

# Asset Management Plan 2022/23

For Cabinet on 10 February 2022

## Summary

**Lead Member:** Councillor Tom Dawlings – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance

**Lead Director:** Lee Colyer Director of Finance, Policy & Development (S151 Officer)

**Head of Service:** David Candlin, Head of Economic Development and Property

**Report Author:** John Antoniadis, Estates Manager

**Classification:** Public document (non-exempt)

**Wards Affected:** All

Approval Timetable	Date
Management Board	05 January 2022
Portfolio Holder	11 January 2022
Finance & Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	25 January 2022
Cabinet	10 February 2022

### This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

The Council's Five Year Plan sets out the Council's overall priorities and objectives for the years 2017 - 22. All assets are managed in accordance with the Five Year Plan and the property portfolio is managed and maintained having regard to the objectives within the framework of legislation and the state of the current property market. The Asset Management Plan is a fundamental contributor to core business resource planning and to empowering wellbeing within the Borough, as set out in the Council's corporate priorities within the Five Year Plan. It also recognises the importance of the declaration of a Climate Emergency by Full Council in July 2019, with the Asset Management Plan being critical to support a reduction in carbon emissions from its own estate.

## Recommendations

Officer recommendations as supported by the Portfolio Holder:

1. That Cabinet approves the AMP for 2022/23 for consideration and adoption of full Council.

# 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Asset Management Plan (AMP) for the period 2022/23 provides a management strategy for the Council's property assets. It details the principles, procedures and mechanisms to be adopted that effectively and efficiently manage the Property Asset Portfolio. It summarises the value and composition of the current portfolio and evaluates specific actions for the previous financial year relating to the Council's property estate and identifies the main portfolio ambitions for 2022/23. The AMP has been produced in February 2022 part way through the financial year and therefore figures and details will change as the year progresses. Some figures are subject to updating as the year progresses and will be added to this report as the report is finalised.
- 1.2 The portfolio is currently valued at £102.35M (31/03/2021).
- 1.3 So far this financial year the Council has negotiated lease renewals, new lettings and rent reviews to an increased value of approximately £86.5K (01/02/2022) annually on Council property, excluding transfers to the new property company. Property and Estates Services have established and will support the activities of Tunbridge Wells Property Holdings Ltd.
- 1.4 All property rentals that are subject to an annual rental increase at the RPI were increased over this financial year to date, resulting in a rental increase of £9.65K (01/02/2022) per annum (included in the figure given in 1.3). These reviews are usually based on the previous year's RPI figure which was 2.9% for April 2020/21.
- 1.5 Vacant space on the portfolio has been reduced by letting or licensing space to reduce occupation liabilities and to achieve rental income. Property and Estates continues with the disposal of surplus land held by the Council from the review that was commenced a few years ago, continuing to identify and dispose of specific sites for development for affordable housing, for private residential development or other regenerative purposes.
- 1.6 The Planned Maintenance Programme for the financial year 2021/22 will have completed works to the value of £625K to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and to carry out priority repairs and upgrades to maintain assets and as indicated in the 10 year PMP additional planned maintenance expenditure will be required to maintain assets and prevent dilapidation.
- 1.7 Capital projects to the value of £9.722M have been progressed or completed 2021/22.
- 1.8 Capital receipts to the value of £2.6M (01/02/2022) have been received from the disposal of surplus land and assets of which £1.74M was passed to Southborough Town Council for the land they owned as part of the Bright Ridge/Speldhurst Road, Southborough disposal.
- 1.9 No property assets have been acquired during this period.

