications.

Members expressed the need for caution with regards to sums paid for land, the tax implications for certain types of land and clarity around the reasons for replacing farmland. Members queried the different types of bidding available on land purchases and it was confirmed that the Council could enter into the process provided there was a valid business case.

RECOMMENDED:-

- 1. that General Purposes consider and propose to Council an amendment to the Constitution such that if a specific budget for the purpose of strategic land acquisition had been approved by full Council, a decision to purchase land could be delegated to a specified group of Members and Officers. This would satisfy the exemption detailed below that negates the requirement for such a decision to be taken by Executive. A detailed business case for each purchase would still be required.**

“1.3.4 implementation of an explicit policy within the approved Budget and Policy Framework or fulfilment of the policy intention of a key decision previously approved by the Executive”

- 2. that pending amending the Constitution as recommended above, the Executive Member for Corporate Resources consider using the protocols of the Constitution for a decision to be taken on the grounds of urgency in order to expedite a decision where supported by a valid business case, should the need arise.**

CR/15/76. December 2015 Q3 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring

The Chief Finance Officer delivered a presentation detailing the financial position of the Council at the end of Quarter 3, highlighting areas of underspend, overspend, Capital budget monitoring and low Capital Receipt figures due to fewer sales than previously planned. Details regarding the delayed opening of Priory View and the impact on revenue as a result were discussed.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That a record of the lessons learned throughout the development of Priory View be retained in order to minimise the likelihood of similar difficulties in the future, particularly relating to agreeing the detailed scope of the project.**
- 2. That a briefing session be organised for Members relating to Priory View and other similar future projects, including a wider focus than just the financial aspects.**

CR/15/77. Work Programme 2016/17 and Executive Forward Plan

AGREED the Work Programme subject to the combination of the IT Strategy and Digital Transformation in June 2016.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.00 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Date.....

Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee 24th May 2016

Corporate Asset Management Strategy [CAMS]

Report of (Executive Member for Corporate Resources,
(richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Director of Community Services, Marcel Coiffait
(marcel.coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk), and Steven Girling
(steven.girling@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk), Tel: 0300 300 5246

This report relates to a key issue

Purpose of this report

1. The attached report to 7th June Executive seeks support for the Corporate Asset Management Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. **Consider the Executive report attached as Appendix A and support the recommendations contained within it.**

Council Priorities

2. The report supports Central Bedfordshire's five year plan and the specific priorities of value for money and enhancing your local community.

Legal Implications

3. As set out in the legal implications section of the report attached as Appendix A.

Financial Implications

4. As set out in the financial implications section of the report attached as Appendix A.

Equalities Implications

5. As set out in the Equalities implications section of the report attached as Appendix A.

Appendices

Appendix A – Executive Report to Executive on 7th June 2016 – Corporate Assets Management Strategy.

Appendix B – Draft Asset Management Strategy document.

Appendix A

Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 7 June 2016

Corporate Asset Management Strategy

Report of Cllr Richard Wenham (Executive Member for Corporate Resources), Richard.Wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk and Cllr Steven Dixon (Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources) Steven.Dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Advising Officers: Marcel Coiffait, Director of Community Services, Marcel.Coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk and Steven Girling, Assistant Director Assets, Steven.Girling@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk, Tel: 0300 300 5246

Purpose of this report

1. To present the Corporate Asset Management Strategy and to seek approval from executive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. Approve the Corporate Asset Management Strategy [CAMS].

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This report has been taken to the PFMT for review ahead of presentation to Overview and Scrutiny on the 24th May and Executive committee on the 7th June..

Reason/s for decision

2. The CAMS sets out how we, as a council will manage, develop and utilise our property and land assets portfolio to ensure that it makes an increasingly significant contribution to the successful delivery of the councils strategic priorities, vision and values over the next four years.
3. The purpose of the CAMS is to establish how the council's asset portfolio will become better aligned to support the delivery of our corporate aims and objectives, whilst ensuring that land and building assets are structured to support the best interests of the organisation.

