

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission

9th January 2020



Report of: Director of Economy of Place

Title: Corporate Property Strategy

Ward: All

Officer Presenting Report: Nuala Gallagher

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Recommendation:

That Scrutiny Members consider the draft Property Strategy, attached at Appendix 1, and provide their comments.

The significant issues in the report are:

Bristol City Council has a significant property portfolio, made up of both property that is used to deliver services from and property that is held to provide an income or other benefits. An effective property strategy with its foundations of consistent standards and decision making and robust strategic asset planning, is critical to achieving an effective and efficient property estate.



1. Summary

Cabinet will be asked to approve and adopt a Corporate Property Strategy in March 2020. The strategy provides a high-level framework for the way the Council holds, transacts and maintains its property estate, and outlines the principles for the preparation of a Corporate Asset Management Plan which will set out the options and strategic objectives around individual properties.

2. Context

1. Bristol City Council is the owner and occupier of a diverse and valuable property estate with a book value of over £1b .
2. The effective and efficient use of that extensive estate is fundamental to delivering exemplary public services and supporting and driving the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives.
3. An effective property strategy with its foundations of consistent standards and decision making and robust strategic asset planning, is critical to achieving an effective and efficient property estate.
4. A fundamental element of the Property Strategy is establishing and embedding a Corporate Landlord approach to managing property assets. Corporate Landlord is designed to enable a local authority landowner to utilise its assets to deliver better, more efficient services to communities. It is endorsed by both CIPFA and the RICS and many local authorities have moved away from a departmental approach and adopted this model.
5. The concept of Corporate Landlord is that governance, decision making and budget management around property assets, as well as the management and maintenance of those assets, is carried out at a corporate strategic level, rather than at a service or occupier level.
6. The Property Strategy sets out the objectives, policies and process for managing the estate in order to ensure that all property transactions are legal and in accordance with best practice. It aims to deliver :-
 - A fully operational corporate landlord which centralises all property functions.
 - A revised system of governance that is understood by all and improves the current decision making processes.
 - Consolidation of existing policies around property.
 - Ensure that all property transactions take account of social value in assessing their impact.
 - Ensure that there are clearly defined responsibilities and mechanisms for all property matters.
 - A complimentary financial framework which recognises the need for budget centralisation and adjustments to ensure all property spend is managed corporately and is adequately reflected in appropriate cost centres.
7. The Property Strategy also sets out the principles and framework for developing an asset management plan, which will drill down into more detail on the options around individual properties through a series of property reviews and will consolidate the results of working with services to understand and develop their property requirements into service asset management plans.
8. A clear governance structure is will be developed to underpin this new corporate approach to

decision making and budget management around property assets.

3. Policy

The Property Strategy contributes towards all four of the Strategic Themes in Bristol City Council’s Corporate Strategy 2018-2023, as it is concerned with the provision and use of land and buildings both in connection with the delivery of services to communities and in facilitating new developments including housing. One of the six key principles set out in the Corporate Strategy is:-

“Use our assets wisely, generating a social and/or financial return. Raise money in a fair but business like way.”

Bristol City Council is a major landowner in the City and the Property Strategy provides the framework for ensuring those assets are used in the most efficient and effective way. The Strategy promotes a joined –up way of working both internally between Council services and externally with partners and stakeholders throughout the City. This will in turn result in a more socially, environmentally, economically and financially sustainable property estate, for the benefit of everyone in the City.

4. Consultation

a)Internal

The Property Strategy principles have been considered by officers at Strategic Property Group, G&R Board, CLB and G&R EDM and by Cllr Cheney The Strategy will be on the agenda for Leadership Forum in January and drop in sessions have been planned following that for further discussion

b)External

N/A

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;

- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
- encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

5b) The Equalities Relevance Check indicates that a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required at this stage.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Corporate Property Strategy

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None