



# **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**

## **Draft**

### **Asset Management Plan**

2020/21



## **CONTENTS**

- 1. Introduction – Function of the Asset Management Plan**
- 2. The Council’s Property Asset Portfolio**
- 3. Summary of Property Portfolio Asset Management for 2019/20**
- 4. Forward Projection and Management Strategy for Property Asset Portfolio 2020/21**

### **Appendices**

- 1 Property Management Strategy
- 2 Mechanisms for Achieving the Aims and Objectives of the AMP
- 3 External and Internal Influences
- 4 Asset Disposal Programme
- 5 Ten Year Property Maintenance Plan (attached to this agenda at Appendix B)
- 6 Asset Register (attached to this agenda as follows):
  - Appendix C – Asset Register – Investment
  - Appendix D – Asset Register – Operational
  - Appendix E – Asset Register – Non-Operational

## **1 Introduction – Function of the Asset Management Plan**

The Asset Management Plan (AMP) defines how the Council managed, maintained, acquired and disposed of the Council's property assets over the past financial year and identifies the objectives for the next financial year.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of the Asset Management Plan are to:

- Manage the asset portfolio in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priorities and the Five Year Plan; Medium Term Financial Strategy; and the Cultural Strategy;
- Raise awareness of property as a valuable and workable asset contributing to the Council's revenue and capital receipts;
- Manage the asset portfolio to deliver the needs of the Council's services;
- Maximise asset value and asset use through strategic maintenance and operational planning;
- Manage the asset portfolio flexibly to ensure optimum financial performance and service delivery to demonstrate continuous service improvement, to deliver the Five Year Plan and to support the Capital Programme.

The Asset Management Strategy is summarised at Appendix 1 with the mechanisms for achieving the aims and objectives of the AMP set out at Appendix 2 including the consultation processes for adoption of the AMP.

The Asset Management Strategy is formulated and carried out to support the Council's corporate priorities. The property assets are managed both individually and as an entire portfolio to maximise operation, income generation and capital values at all times in accordance with the requirement to achieve best consideration.

The AMP is subject to external and internal influences which are summarised at Appendix 3.

The Property and Estate Team, through the Estates Manager, Major Projects Manager, Building and Property Manager, the Property, Estates and Development Lead, the Head of Economic Development & Property and the Director of Finance, Policy and Development (S151 Officer), work closely with the Portfolio Holder for Property, Major Projects and Strategic Engagement and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance to deliver maximum returns from the Council's existing and varied property asset portfolio, whilst complying with the requirements for commercial sensitivity, economic viability, best consideration and probity. The team is delivering a proactive property management service which meets the changing demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century within the current uncertain economic and political climate.

The AMP will support the Council in the delivery of its corporate priorities through ensuring that the portfolio is dynamically managed with focus directed towards priority areas of urgent major repair to relevant assets, investment, disposal of surplus assets, repurposing, redeveloping and refurbishing of existing assets with potential. It will ensure that asset performance is in support of the Five Year Plan and identified corporate priorities. This is evidenced by a rationalisation review that has been undertaken of the larger non-operational land assets over the past 6 years,

which has successfully disposed of non-performing surplus land assets to generate capital income. Maintenance costs will be kept to a sustainable level and strategic decisions will be based on delivering services, ensuring best consideration and optimising financial return.

## **2 The Council's Property Asset Portfolio**

The current asset portfolio was valued at £106.77M at 31 March 2019, with an annual rental income of £1.79M (which includes all income from rents, other rents and wayleaves) and had an annual maintenance budget of £959.45K (2019/20). The income to capital value ratio reflects the nature of the portfolio and the fact that it is held in the majority as an operational portfolio to enable the Council to deliver its key priorities.

The portfolio comprises a full range of property uses including commercial, residential, light industrial and retail properties, woodland and community land, and footpaths and pieces of ancillary land. The assets form operational, non-operational, and investment assets and are held under both freehold and leasehold title. The Asset Register defines the property portfolio within these categories. The Council also holds a separate investment portfolio in which the acquisition of 33 Monson Road is held (the Ask restaurant). In addition, the Council holds a number of leases with Tunbridge Wells Property Holdings Limited which are let for residential uses through the holding company. In relation to Royal Victoria Place (RVP), the Council has worked with the new head lessee, British Land, to facilitate a refresh of the centre, the Council paying a contribution to the total cost in accordance with the lease covenants.

