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SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL - THE COUNCIL'S PROPERTY PORTFOLIO - THE NEXT 5/10 YEARS

Meeting: 23 February 2022
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Lisa Smart (Chair) in the chair; Councillors Carole McCann, John McGahan, Charlie Stewart and Lou Ankers (substitute).

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 17 January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and Officers were invited to declare any interests which they had in any of the agenda items for the meeting.

No interests were declared.

3. OPERATIONAL ESTATE NEXT 5/10 YEARS

A representative of the Corporate Director (Corporate & Support Services) & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) that aimed to outline to the Panel the extent of the Councils operational portfolio and the suitability of the significant assets to support service delivery for the next five years.

The Panel were advised that property assets were arranged in four main portfolios:-

- Operational Estate – Land & Property held for service delivery
- Education/School Estate – Land & Property held for the delivery of education
- Tenanted Non Residential – ground leases, industrial units and retail units
- Investment & Development Estate – Land & Property held for income generation or held for sale to generate capital receipts.

James Kington (Strategic Head of Estate & Asset Management, Stockport Council) attended the meeting to respond to Members' questions.

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- It was clarified that reports on both Tenanted Non-Residential and Investment & Development estates would be submitted to the Scrutiny Review Panel.
- The Panel welcomed the language being used for the library estate so that local residents could understand the concerns.
- The Panel considered that the neighbourhood level of working with officers working locally and hot-desking in the community, would be a good use of the library estate and

neighbourhood working and would be recommending that more be done to make use of the library estate.

- Clarification was sought regarding how external sources of funding was decided and sourced. In response, it was stated that strategically a number of projects would be identified in advance relating to the funding using in-house quantity surveyors and architects, while staff would be monitoring funding opportunities, various projects and specific funding streams.
- It was commented that the approach from the Council regarding Heritage Assets should be as an asset and not a liability.
- The Panel enquired about how there could be a change of thinking relating to heritage assets. In response, it was commented that sites needed to be maintained so the holders would not be questioned about its ownership. It was all about challenging the team to maintain the sites with investments and having a more targeted approach and vision for the assets.
- It was proposed that consideration be given to the work already being done by the estates team to ensure the Council were the right custodians of the heritage assets and there was a plan.
- Clarification was sought regarding how often were the heritage assets valued. In response, it was stated that the re-instatement value for normal assets was on a 5 year rolling programme and heritage assets was done on a 3 year rolling programme.
- The Panel enquired about the carbon reduction commitments and how it aligned with the welfare of the children within the buildings and were steps being taken e.g. ventilation etc. In response, it was stated that the key priority was the welfare of the children and it was also a priority to keep the schools opened as much as possible with minimum interruption.
- Clarification was sought regarding the varied assets (approximately 192) across the borough and the details relating to these assets. In response, it was noted that a list of those assets would be shared with the Panel following the meeting.
- Were all properties rented internally or were some rented externally to private companies. It was stated that the rented properties to third parties would sit within the 'Tenanted Non-Residential' and the 'Investment & Development' estates.
- It was commented that heritage sites were a concern and consideration should be given to the commercial viability of the assets not becoming the driving factor even though it would cost a bit more to maintain.

RESOLVED – (1) That the scope of the review include detailed reports as follows: -

- A review of both Tenanted Non-Residential and Investment & Development estates to be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Review Panel.
- A detailed list of the varied assets (approximately 192) across the borough be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Panel

(2) That the following draft recommendations be considered as part of the final report: -

- The neighbourhood level of working with officers working locally and hot-desking in the community, would be a good use of the library estate and neighbourhood working.
- There could be a change of thinking relating to heritage assets e.g. Chadkirk and Woodbank Hall being maintained to ensure the Council were the right custodians of the heritage assets and there was a strategic plan and vision for the future.

Scrutiny Review Panel - The Council's Property Portfolio - The next 5/10 Years - 23
February 2022

- Ensuring that the approach to accessing the various sources of funding be a strategic approach to maximise the funding opportunities and the amount of funding coming into the borough.

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm