

Appendix B

The actions set out in the previous Corporate Asset Management Plan are aligned to the themes set out below.

The below is a non-exhaustive list activity that the Council has achieved since the setting of the previous Corporate Asset Management Plan.

1. Delivery of a significant capital receipts Programme

The Council has delivered the following programme of Capital Receipts in the previous plan period. It is noted that over 120 assets have been disposed of in the period releasing just under £43m to be fed back into the Capital Programme, with these assets been released to their future economic use, thereby increasing the return to the Council through Business Rates and generating an improved economic performance for the Borough and its businesses. This exercise has also allowed the Estates Service to reduce the number of assets the Council holds, leading to a simpler better value and more effective estate, allowing efficiencies to be made reducing the revenue impact of holding assets.

Year		Number	Value	Remarks
2015	2016	13	£16,039,155	
2016	2017	21	£9,034,425	
2017	2018	14	£4,979,861	
2018	2019	17	£4,808,789	
2019	2020	17	£5,673,966	
2020	2021	5	£1,117,000	
2021	2022	6	£1,300,000	
		93	£42,953,196	

The Council also has a Programme of Community Asset Transfers. These assets are released under the Council's Asset Transfer Policy and usually do not generate a Capital Receipt. There have been 28 Asset Transfers since 2015 bringing the total of assets released to future uses to over 120.

This does not articulate all the disposals that the Council has completed, or the complete picture for Capital Receipts. The Council also is required to undertake other disposals, for example Right to Buy, or releasing other assets, for example vehicles or receipts associated with loan repayments. These assets are not included in this exercise but are reported as part of the Capital Programme.

During the plan period the disposals team has also deliberately elected to address difficult properties as part of the basket of assets to dispose of, minimising risk to the Council.

2. Increasing inward investment opportunities

Although the Council does not track the future use of these assets in the plan period this release of assets has:

- The Council has actively disposed of over 120 assets in the plan period. This has released these assets to their future economic uses, removing the burden of their management from the Council and also generated opportunities for the Council to benefit from Business Rates, or Council Tax revenue when these assets are reused.
- The release of assets has generated employment and housing opportunities for residents and allowed businesses in the borough to continue to trade or to offer opportunities for businesses to grow.
- The Council has led on the delivery of a number of regenerative schemes in the borough, using its land and property to provide greater opportunities for its residents.
- The Borough has also invested in its infrastructure, improving its schools and leisure centres, which in turn have made Cheshire East a more attractive place to Live and Work.
- The Estates Service has delivered a number of significant property projects in the plan period. For example projects of note since 2020 include School expansions projects in Congleton, Sandbach, Crewe, Alsager, Nantwich and Macclesfield valued at £60m, Macclesfield and Nantwich Leisure Centre Refurbishments valued at £4.5m and Crewe Market Hall at £3.9m.

The Council, during the plan period has also instigated a number of regeneration projects which are anticipated to be delivered outside the plan period. A key factor for these projects has been the ownership of land and property assets that can be used to deliver these proposals.

3. Strategic Asset Management Planning

Since 2016 the Council has undertaken a considerable journey to consolidate and improve how it delivers an Estate that is fit for purpose and delivers for customers, set against the challenging background set out in this report.

It has taken the opportunity to learn from the past and from other Local Authorities and developed robust systems of governance that are set out in the Corporate Asset Management Plan. Forums such as the Asset Board and Capital Programme Board allow officers to develop appropriate coherent and well thought though recommendations about the Council's Land and Property.

It has integrated corporate direction, for example, Carbon Neutral Council by 2025, to drive its thinking and innovate about how it will use its assets now and in the future and also how it delivers its services into the future.

4. Collaborative working with other stakeholders

The Council looks to work closely with Local Government partners and Community bodies. Through the refreshed Community Asset Transfer process it generates opportunities for a wide range of groups to use assets to deliver services for their communities.

During the previous plan period the Council has worked closely with its OPE partners for example the Council has sought to understand the NHS' requirements and identify opportunities to work collaboratively and as OPE partners understand the opportunities that can be generated by working closely together. This has included co location and partnership working in NHS and Council assets. A similar journey has been worked though with other OPE partners as well.

The Council also plugs into wider opportunities with our adjoining local authorities though close officer working and through structures such as the LEP.