Maintenance across the portfolio is divided between Planned and Responsive currently at an approximate 60/40 split respectively. In addition to the planned and responsive maintenance works is the regular servicing of plant and equipment. The works and servicing requirement is prioritised to ensure that all legislative compliance needs are met followed by maintaining a fitness for purpose and the asset value. The AMP identifies the anticipated maintenance budget requirement over the next ten year period for the property portfolio. This is used to assist in financial planning and to indicate ongoing costs related to the individual assets to inform strategic decisions on their future. A copy of the ten year maintenance plan is contained in Appendix 5.

The Council's Property Asset Portfolio is summarised in the Asset Register at Appendix 6. The current Property Asset Portfolio comprises 67 commercial investments, 156 operational assets of which 13 are allotment sites and 280 non-operational assets. The commercial investment assets comprise those assets that are let to third parties on commercial terms and are therefore subject to the clauses within their leases for opportunities to maximise income or exploit potential development opportunities.

## **3 Summary of Property Portfolio Asset Management 2019/20**

Over the past financial year the Council has negotiated lease renewals, new lettings and rent reviews to an increased value of approximately £72K annually on Council property, excluding transfers to the property company. The Council will continue to support the activities of Tunbridge Wells Property Holdings Ltd.

All property rentals that are subject to an annual rental increase at the RPI were increased over this financial year, resulting in a rental increase of approximately £5.34K per annum. These reviews are usually based on the previous years RPI figure which was 3% for April 2018/19.

Over the past 12 months, the Council has received a third tranche payment from the sale of Holly Farm of £1.38M (with the final staged payment of £1.38M due on 04/05/2020).

Vacant space on the portfolio has been reduced by letting or licensing space to reduce occupation liabilities and to achieve rental income. However, the retail portfolio element has been impacted by the general decline in the retail market resulting in the vacant unit at John Street.

The Council is continuing with the disposal of surplus land held by the Council, continuing to identify and dispose of specific sites for development for residential development. In this financial year the Council has disposed of land realising a total capital receipt of £495K and disposed of a surplus property asset generating a further capital receipt of £675K giving a total capital receipt of £1.17M.

The Council has negotiated to acquire a ransom strip of land in Tunbridge Wells to significantly increase the value of a site in Tunbridge Wells already in the Council's ownership.

The Planned Maintenance Programme for the financial year 2019/20 completed works to the value of £600K to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and to carry out priority repairs and upgrades to maintain assets and prevent dilapidation. Reactive Maintenance was undertaken to the value of approximately £345K.

Capital projects to the value of £754.8K have been progressed or completed in this financial year.

The Council can demonstrate significant contributions to its priorities through property asset management over the last financial year (2019/20). The Council has:

### **Estate Management**

- Increased rental income from Council property assets by approximately £72K per annum.
- Raised the profile of the property assets and worked them to achieve maximum return financially or by delivery for Corporate Priorities. The Council has worked with partners to accommodate business or community needs.
- Structured proactive management of the Royal Victoria Place lease including Meadow Road Car Park and continued to work with British Land to maximise the capital and revenue value of this asset through a refresh scheme.
- Continued to maximise the rental income from the property portfolio by proactively managing rent reviews and exploiting viable opportunities for rental and capital income.
- Provided professional support to Tunbridge Wells Property Holdings Limited in reviewing and updating assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs).

- Completed the refurbishment of the Pavilion in Calverley Grounds and negotiated a lease for use as a café and space to hold community classes serving the public.

### **Strategic Asset Management**

- Received a third tranche payment from the sale of Holly Farm of £1.38M (with 1 final stage payment of £1.38M due on 04/05/2020).
- Negotiated a further capital receipt from the disposal of surplus land assets at Red Oak, Hawkenbury, in the sum of **£495K** during 2019/20.
- Successfully worked with Kent County Council to progress the development of Amelia at the Amelia Scott (formerly known as the Tunbridge Wells Cultural and Learning Hub).
- Provided ongoing support for regeneration of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook, Southborough and Paddock Wood Town Centres and worked with land owners and Town and Parish Councils to progress potential opportunities including the provision of new community facilities for Cranbrook and Paddock Wood.
- Disposed of a Tunbridge Wells property asset generating a capital receipt to the Council of £675K.
- Continued to monitor changes in compliance legislation relevant to the property portfolio and maintain and manage accordingly to ensure statutory compliance.
- Successfully negotiated to acquire a ransom strip of land to maximise the value of land already in the Council's ownership.
- Continued to update the compliance information and continued to review and where necessary update the asset compliance risk assessments, management plans and registers and carry out any necessary remedial work identified and plan for future corrective measures to improve health and safety compliance to be in line with current regulations. This has been prioritised to cover Fire Risk, Asbestos, Legionella control and Electrical Safety but will broadly cover all levels of building compliance requirements for all assets.
- Continued the review of published data to meet the Government's transparency objectives on property targets.