Council Priorities

Indicate how the proposed action supports at least one of the Council's priorities, listed below:

- Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
 - Great resident services
 - Improving education and skills
 - Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing
 - Creating stronger communities
 - A more efficient and responsive Council.
4. The aim of the CAMS is to promote the best use of the council's assets for service delivery, delivery of an optimum return from our commercial and agricultural investments, and to facilitate regeneration and development. Clearly this cannot be achieved in every case, in some cases service delivery and optimising return may be incompatible. Projects will be assessed on a case by case basis with the best fit for delivery of our council priorities being adopted.

Corporate Implications

5. This strategy will have an impact on all of our property assets, as such its wider implications for the delivery of services by CBC need to be borne in mind and facilitated.

Legal Implications

6. None other than referred to in the Strategy.

Financial and Risk Implications

7. None other than referred to in the Strategy.

Equalities Implications

8. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics. The Asset Management Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to using its land and property assets in a corporate manner which realises their optimum benefit to the community and represents value for money.
9. This could include positive equality impacts such as:
- Developing Community Hubs to bring together services and meeting spaces for customers and the public, incorporating a variety of uses and enabling good service delivery; and

- Bringing together health and social care services incorporating GPs, Social workers and Community clinics
10. Where appropriate, the Council will use its surplus land and property assets to contribute towards corporate objectives for regeneration across the region.
 11. The Council will also consider the disposal of land and property assets to community groups where they develop a proposal and raise capital to bid for an “asset of community interest”.

Implications for Work Programming

12. None.

Conclusion and next Steps

13. In conclusion it is requested that the Executive accept and adopt the Corporate Asset Management Strategy document as presented.

Appendices

The following Appendix is attached:

Corporate Asset Management Strategy [CAMS]

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Asset Management Strategy

Foreword

Draft

Cllr Richard Wenham

Executive Member for Corporate Resources

Cllr Steven Dixon

Deputy Portfolio Holder

It gives us great pleasure to present Central Bedfordshire Council’s Asset Management Strategy.

This Strategy document sets out how we, as a Council, will manage, develop and utilise our property and land assets portfolio to ensure that it makes an increasingly significant contribution to the successful delivery of the Council’s strategic priorities, vision and values over the next four years.

The Council has made considerable progress towards establishing a solid and sustainable foundation for the management of our land and property assets, however, we acknowledge that we are only part way through the journey towards excellence. This strategy sets out how we will continue on this path.

Our Asset Management Strategy recognises the benefits that can be achieved by looking holistically at our asset portfolio and embeds this approach across four defined geographical quadrants of Central

Bedfordshire (based upon Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group Localities). This approach has been used to promote collaboration, both internally between Services, and externally with other stakeholders, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. This quadrant approach will be articulated in greater detail via a series of specific quadrant assets plans and a specific plan for the Council’s farms estate.

This strategy is framed in an increasingly challenging financial context that demands we achieve more from the assets we own. During the Strategy implementation period the Council has assumed capital receipts of £33.5 million within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (or the benefit in kind) and it expects to deliver a major schools re-provision and replacement programme requiring capital investment of some £93 million.

Finally, the Council has begun the process to rationalise its office accommodation to reflect changing requirements; a rationalisation enabled by the promotion of new, more flexible ways of working and delivery of frontline services. This work will continue and will deliver a more efficient and effective operational portfolio.