- 1.10 The AMP outlines the forward projection and management strategy for the Property Asset Portfolio in 2022/23. It identifies the aims and objectives for next year.
- 1.11 Following the declaration of global climate and biodiversity emergencies by the Council in July 2019 the Climate Emergency Advisory Panel contracted Laser to produce a Carbon Audit and a Carbon Reduction Plan. The initial results of this work in respect of the Council's estate are set out under sustainability in the cross-cutting considerations of this covering report. Recommendations arising from this work have been included in the revised draft AMP 2022/23. The AMP will be critical in identifying, planning, and delivering on energy saving and carbon reduction interventions.
- 1.12 The consultation period for the AMP ended on 31 January 2022. The Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery made the following comment:

In 2006, a group of volunteers established the Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery (FWPC), to help protect, conserve and sympathetically enhance this heritage listed site for public benefit and enjoyment, to record and foster its heritage of memorials and its ecological importance, and to develop its use as an educational resource. A priority was to make it once more a place where people felt safe to walk alone, and to stop costly damage happening to its memorials and other structures. 2. We plant and tend it all year round, focussing on preserving the rich habitat and enhancing biodiversity, and calculate the total worth to the Council of our volunteer workhours put into this since 2006 is now some £120,000. We greet visitors, many from quite long distances, and answer their eager questions while encouraging them to become active supporters. We act as the Council's eyes and ears on the spot to alert them to public hazards and antisocial behaviour. We have raised some £50,000 to conserve its 600 historic memorials, and our research on the life and times of the Victorians buried here is shared through walks, talks, and publications. Our projects for children and annual award scheme for primary schools are designed to encourage mindfulness, interest in sustainability, and pride in Tunbridge Wells past. 3. We warmly welcome the interest and support we have always had from Parks Department and fully support TWBC's stated intention to "seek viable opportunities to work with local community groups to improve community facilities and encourage localism" (Forward Projection and Management Strategy for the Property Asset Portfolio 2022/23 – Section 4 Estate Management, fifth bullet point). Our experience has demonstrated how greatly voluntary group detailed knowledge on the ground and involvement can contribute to community asset management not just in terms of added value, but also in cost minimisation from external threats. We strongly urge TWBC to:

- regularise positive consultation with relevant local community groups as a matter of course at both Councillor and officer level
- designate all 'partner' Friends Groups caring for public green spaces or heritage properties as automatic consultees by Planning Control section on any planning applications received that affect land close to their boundaries; and encourage developers having pre-application discussions to consult them at that stage about ways of averting or mitigating any potential adverse impacts
- establish a display area in the Amelia Scott Centre for the use of Council partner Friends Groups to display their wares to encourage volunteering.

The comments have been passed onto the various Heads of Departments to consider at a later date.

## 2. Options Considered

- 2.1 **Option 1:** That Full Council approves and adopts the Asset Management Plan 2022/23. The consultation started on 20 December 2021 and will end on 31 January 2022.
- 2.2 **Option 2:** To not approve and adopt the AMP.

## 3. Preferred Option and Reason

- 3.1 **Option 1:** That Full Council approves and adopts the Asset Management Plan 2022/23.
- 3.2 Adoption of the Asset Management Plan will help the authority to improve its efficiency and focus on delivering its objectives, aiding the decision-making process. The Asset Management Plan is a requirement of the Constitution and of local government statute.

## 4. Consultation on Options

- 4.1 The AMP is going through the due process in accordance with the Constitution.
- 4.2 Cabinet approved the AMP to be released for public consultation which started on 20 December 2021 and ended on 31 January 2022.
- 4.3 Management Board approved the AMP on 05 January 2022 for consideration of F & G Cabinet Advisory Board.
- 4.4 Finance & Governance Cabinet Advisory Board approved the AMP on 25 January 2022 for consideration of Cabinet.

## 5. Implementation

- 5.1 Finance & Governance Cabinet Advisory Board will need to consider the AMP before any recommendation is made to Cabinet.

## 6. Appendices and Background Documents

The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Plan Document

- Appendix B: Text for Ten Year Maintenance Plan
- Appendix C: 10 year PMP
- Appendix D: Asset Register (Investment)
- Appendix E: Asset Register (Operational)
- Appendix F: Asset Register (Non-Operational)

## **7. Cross Cutting Issues**

### **A. Legal (including the Human Rights Act)**

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires councils to put in place proper processes for the management of their finances, including their assets. The Asset Management Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to fulfilling its duties under the Act.

The Local Government Act 1972, section 111(1) empowers a local authority to do any thing (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions. This enables the Council as part of its asset management strategy to acquire and/or dispose of assets meeting relevant statutory requirements.