### **Property and Projects**

- Continued the progress of the delivery of the Amelia at the Amelia Scott (Cultural and Learning Hub).
- Continued with a programme of R22 refrigerant gas phase-out on the Council's air conditioning plant.
- Completed the refurbishment of the Crescent Road car park.

- Completed the procurement of the building services contracts and entered into new contracts for building services, mechanical services maintenance, electrical services maintenance, lift maintenance and alarms and security maintenance.
- Progressed and or completed the capital projects to various assets within the portfolio.

### **Development**

- Increased the Development Programme budget to £6.59M for specialist professional advice to undertake initial works facilitating redevelopment and delivery of Council priority projects.
- Successfully progressed the Calverley Square development through the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) plan of work to the end of stage 4 having procured a contractor under a 2 stage design and build contract using a framework agreement for procurement.
- Successfully secured a confirmed Compulsory Purchase Order to deliver the Calverley Square project following a Public Inquiry.
- Continued to work in partnership with Kent County Council to facilitate the delivery of the Southborough Hub.
- Continued to work in partnership with Kent County Council to deliver the Amelia at the Amelia Scott.
- Continued to develop the design of an extension to Crescent Road Car Park and work with the Local Planning Authority to develop a revised design to submit for planning permission.

## **4 Forward Projection and Management Strategy for the Property Asset Portfolio 2020/21**

- The Council will build on these achievements during 2020/21 in the following areas:

### **Estate Management**

- Review all rents and licence fees due to be reviewed in 2020/21 to maximise the increase in income due for that financial year.
- Manage all existing leases and grant new leases to maximise the return from rental income and to ensure that proper care, maintenance and use is made of the property assets.
- Identify targets and performance indicators to demonstrate the efficient and effective management of the property asset portfolio to ensure maximum capital and operational benefit and will present these to Management Board



and Cabinet where appropriate as part of the Property Transaction Reports.

- Seek viable opportunities to work with local community groups to improve community facilities and encourage localism.

### **Strategic Asset Management**

- Continue to explore and secure new property investment opportunities within the borough for expansion of the property investment portfolio and explore any potential benefits of expanding the investment criteria.
- Review the tenure, existing use, obsolescence and strategy of all operational property assets to identify opportunities for increased income, operational use or asset disposal.
- Continue to work with Tunbridge Wells Target Shooting Club to relocate them to the Kevin Lynes site or to an alternative site to enable the disposal of the shooting club site.
- Review the disposal options for the surplus Gateway building as services are relocated into the Amelia at the Amelia Scott.
- Manage assets to support the delivery of the corporate priorities and the Five Year Plan and the recently declared Climate Emergency.
- Continue to review the asset base of non-performing land and property assets identifying assets for disposal to realise capital return and finalise disposal of outstanding identified sites. (See Appendix 4 for approach).
- Explore the impact of obsolescence on the Council's operational portfolio and acquire, dispose of and develop the asset portfolio to reflect this.
- Continue to identify refurbishment and development opportunities within the Council's asset portfolio and act on these to achieve the Council's objectives.
- Continue to look to acquire assets to assist in the delivery of the Council's objectives.
- Review and revise the asset management plan in accordance with the results of the Property Performance Indicators.
- Review the development potential for assets with potential including the Town Hall, Assembly Hall Theatre, 9/10 Calverley Terrace, 30-36 Crescent Road and the Great Hall and Mount Pleasant Avenue car parks and sites identified in the local plan.
- Support the implementation of the Sports and Active Recreation Strategy 2016-2021 and continue to explore the acquisition and disposal of sites to deliver the sports strategy.
- Continue to work with British Land to refresh and increase the capital and revenue value of the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre.

- Continue to work with other developers to deliver place shaping and regeneration to the borough.

