
Corporate Property Strategy 2021-26

Reason for the Report

1. To provide the Committee with an opportunity for policy development scrutiny of the Council's updated Corporate Property Strategy 2021-26.

Structure of the Papers

2. To assist Members' preparation for the scrutiny as described above, papers attached to this cover report are as follows:

Appendix A: Presentation Corporate Property Strategy 2021-26

Background

3. The Committee's Terms of Reference confer responsibility for scrutiny of the Council's property estate. This is comprised of both 'operational' property from which the Council operates and delivers its services, and 'non-operational' or 'investment' property which is often let for commercial return or to promote local employment, small businesses and the economic regeneration of local areas. The Council's operational and non-operational estates both fall within the Investment and Development Cabinet Portfolio and the Economic Development Directorate.
4. In February 2021 the Council approved its Corporate Plan 2021-24, a clear statement of the strategic priorities of the organisation, setting out eight Well-being Objectives and, as such, underpinned by Directorates Delivery Plans which provide greater detail on how the Well-being Objectives contained in the Plan will be delivered.

5. Well-being Objective 7 is: **Modernising and Integrating Our Public Services**, and a key **Step** listed to achieve the Objective is:
 - **Deliver fewer and better Council buildings**

6. The Corporate Plan narrative reads ‘Following the successful delivery of the Corporate Property Strategy 2015-20, capital receipts amounting to some £35m have already been generated and are being re-invested in delivering the Council’s priorities. Major work has also been continued on the long-term commitment to modernise the Council’s estate and significant progress has been made across the estate, especially in schools, to ensure our buildings are meeting health and safety compliance standards and that they are managed effectively..... As working practices have changed during the pandemic, large parts of the organisation have successfully worked from home. Whilst retaining core office accommodation will form an important part of the Council’s service delivery model going forward, particularly in supporting economic recovery and footfall in key parts of the city, there are clear opportunities for innovation. The Council’s office accommodation must therefore be considered in the context of a highly agile workforce, a diminished requirement for office space and the opportunity to flexibly deploy activity across the city. This provides opportunities to better target service delivery and use allocation of Council accommodation to support economic recovery.’

7. To deliver fewer and better Council buildings the aim is to ***‘develop(ing) a plan to secure investment into the Council’s historic assets, including City Hall, by December 2021; and review(ing) the Council’s existing corporate estate to identify potential disposals to generate capital receipts.***

Issues

4. Attached at **Appendix A** is the presentation that officers will deliver to facilitate policy development scrutiny of the Corporate Property Strategy 2021-26. The Strategy will provide the framework within which the corporate property function manages the Council’s estate, both operational and non-operational.
5. The theme of the new Strategy will be Modernisation and its scope now extends to land and investment property. The Corporate Landlord model will continue to be

developed and the principles of Hybrid and Locality Working and One Planet Cardiff will be central to decision making.

6. The presentation includes a number of anacronyms in relation to governance arrangements, for reference:

AMB – Asset Management Board

APP – Annual Property Plan

ODR – Officer Decision Report

CR – Cabinet Report

HRA – Housing Revenue Account

Scope of the Scrutiny

14. The Committee will receive a presentation on the Corporate Property Strategy that includes the ongoing evaluation of core office requirements and addresses the property implications of the recovery and renewal programme move towards Hybrid Working.
15. The Corporate Property Strategy is programmed for decision by Cabinet in December. As such this scrutiny constitutes a policy development discussion that will feed into the final report to Cabinet.

Way Forward

15. Councillor Russell Goodway, Cabinet Member, will be in attendance to answer Members' questions, supported by Neil Hanratty, Director of Economic Development, and Donna Jones, Assistant Director County Estates.

Legal Implications

16. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to

Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

17. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

- i. The Committee is recommended to consider the information presented at the meeting;
- ii. Agree whether it wishes to make any comments, observations or recommendations to inform the Cabinet's final consideration of the Corporate Property Strategy 2021-26.
- iii. Agree whether further pre-decision scrutiny of the Strategy will be required.

Davina Fiore

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11 November 2021