Councillor Richard Wenham
Executive Member for Corporate Resources

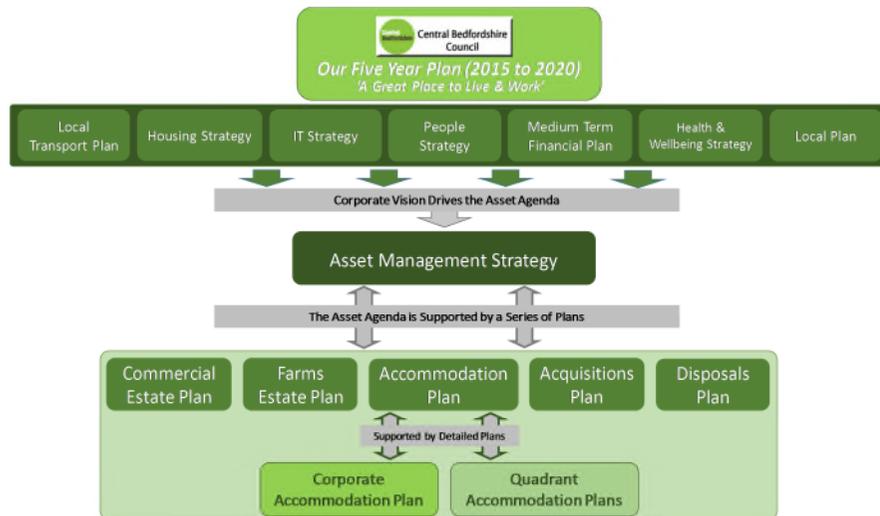


Councillor Steve Dixon
Deputy Portfolio Holder

Introduction

This document, Central Bedfordshire’s Asset Management Strategy (AMS), is part of a new suite of documents developed by Central Bedfordshire Council (the Council), to establish and articulate its holistic approach to asset management.

The purpose of this AMS, and supporting documents, is to establish how the Council’s asset portfolio will become better aligned to support the delivery of our corporate aims and objectives, whilst ensuring that land and building assets are structured to support the best interests of the organisation.



The AMS is laid out in five sections as described below:

- **Context and Purpose** – Laying out the Council’s approach to asset management

- **Central Bedfordshire** – Five Year Plan – Setting the AMS in context
- **The Asset Management Strategy** – Establishing the aim, purpose and objectives of the AMS
- **The Council’s Property Portfolio** – Details the Council’s property portfolio and relevant strategies and policies
- **Summary** – Details the review process for the plan
- **Appendix A – Governance and Review**



Marcel Coiffait
 Director of Community Services
 Central Bedfordshire Council

1. Context and Purpose

Overall Aim

- 1.1. Central Bedfordshire's Asset Management Strategy (AMS) establishes the high-level strategic framework for the effective management of the Council's assets portfolio for the next five years. It will guide future strategic property decisions to ensure the Council's property portfolio is managed efficiently and sustainably, whilst providing suitable flexibility for it to adapt to future demands.
- 1.2. Further, as the financial environment becomes increasingly challenging, innovative and better use of Council assets assumes greater importance for funding service responsibility and Council ambition.
- 1.3. The AMS sets out how the Council's mixed portfolio of assets and property will support the delivery of the organisation's key strategic objectives as reflected in the Council's **Five Year Plan (2015 to 2020)**, the financial challenges presented in the **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** and the demands of other associated Business and Service Strategies. The obligation is reflected in the following aim

'To promote the best use of the council's assets for service delivery, deliver an optimum return from our commercial and agricultural investments, and facilitate regeneration and development'

- 1.4. The scope of the AMS extends across all of the Council's owned or leased (with management accountability) land and property assets, other than Council housing and highways which are addressed in their own dedicated strategies.
- 1.5. The Council's property and asset portfolio is likely to change significantly in the coming years as the organisation responds to changes in its sector, its own size, demand for its services and the way by which services are delivered. These changes will impact the size, composition, use and the cost of running and maintaining the portfolio. The principles set out in the AMS form the basis on which implementation plans will be developed and progressed into delivery.
- 1.6. The AMS cannot be static but is instead a "live" and interactive document that will be reviewed annually to coincide with budget setting and a continued drive to enhance the management of the Council's corporate assets.