### **Property and Projects**

- Produce a 10 year planned maintenance programme in consultation with the respective heads of service and management team, to provide an immediate, medium and long term maintenance strategy for the Council's assets, coordinating with the Estates team to ensure effective and efficient portfolio management.
- Continue to work with the contractors to deliver a more efficient and cost effective service across both planned and responsive maintenance requirements having regard to the future potential obsolescence of identified property assets on the estate.
- Operate and manage the new property maintenance and servicing contracts which replace the current term contracts, expiring 2019/20, achieving best value and ensuring the current and future maintenance needs to the portfolio can be effectively delivered and statutory compliance is delivered.
- Progress the development of a maintenance, repair and enhancement programme to Crescent Road Car Park.
- Continue to monitor changes in legislation and put in place the most appropriate action to ensure compliance across the property portfolio in particular the 2015 R22 refrigerant gas phase-out and the 2018 EPC changes.
- Continue to develop the proposal to replace the life-expired buildings on the Benhall Mill Road Depot site and maximise the development potential of that site.
- Commence the significant programme of repairs to the Town Hall and Assembly Hall Theatre.
- Review the condition of Great Hall car park and programme the necessary works to maintain the integrity of this asset.
- Deliver improvements to Torrington Car Park.
- Deliver the refurbishment of Packs in the Wood.
- Continue to successfully progress the reduction of carbon emissions from local authority operations and managing its property assets to achieve the targets set out in the Carbon Management Plan over the next four years including rolling out the delivery of LED lighting in TWBC multi-storey car parks, having regards to the requirements to emerge from the declaration of a Climate Emergency.
- Ensure that the property strategy and maintenance programmes support the Council's commitment to sustainability within the budgetary constraints.

## **Development**

- Review the current maintenance requirements and future development options for the Mount Pleasant Avenue car park, Great Hall car park, Town Hall, Assembly Hall Theatre and 9/10 Calverley Terrace (and car park) assets.
- Deliver the Ameila at the Amelia Scott project working with Kent County Council.
- Progress the potential development of various property assets in the portfolio.
- Continue to work with Kent County Council and Southborough Town Council to progress the Southborough Hub.
- Work with the Parish and Town Councils to progress community facility projects in:
  - Cranbrook
  - Paddock Wood
- Progress with the acquisition of designated land for recreation use including use of statutory powers if required.
- Work with public and private sector organisations on a number of sites including continuing to build on successful relationships with KCC, Nevill Estate, British Land, Targetfollow and AXA PPP to secure objectives within corporate priorities of the borough.
- Support regeneration initiatives in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook and Paddock Wood central areas.

## **Appendix 1 - Property Management Strategy**

Asset Management is significant throughout the public sector, as a means of optimising financial and social returns from property assets whilst, at the same time, creating a leaner estate in a modern environment.

The Council manages the portfolio in accordance with the following principles:

- Ensuring reporting arrangements are in place to enable members to fulfil legal, strategic and service duties;
- Maintaining an up-to-date asset register with complete records;
- Ensuring future property needs are regularly assessed to meet the Council's service requirements and priorities;
- Ensuring that the shape of the asset portfolio is reviewed at least annually; that the shape of its structure and the contribution of its component assets are challenged and that disposal and acquisition strategies are identified and recommended;
- Ensuring that assets that are surplus to requirements are identified as such and disposed of as appropriate;
- Ensuring that assets that would assist in the delivery of the Council's objectives are identified and acquired where appropriate and where funds are available;
- Ensuring opportunities to share property with other bodies are explored;
- Ensuring that opportunities to develop and enhance property assets, including opportunities in partnership with other public and private sector owners are identified, examined and progressed;
- Ensuring office accommodation is reviewed to meet organisation and service needs;
- Ensuring an appropriate maintenance programme based on condition surveys, is developed and implemented, carrying out quinquennial condition and maintenance surveys in a rolling programme;
- Formulating a ten-year maintenance budget projections based on the maintenance of assets for current use and at required standards to inform the Five Year Plan;
- Undertaking option appraisals to ensure optimum use of all assets;
- Ensuring property services focus upon both customers and commercial opportunities;
- Ensuring measurable targets are set and property performance monitored including risk versus reward;