5. Improving data management

The Council has also undertaken a significant exercise in voluntarily registering the assets it owns early in the plan period. This has been followed up with a data verification exercise aligning the Council's systems and data held by HMLR. Additional work remains to be done, however the Council now has a excellent understanding of its registered ownership.

The Council did rely on a functional but rapidly aging property management system and one of the significant achievements in the plan period has been the replacement of this system.

The migration process itself allowed the service to undertake further data cleansing prior to the implementation of the new system and the assets to be categorised with much closer alignment to the services within the Council and the asset register from which valuation lists are drawn for their four-year cyclical review.

The implementation of a more robust property information system means that the Council now holds more information not only on the property it owns, but those individual components (assets) within the buildings it actively manages which assists with the programming of maintenance. Obtaining key supplier buy-in to utilise the same system for the management of their orders allows real-time reporting of progress which has brought efficiencies.

The approach on the surveying side has been slow and steady, utilising existing resources within the service. By embedding the work to improve the system into the team's case load activity the service is gradually densifying the data that it holds and allows a financially and operationally sustainable approach to completing the exercise.

The Council has also deepened its understanding of some of its most complex assets during the plan period, for example contaminated land and reservoirs, working closely with teams within the Council and outside bodies, where appropriate, including the Environment Agency. The system readily displays all current and recent surveying,

revenue and capital projects and orders and customer relating to any one site enabling a more holistic management of the asset.

An improved auditing capability tracks all edits and amendments made to data, as well as enabling necessary financial controls and capturing the full approvals process. A case management module is used to effectively capture all enquiries coming into the property helpdesk so that those few enquiries that are at risk of not meeting the service's customer service level standards can be identified and further support offered. A workflow to handle property transactions is near completion which will enable the same full visibility as cases advance along their route to completion, including the periods where they are allocated to other corporate services across the Council. At each stage the system will prompt for notes from case officers, confirmation that defined tasks have been completed, or that key documents supporting decisions eg valuations, are stored within the system.

The Council also has dealt with the challenges of implementing new systems and processes around GDPR, which affected the way it retains and uses data, however the more modern system can readily purge customer data within set retention schedules.

6. Ensuring statutory compliance

The Facilities Management Team ensure the Council meet its statutory requirements, not only within our buildings, but also in areas such as reservoirs and septic tanks which are outside the Council's land ownership, but for which the Council has retained a liability. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Asbestos Management (annual re-inspections and R&D surveys);
- Legionella Management (weekly/monthly monitoring, plus risk assessments and cleaning);
- Fire Safety Management (risk assessments);
- Energy DEC and EPC Certification;
- Fire Remedial Works Programme;
- Asbestos Removal Programme (7.8 tonnes has been removed since 2018 – equivalent to 7 Giraffes or 3 Elephants);
- Statutory Compliance Training.

The Council has also improved its score for Council Accommodation of 97% in 2021, building from 87% in 2018.

Although certain aspects of the Council's activities may be more exciting, delivery of statutory compliance is a critical activity to the Council and underpins all its other activity. It continues to be key to engage a wide range of stakeholders and have the appropriate attention for example through the Corporate H and S forum and relevant upward reporting.

Key to achieving the positive results set out here has been the buy in of staff and the Corporate H and S team.

7. Sustainability

The Council is migrating to a more sustainable estate through a number of factors.

- **Right Sizing the Estate.** The service has worked hard to reduce the number of assets that it holds, over the plan period disposing of 120 assets.
- **Carbon Neutral.** The Council has also adopted a carbon neutral plan. In order to support this the corporate landlord has been successful in obtaining Public Sector Decarbonisation Grants in the first three schemes – Phase 1 - £2.4m; Phase 2 - £604k; Phase 3 - £3.7m.
This has, and will continue to, assist in both the decarbonisation of the Council's estate by the installation of air source heat pumps, Photovoltaic Panels, LED lighting; building insulation. This will help the Council reduce consumption within its buildings.
- **Water Management:** In addition, works have been undertaken to ensure that the Council has a full understanding of its water management within buildings, by the installation of automatic meter readers, which help with early detection of excess usage.
- **New Ways of working:** The service has supported the Council in the transition to remote working and also facilitated innovation in the way people work together. It is delivering new hybrid meeting capability within the Council's Office spaces.

During the plan period the Council has also introduced its policy Carbon Neutral by 2025 and this has been baked into the processes of the Council when it considers activities in and on its land and property.