2. Central Bedfordshire – Five Year Plan

- 2.1. This section provides the background to the region, the Council’s corporate objectives, as set out in the Five Year Plan (2015 to 2020), and how these impact on the priorities for the Council’s assets.

About Central Bedfordshire

- 2.2. Lying within the East of England region and with a population of 250,000, Central Bedfordshire is located on the northern fringe of London and borders other regional groupings such as East Midlands, South East and Eastern Regions. Recent population growth has put pressure on the existing transport infrastructure and there is an increasing demographic profile of elderly and very elderly residents.
- 2.3. There is an international airport at Luton and excellent North to South road and rail links. East to West travel is more difficult, with an ongoing concern of the Council, and its residents, that the area is seen as a place to travel through or commute from, rather than to stay and work in.
- 2.4. The Council has an emerging local plan supported by local Masterplans and Development Briefs to highlight and inform future development in the region.
- 2.5. Central Bedfordshire Council has statutory and other obligations to deliver various functions and services within the council area. These include education, transport, planning, social care, libraries, waste management, refuse collection, Council Tax collections and

housing. How the property portfolio will play a vital role in the provision of these services is the key output of the AMS.

Five Year Plan 2015 to 2020

- 2.6. The Council’s vision, priorities and values set out what it wants to achieve as a Local Authority over the period to 2020 and how it aims to accomplish its key aspirations. Together, they capture the long term aspiration for the authority and drive the work of the entire Council.

The Council’s Vision

- 2.7. The Council’s vision states its overall desire for the type of place it wants Central Bedfordshire to be:

“A Great Place to Live and Work”

- 2.8. This vision encompasses all members of the resident and business community regardless of age and extends to the role of the Council as a decision maker and enabler. By the year 2020, Central Bedfordshire will be a place offering opportunity for all and where people help each other and themselves. Residents of all ages will aspire to build successful lives to create strong and self-sustaining communities.

The Council’s Priorities and Programmes

- 2.9. The Council’s priorities and programmes drive how the organisation will focus its efforts to ensure that the vision is

achieved. These priorities are fully articulated in the five-year plan

A Great Place to Live and Work					
Enhancing Central Bedfordshire	Delivering Great Residents' Services	Improving Education and Skills	Protecting the vulnerable, promoting well being	Creating stronger communities	An efficient and responsive Council

2.10. It is clear that the Council's asset portfolio has a major role in the delivery of each one.

The Council's Values

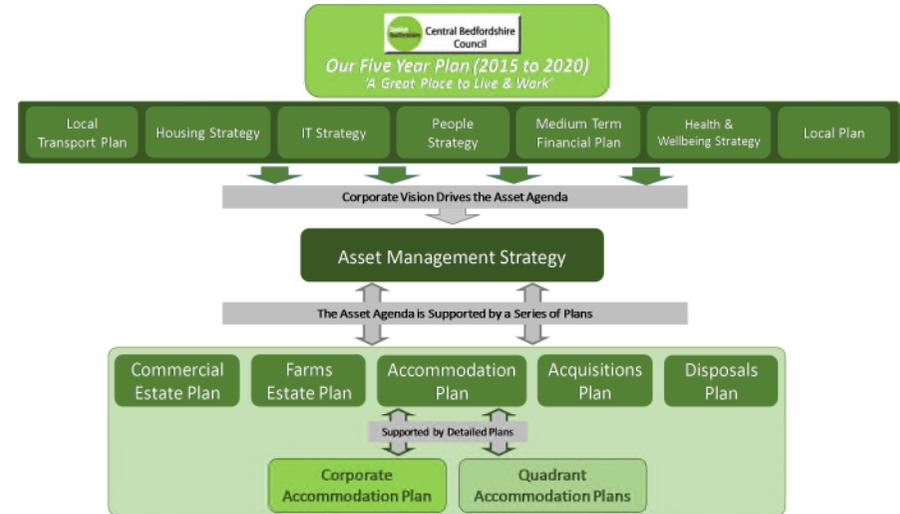
2.11. The Council's values describe the type of organisation it aspires to be and the principles that will guide it to achieve the vision and priorities and make clear how the Council will work and interact with customers, members and each other.