- Maximising income from property having regard to economic, social and environmental policies and property market conditions;
- Ensuring best practice in procurement and project management;
- Ensuring investment and disposal decisions are based on full option appraisals and whole-life costing;
- Ensuring all property assets are managed at operational level to provide accommodation, community and wellbeing facilities;
- Ensuring investments maximise returns from individual properties and from the whole portfolio;
- Ensuring the Council considers the impact of sustainability on the value of its property portfolio, including political, economic, social and technological issues in producing its property management strategy;
- Ensuring that decisions for strategic management of Council owned assets are made on a case-by-case based on comprehensive options' analysis:
  - Is the property required for the Council's core business?
  - Is there a robust community need for the property?
  - Are there strategic reasons for retaining/acquiring the property?
  - Is retention/disposal/acquisition of the property likely to have a beneficial effect on a likely future development or investment initiative of the Council?
  - Does the property generate a sustainable good rate of return and if so is this likely to continue for the next ten years in light of any future costs that may be applicable to the premises?
- Ensuring that Property and Estates Service reports to Management Board on portfolio performance as to:
  - rental income, asset value and maintenance liability;
  - vacant property and vacancy timescale;
  - service need and space occupation;
  - service needs and maintenance liability;
  - performance of tenants and compliance with lease obligations.
- Maintaining in an appropriate state of repair, based upon any financial constraints;
- Ensuring that the assets are fit for purpose (including accessibility, suitability, statutory compliance, space utilisation); to be efficient and environmentally sustainable (including running costs and CO2 emissions). Our approach will support sustainable improvements, especially in maintenance and new buildings. The Carbon Management Plan will demonstrate our leadership in carbon reduction;
- Working the portfolio to deliver the Council's objectives and the five year plan using appropriate legislative powers including compulsory purchase powers if necessary;

- Ensuring that the portfolio is managed in accordance with Council's Equalities policy, with Equalities Impact Assessments being undertaken as and when appropriate.

## **Appendix 2 – Mechanisms for Achieving the Aims and Objectives of the AMP**

### **Property & Estates Team**

The Property & Estates Team comprises estates and property surveyors and officers providing the professional and support expertise to manage, maintain and maximise the Council's property asset portfolio.

### **Development Project Team**

The Development Project Team comprises a specialist team to deliver projects in line with the Council's stated objectives. The team's output is closely monitored and reported upon to ensure openness and transparency.

### **Management Board**

The Management Board is attended by the Director of Finance, Policy and Development (Section 151 Officer) and includes representatives of the Property and Estates Service for property, estates and development items as and when required, which demonstrates the commitment of the whole Council to the management of its assets.

## **DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME STRUCTURES**

### **Programme Management Board**

The Programme Management Board (PMB) manages and monitors the effective prioritisation of the Civic, Development and Transformation Programmes within budgetary and resource constraints in order to optimise Programme delivery.

The PMB will receive information via four main areas Development Programme, Civic Programme, Community and Transformation programmes. Community and Transformation while requiring significant support from the Property and Estates team and others in the Directorate of Finance, Policy and Development (S151 Officer) are structured under the Directorate of Change and Communities.

## **DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

### **Development Programme Officers Group (DOG)**

Officers in attendance: Director of Finance, Policy and Development (S151 Officer), Head of Economic Development & Property, the Property, Estate and Development Lead, the Estates Manager and representatives from BDU, Finance and Legal.

The Development Programme Officers Group (DOG) is the primary officers meeting to oversee the delivery of the Development Programme. Scheduled on a monthly cycle this meeting will oversee the programme receiving progress reports on specific projects, oversee the budget, risks, legal aspects and ensure approvals in place. For the purposes of this the DOG will cover the full Development Programme budget which includes Hubs, Sports Facilities and significant asset development.

Attendance by other Property & Estates officers and internal services including Communications will be as appropriate and consultants may also be invited as appropriate.

### **The Amelia at the Amelia Scott Steering Board**

### **The Amelia at the Amelia Scott Project Board (internal)**

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### **Development Advisory Panel**

The Development Advisory Panel is an informal working group established by and chaired by the Leader of the Council to:

- Oversee the Council's programme regenerating the borough and advising on development of key sites in accordance with the Asset Management Plan;
- To receive updates on key sites and recommend the appropriate next steps for the sites;
- To receive updates on the progress of the land asset disposal programme.

The DAP is an informal working group established by Cabinet on 22 May 2013. It has no delegated decision-making powers and its advice and recommendations will be reported to the relevant decision maker (Leader and Portfolio Holder). The Leader of the Council will report back to Cabinet at Cabinet/ Management Board meetings on a regular basis. The constitutional position regarding asset disposal will remain unaltered.