In particular, section 120(1)(2) of the 1972 Act enables the Council to acquire land to be used for the benefit, improvement or development of their area; or for the purpose of discharging the Council's functions.

Section 123(2) of the 1972 Act enables the Council to dispose of land or property for the best consideration reasonably obtainable, otherwise the consent of the Secretary of State will be required subject to certain conditions.

Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers as set out in the above statutory provisions.

#### **Human Rights Act**

There are no consequences arising from the recommendation that adversely affect or interfere with individuals' rights and freedoms as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998.

Claudette Valmond, Interim Head of Legal partnership

Interim Monitoring Officer for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

## **B. Finance and Other Resources**

Ensuring that assets are properly managed and accounted for will impact on maintenance expenditure, revenue income and capital receipts.

Jane Fineman, Head of Finance, Procurement and Parking

## **C. Staffing**

Work will be prioritised to be undertaken by permanent staff, but specialist consultants will be appointed when necessary, subject to approval, in order to deliver the aims and objectives of the AMP.

Nicky Carter, Head of HR, Customer Service and Culture

## **D. Risk Management**

Strong asset management should ensure that risks are quickly identified and that there are procedures in place to remedy them.

John Antoniadis, Estates Manager

## **E. Environment and Sustainability**

The Council passed a notice of motion of a Climate Emergency in July 2019, by agreeing an ambition to make the Council's operations carbon neutral by 2030. A carbon audit completed August 2020 (based on 2018/19 data) to identify the Council's carbon footprint shows that its buildings account for 68% of its total carbon emissions. Therefore, reducing emissions from buildings owned or for which the Council is responsible for, will be essential if the Council is to meet its ambition of being carbon neutral by 2030.

To achieve this ambition the following actions are recommended: -

- Recognise the scale of emission reduction required to achieve the objective.
- Provide clear policy direction relating to the property portfolio, estate rationalisation and long-term use of buildings.
- Develop a clear pathway in terms of the property portfolio to achieve the Council's ambition on being carbon neutral by 2030
- An assessment of each project including maintenance schemes to identify the impacts on carbon emission, cost effectiveness of retrofits, energy reduction measures etc. to make an informed decision on meeting the ambition of being carbon neutral by 2030. Including the long-term financial implications and reputational risks of not meeting this goal.

Karin Grey, Sustainability Manager

## **F. Community Safety**

There are no consequences of concern arising from this report.

Terry Hughes, Community Safety Manager

## **G. Equalities**

Decision-makers are reminded of the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups.

The Draft Asset Management plan includes proposals and projects which have the potential to support the aims of the duty to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with regard to:

- Property and projects – maintenance programmes that could impact on access for protected characteristics;
- Delivering the Amelia Scott project;
- Working with the Parish and Town Councils to progress community facility projects;
- Cranbrook and Paddock Wood;
- Managing the asset portfolio in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priorities and the Five Year Plan; Medium Term Financial Strategy; and the Cultural Strategy;
- Managing the asset portfolio to deliver the needs of the Council's services;
- Ongoing support for regeneration of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook, Southborough and Paddock Wood Town Centres and working with land owners and Town and Parish Councils to progress potential opportunities including the provision of new community facilities for Cranbrook and Paddock Wood;
- Monitoring changes in compliance legislation relevant to the property portfolio and maintain and manage accordingly to ensure statutory compliance;
- Supporting development initiatives in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook and Paddock Wood central areas.

One of the aims of the Property Management Strategy is to ensure that the portfolio is managed in accordance with the Council's Equalities Policy, with Equalities Impact Assessments being undertaken as and when appropriate. An EQIA has already been completed on the Council's five year plan and the Amelia Scott project which is referred to in the draft Asset Management Plan.

John Antoniades, Estates Manager

## **H. Data Protection**

No specific issues.

John Antoniades, Estates Manager

## **I. Health and Safety**

No specific issues.

Mike Catling, Corporate Health and Safety Advisor

## **J. Health and Wellbeing**

No specific issues.

Rebecca Bowers

Health Improvement Team Leader