2.12. The Council's values are:

- **respect and empowerment** – all people will be treated as individuals who matter to the Council;
- **stewardship and efficiency** – making best use of the resources available;
- **results focused** – focused on delivering the outcomes that make a tangible difference to people's lives; and
- **collaboration** – work closely with colleagues, partners and customers to deliver on these outcomes.

Key Plans and Strategies

2.13. These priorities are being driven forward across the five year period through a series of strategies, as demonstrated in the diagram below.



2.14. The Council's asset base needs be an effective tool in driving forward the Council's Five Year Plan and all of the strategies that interpret this, as such the following strategies interact strongly with this document

- People Strategy;
- Local Transport Plan;
- Housing Strategy;
- IT Strategy;
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy;

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee 24 May 2016

Land Acquisition

Report of (Executive Member for Corporate Resources,
(richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Director of Community Services, Marcel Coiffait
(marcel.coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk), Chief Finance Officer, Charles Warboys (charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) and Steven Girling (steven.girling@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk), Tel: 0300 300 5246

This report relates to a key issue

Purpose of this report

1. The attached report to 7th June Executive seeks support for the proposed Land Acquisitions policy.
2. The report also seeks the support of the council's Executive for the addition of £8m of capital in the MTFP to enable the acquisition of land assets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Consider the Executive report attached as Appendix A and support the recommendations set out within it.**

Council Priorities

3. The report supports Central Bedfordshire's five year plan and the specific priorities of value for money and enhancing your local community.

Legal Implications

4. As set out in the legal implications section of the report attached as Appendix A.

Financial Implications

5. As set out in the financial implications section of the report attached as Appendix A.

Equalities Implications

6. As set out in the Equalities Implications section of the report attached at Appendix A.

Appendices

7. Appendix A – Executive report for 7th June 2016 – Land Acquisition.

Appendix A

Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 7 June 2016

Land Acquisition

Report of (Executive Member for Corporate Resources,
(richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Director of Community Services, Marcel Coiffait
(marcel.coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk), Chief Finance Officer, Charles
Warboys (charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) and Steven Girling
(steven.girling@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk), Tel: 0300 300 5246

This report relates to a key issue

Purpose of this report

1. Currently there is no provision in the capital programme for land acquisitions. It is proposed that a policy of land acquisition is put in place that allows Central Bedfordshire Council to replenish its estate through judicious purchases of land where these fit strategically with our current estate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to approve the following recommendation:

1. That approval from Council is requested for a new item to be added to the capital programme to cover land purchases up to a maximum combined total of £8 million for financial year 2016/17 subject to the revenue impact being containable within the existing budget and the completion and sign off of a suitable business case.

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. On the 22 March the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee sought an update on the development of a land acquisition policy. A paper was presented from the Community Services Directorate outlining the options and the intended direction of travel. The action arising from this committee meeting was that a report should be drafted for the next Executive meeting, and that the acquisitions process should if acceptable be passed to full council for consideration.

Background

2. Realising the value of agricultural land that has become developable over time helps to support the delivery of the Councils objective of supporting sustainable growth in housing and employment sites to meet the needs of current and future communities.
3. The Council's capital programme is also underpinned by the capital receipts it receives from the sale of this land; the current MTFP assumes around £ 40 million of income from sales..
4. Creating this added value is a fundamental part of the Assets Service's work; gaining planning permission, commissioning infrastructure works and agreeing a promoter / developer framework have all meant we are now well placed to achieve our income targets.
5. Currently over 200 acres of ex-agricultural land are being marketed or sold by the Council including:
 - Arlesey Cross, Arlesey
 - Thorn Turn, Houghton Regis
 - Stratton 5, Biggleswade
 - Hitchin Road, Fairfield
6. Further sites are being put forward as part of the 'call for sites' process that supports the development of a new local plan
7. Whilst disposing of developable land makes sound financial and business sense, the Council currently has no policy of land acquisition specifically aimed at replacing the land being sold; therefore the Council's asset base is being depleted over time.
8. In order to retain the viability of the Councils Agricultural holdings, continue to play a role in protecting the landscape and to ensure the long term asset base of the Council is maintained a policy of land acquisition to replace that lost through sales is suggested.