The DAP will have 4 meetings a year scheduled, on going schedule to be established. Other meetings can be arranged on an ad hoc basis when required. All meetings will be held in private session in view of the informal status of the group with materials available to all Members of the Council on request and on a confidential basis. Visiting Members will be able to attend at the discretion of the Chairman. The request should be made in advance of the meeting.

### **Cultural Hub Officers Board (CHOB)**

Officers in attendance: Director of Change & Communities, Executives & Heads of Service, Head of Customers & Communities, Project Surveyor, Museum Manager, Property, Estates and Development Lead with support from HR, BDU, Finance and Legal as required.

The CHOB is the officer meeting to oversee the delivery of the Cultural Hubs (and Sports Facilities). The Board will meet on a monthly cycle, before the Programme Management Board in order to oversee the programme receiving progress reports on specific projects, oversee the budget, risks, legal aspects and ensure approvals in place.

The Board does not have decision making authority. All meetings will be minuted. The Property, Estates and Development Lead and the Project Surveyor will act as the link between the DOG and the CHOB.

### **Estates/Finance Review Meetings**

Senior Finance, Property and Estates officers meet regularly and not less than quarterly to review projected income against actual income received, and to review a remedial strategy for arrears.

### **Royal Victoria Place Officer Group**

Senior Finance, Legal, Property and Estates officers meet on a quarterly basis to cover financial, maintenance and property issues relating to the RVP lease.

### **RVP Maintenance Group**

The Building and Property Manager supported by Property Services and Estate surveyors, Parking Officers and representatives of British Land meet monthly to discuss the operational management and maintenance of the RVP and the Meadow Road and RVP car parks.



### **Compliance Management Group**

This group, chaired by the Head of Economic Development and Property and attended by representatives of the Services, Property and Estates Service and the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor meets quarterly to review, update and improve the Compliance processes and policies of the Council, making recommendations to Health and Safety Committee and Management Board.

### **Land Asset Strategy Group**

Chaired by the Property, Estates and Development lead, this group meets monthly to review the land asset disposal programme and reports into the Development Officers Group.

### **Affordable Housing Group**

This group has been established to replace the Empty and Difficult Property Group to reflect the changing priorities of the Housing service.

This group will meet when needed but not less than quarterly and will comprise of the representatives of the Housing team and the Property, Estates and Development Lead.

### **Data Management**

The data management approach is informed by the principles of the Council's Data Quality Policy. Data is held as part of the IDOX Uniform Estates Management System, which is linked to the GIS system. The Council continues to review the use and content of its Estate data system to ensure that it is used to its full potential. Dates in respect of ongoing maintenance on Council land and buildings is held on an Access Database System and monitored by Property & Estates. Each building is surveyed on a regular five yearly cycle and the building elements are individually assessed for condition to enable the Ten Year Planned Maintenance Programme to be determined.

Income due and received in respect of Rent and Licence Fees are monitored and collected through the Financial Management System. The Estates Manager is responsible for any arrears and will monitor accordingly. By working closely with Finance and Legal teams, Property and Estates assures that rental, service charge and maintenance provisions in leases and licences are observed. Control is maintained on income streams and expenditure in this way.

It is intended to consolidate the systems that hold property and asset related data into one combined system that overcomes gaps or mismatches in the supply of full and accurate information.

The central database held by the UK Government is known as the Electronic Property Information Mapping Service (e-PIMS). The Council's maps are held on the Geographical Information System (GIS) and on e-PIMS, which means the Council is compliant with the annual governance report 2015. By featuring on e-PIMS, the Council's portfolio complies with the Government's One Public Estate initiative.

All data is collected, stored and managed in accordance with GDPR.

### **Consultation Process**

The Asset Management Plan is considered annually by:

- The Portfolio Holder for Property, Major Projects and Strategic Engagement
- The Management Board

- The Finance and Governance CAB
- The General Public

**Statutory Powers**

The Council will investigate and look to use all statutory powers including Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) to achieve the delivery of the corporate objectives and key priority projects.

## **Appendix 3 - External and Internal Influences**

### **National Context**

This statement is produced against the backdrop of what continues to be an extremely challenging time for local government with a combination of demand pressures and reduced resources placing significant pressure on the revenue and capital budgets of local authorities. Most local authorities are seeking to leverage property assets to reduce costs and deliver capital receipts. The Government has established the 'One Public Estate programme' in partnership by the Local Government Association and the Office of Government Property (OGP) within the Cabinet Office with a view to helping in this endeavour. TWBC contributes actively to the programme and has sought funding to assist in a number of its property-related priorities.

The property market is being impacted by the political uncertainty surrounding Brexit and economic climate and this is being seen by an increase in vacant property, a general reduction in asking rents, an increase in tenant defaults, softening of yields and increased construction costs and uncertainty in the construction sector.

### **Regional/County**

Kent local authorities work together through a number of forums to discuss and prioritise property-related issues. This includes Kent Leaders and Joint Kent Chief Executive meetings but also includes the Kent Estates Partnership. The Kent Estates Partnership seeks to promote a collaborative approach to estate management across the County and to support a more integrated, flexible and affordable public estate.

The property market in the borough generally reflects the national position.

### **MKS**

The Mid Kent Services partnership (MKS) between Maidstone Borough Council, Swale Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was set up in 2008 to:

- Improve the quality of service to communities;
- Improve the resilience of service delivery;
- Deliver efficiency savings in the procurement, management and delivery of services;
- Explore opportunities for trading in the medium to long term; and
- Share best practice.

MKS sees staff working from a range of offices across the partnership area and, in time, should lead to the potential to rationalise accommodation. The Council is working proactively with partners and partnership services such as ICT both to facilitate flexible and mobile working and to help in the longer-term objectives of reducing the cost of our operational estate.

### **Partnership Working**

The Council works with a range of partners in delivering its priorities and services including Town and Country Housing (TCH) Kent Police and Kent County Council. Through these and other partnerships, the Council will continue to explore, develop and exploit opportunities for collaborative working with public and quasi-public bodies

by amalgamating asset knowledge to help promote economies of scale, sustainable levels of occupation and better working practices.

## **Legislation**

### **Localism**

The Localism Act 2011 meant to offer more opportunity for smaller groups and local governments' lowest tiers to exercise powers locally. The legislation is wide ranging and deals with multiple community issues. One particular change was the introduction of a 'Community Right to Bid' which enables community groups to apply for local buildings or land to be put on a register. Once on the register of Community Assets, an asset cannot be sold without first allowing a community group a period of up to 6 months to raise funds to make an offer based upon its market value.

### **Local Context**

The Asset Management Plan should be read in conjunction with the Council's Five Year Plan 2017-22 and connected Community Project documents. These documents can be read on the Council website, whose mission is as follows: -

"To encourage investment and sustainable growth and to enhance quality of life for all"

The Council's Five Year Plan 2017-2022 accounts for issues identified through the community planning process and through regular consultation and surveys with residents. In property terms the Asset Management Plan is a strategy that delivers improvements in all areas and services for the purpose of meeting local community needs.

The main aim of the AMP is for Council assets to be recognised as a principal resource, thereby ensuring continuous strengthening in the organisational arrangements set out above.

### **Sustainability**

The Council provides a leading role on sustainability by addressing its own asset base. Legislation and a number of sustainability initiatives, especially energy and carbon reduction, have been put in place in the past few years. Projects, including maintenance schemes that flow from the AMP, will need to include a sustainability assessment to ensure that the impact of projects are fully understood and that mitigation measures are put in place and support a continued reduction in the carbon emissions.

### **Economic Position**

Instability in the global economy, where major adjustments continue, is in marked contrast with the local property market. The local effect of global instability converts mainly into a corset upon the growth in property rents and capital values. The national context is of historically low interest rates with weak banks, a gradual removal of quantitative easing, and record investment in the FTSE 250. Uncertainty over the UK's future relationship with the EU will accentuate a general pattern of low growth, and is likely to apply for the whole period of the AMP 2020/21.

The strength and weakness of the UK property market will impact upon the policies and processes that the Council needs for managing its asset portfolio for optimising efficiency and effectiveness.

For surplus property assets with development potential, market conditions will be assessed in deciding the future of each asset. Market shifts will require the Council to maintain a flexible approach in managing the portfolio.