Options for consideration

8. It is proposed that a policy of land acquisition is put in place that allows Central Bedfordshire Council to replenish its estate through the judicious purchase of land where this fits strategically with our current estate.
9. To enable the replacement of land sold for development it is proposed that Council is asked to add a Land Acquisition item be added to the capital programme,

10. The proposed value of the Land Acquisition programme is £ 8 million as this represents a reinvestment of 20% of the disposals income over the period of the MTFP.
11. As it is not possible to predict what opportunities will come forward and when, it is requested that the full value of this programme is available in 2016/17 but that this represents the total value of this activity over the period of the MTFP with any unspent balance rolling into future years but not being added to in those years. .
9. The alternative option is to maintain the status quo, with land being sold when it becomes possible to enhance its value, this is not sustainable in the long term as it leads to depletion of assets and does not support our farming businesses nor help protect our rural landscape.

Issues

10. The Council's constitution requires capital expenditure over £ 500k, unless specifically detailed in the budget, to be an Executive decision.
11. However the speed and agility of decision making required to purchase land in an active market does not always sit well with an eight week Executive Committee cycle, particularly with reports needing to be prepared at least a month in advance.
12. The Constitution does however allow for more rapid decision making if required, and therefore the following hierarchy of decision making is suggested:
 - Individual land purchases over £ 500k are approved by Executive.
If this is not possible due to timescales then
 - Reports are submitted to Executive using the General Exceptions rule, shortening the timescales in preparation
If this is not possible due to timescales then
 - A Special Executive is called to enable the decision to be made
If this is not possible due to timescales then
 - A decision is made using the Special Urgency Rules
13. Following this hierarchy of decision making would allow decisions on land purchases to be made without need to change the Council's constitution and yet retain the ability to make decisions quickly if required.

14. The frequency of suitable opportunities has, to date, been low and therefore it is not expected that requirements for a Special Executive, for example, would be commonplace.

Reason/s for decision

15. Over 200 acres of ex-agricultural land are currently being sold; we also have a significantly larger amount of land being considered in the call for sites.
16. Whilst disposing of this land makes good financial and business sense it means the Council's agricultural asset base is shrinking significantly.
17. Currently there is no provision in the capital programme for land acquisitions, which makes the current policy of disposals to underpin the capital programme and deliver policy objectives unsustainable in the long term

Council Priorities

18. The acquisition of additional land will assist in delivering more efficient and responsive council.

Corporate Implications

19. The corporate implications are covered in the legal and financial risk sections below.

Legal Implications

20. There are no legal implications beyond the work required to carry out the purchase of agreed land.

Financial and Risk Implications

21. Currently there is no provision for land acquisition in the capital budget; it is proposed only to bring forward proposals whose costs can be contained within the existing revenue budget.
22. It is intended that the financial and risk implications of each proposed purchase will be managed via a business case, with each proposal being considered on its merits and that the case for each proposal will be part of the Executive report that informs the Executive's decision..

Equalities Implications

23. No Equality implications have been identified.

Implications for Work Programming

24. It is not anticipated that this will have any implications for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Conclusion and next Steps

25. If the recommendations are accepted a report will be made to the July Council seeking the addition of a land acquisition allocation to the capital budget
26. If Council in turn approves the addition to the capital budget the assets team would seek to bring forward a series of business cases to Executive for consideration, as and when opportunities arise.

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.

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