Market impact is anticipated in the following areas:

- Property vacancies (more anticipated);
- Emphasis upon maintenance;
- Obsolescence in building fabric and services;
- Rebalancing of tenants in contractual default;
- Softening of yields
- Lowering of asking rents and/increased incentives
- Avoidance of defaulting contractors; and
- Increasing demand upon the supply chain of contractors and consultants,

The Property and Estates Team will review all assets held by the Council to ensure that every opportunity for return is exploited to achieve its wellbeing or financial objectives. This will include:

- A full review of land and assets held and use made of them;
- Short, medium and long term strategic requirement;
- Maximisation through partnership working; and
- Maximisation of easements, licences and rights granted and benefits received.

To work its property assets harder, both financially and in the provision of facilities, the Council will continue to consider and exercise both disposal of surplus assets and acquisition for investment purposes to secure future income streams and to assist the local economy.

### **Performance Management and Monitoring**

The following performance indicators are reported to Cabinet:

- Total rental income for the financial year;
- Capital income from property asset disposal for financial year;
- 6 monthly property transactions reports completed under delegated authority.

Additional performance indicators are monitored by the Head of Economic Development and Property and Management Board.

## **Transparency**

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 provides guidance on the expected minimum level of information made available to the public. This includes how local authorities publish details of all land and assets held by them. The base position is publishing a list of all land and property annually, including a unique property reference number, unique asset identity, name, address and map reference. In addition how the land/building is recorded and set out.

The Electronic Property Information Management Scheme (e-PIMS) has been populated with data complying with the One Public Estate initiative. Property officers are in contact with counterparts in Kent County Council and with departments of central government to assist in promoting this initiative.

The Council currently publishes the Asset Register within the Asset Management Plan on an annual basis. In addition the Council has identified all its assets geographically within My Neighbourhood on its Website, which is a live system.

## Appendix 4 – Asset Disposal Programme

The Council reviewed and disposed of various assets listed in previous AMPs during 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17. The Council has completed these reviews of the non-performing land and property assets identified in previous Asset Management Plans. In 2020/21 the Council will process outstanding actions from those reviews, and continue to review all assets towards a leaner and more productive estate.

### 2020/21 Sites to be Reviewed

The Council will identify sites appropriate for disposal.

Feasibility studies will be undertaken of the assets. Subject to full analysis including the potential for planning permission, a recommendation for lease or sale will be made to the Finance & Governance Cabinet Advisory Board, or the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property, Major Projects and Strategic Engagement and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance.

The feasibility studies will be undertaken in two stages:

#### Stage 1 - Feasibility:

- Detailed analysis of the land title;
- Detailed analysis of the physical site;
- Detailed analysis of the planning status and likely grant of planning permission;
- Marketing and disposal if planning permission is not recommended.

#### Stage 2 - Feasibility:

- Production of development scheme;
- Valuation of land;
- Application for planning permission (if appropriate);
- Marketing and disposal of site.

All disposals will be in accordance with the Constitution and local government legislation. Ward members, parish and town councils will be informed of the intention to lease or dispose of these assets.

### Asset Disposals in 2019/20

The following asset disposals were completed in 2019/20:

Address	Status
Land at Red Oak, Hawkhurst	Sold
27 Monson Road, Tunbridge Wells	Sold

## **Appendix 5 – Ten Year Property Maintenance Plan**

The Ten Year Maintenance plan as detailed in the following pages is the result of the rolling programme of quinquennial surveys which produce a projection of the anticipated maintenance cost liability for the individual property asset. It very much represents an 'ideal' programme of maintenance to keep the respective buildings in good condition, for their expected lifetime and maintaining their current use. Some of the works anticipated and included in the schedule can potentially be funded by the capital expenditure programme as the works will bring an enhancement to the asset value.

Periodically the Council undertakes surveys of the entire portfolio. This process will be undertaken and completed in 2019/20. This will include condition surveys of the building fabric, plant and machinery and will also include updated asbestos surveys.

The Ten Year Maintenance plan attached to this Asset Management Plan summarises the plan for the assets highlighting immediate, five year and ten year maintenance strategy for each asset and for the portfolio as a whole. The figures for the Town Hall and Assembly Hall Theatre have been informed by a recent survey and reflect the Council's commitment to the historic integrity of these buildings.

The schedule includes the full projection for all buildings even where works have been frozen where the future strategy is under consideration. Annually the projected works are reviewed on a case by case basis and reassessed as to viability, taking into consideration anticipated future use, urgency of works and budgetary considerations. The year on year total figures will therefore, in practice, be considerably lower than indicated in the schedule projection.