

Report to	Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	12th September 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis (Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets) / Helen Vaughan-Evans (Head of Corporate Support Services- Performance, Digital and Assets)
Head of Service	Helen Vaughan-Evans (Head of Corporate Support Services- Performance, Digital and Assets)
Report author	Bryn Williams (Asset Manager)
Title	Asset Management Strategy 2024 - 2029

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 The report outlines the proposed Asset Management Strategy 2024 – 2029 (Appendix 1).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To present the reviewed and updated Asset Management Strategy document for Scrutiny consideration prior to taking it to Cabinet for a decision to be made on its adoption.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 That Committee consider the proposed Asset Management Strategy 2024 – 2029 (Appendix 1) and provide any feedback.
- 3.2 That Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 2) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

4.1 The existing Asset Management Strategy was adopted by the Council in July 2017 with a review due after 5 years – 2021. As such, a revised Asset Management Strategy is now overdue and the impact of the pandemic on priorities and work programmes has led to some delay.

4.2 The proposed Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029 is attached as Appendix 1.

4.3 The new Asset Management Strategy has sought to align asset plans and the outcomes being sought by the Strategy with the Council's Strategic Themes as outlined in the Corporate Plan, making sure that our property assets play a key role in delivering on these priorities. For this strategy, we are proposing that a slightly amended first outcome from the 2017-2021 strategy document becomes an underlying principle with regard to decisions we make about our property portfolio. That is as follows: ***We will provide the right assets, in the right place, and in the right condition to meet current and projected future service delivery needs, considering who best to own and operate each asset and opportunities for collaboration.***

4.4 The following four priority outcomes have been identified in the Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029 aligning with the Council's Corporate Plan:

- **Climate Action & Natures Recovery** – which would include improving energy performance of buildings, reducing the overall building footprint, facilitating reduced travel, increasing carbon sequestration from existing and new properties, improving biodiversity on our sites, etc. In addition to increasing the understanding of, and improving, our assets resilience to climate impacts.
- **Modernising Education** – delivered primarily by Education but will involve significant investment in our school buildings over the next five years.
- **Regeneration** – where the council is directly intervening in the property market to promote regeneration and economic development, particularly in town centres.
- **New Ways of Working (NWOW) and Collaboration** – looking specifically at our office portfolio and how this needs to change considering significant increase in home working (post-COVID), along with progressing collaboration

opportunities to create an asset ownership and operation model that is sustainable.

- 4.5 Delivery of the outcomes outlined in this strategy will be dependent on securing the necessary funding, through leveraging opportunities to bring in external funding and prioritising the limited resource we hold as a Council.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 5.1. This strategy supports the Greener Denbighshire Theme of the Corporate Plan, as better energy management and the potential for the further introduction of renewable energy generation within the entire portfolio will help the council reach its target of becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically positive by 2030.
- 5.2. The strategy also supports the Prosperous Denbighshire Theme as our asset portfolios have the potential to improve economic prosperity if surplus office space can be used as accommodation for small businesses or disposed of for example.
- 5.3. The strategy supports the Learning and Growing Denbighshire Theme by supporting the creation of sustainable communities for learning by support new build and major refurbishment of the school estate.
- 5.4. The underpinning principal of 'right buildings, in the right place' also supports the Well run, high performing Council Theme of the Corporate Plan- using assets to support agile and partnership working.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. Development of the strategy has been undertaken in-house and has not incurred any additional costs for the Council. Clearly, decisions made about property usually have a cost associated with them. Delivery of the outcomes outlined in this strategy will be dependent on securing the necessary funding, through leveraging opportunities to bring in external funding and prioritising the limited resource we hold as a Council.
- 6.2. All property decisions are made through existing mechanisms, including Asset Management Group (AMG), Capital Scrutiny Group (CSG), Cabinet, etc., to ensure they are properly considered and scrutinised.

- 6.3. All services will be affected, as all services use and occupy property. Services will always be consulted in relation to any property decisions that will affect them or the way they deliver their services.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1 The overall conclusion of the Well-being Impact Assessment is positive (appendix 2). Score for the sustainability of the approach is 3 out of 4 stars. Contribution to 6 out of 7 wellbeing goals was assessed as positive and 1 assessed as neutral (a More Equal Denbighshire). The Wellbeing Impact Assessment can be further reviewed in light of any feedback received at Scrutiny.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. Consultation has been carried out at officer level through the various Portfolio Plans, which group land and buildings with similar types of property, rather than along services lines. These Portfolio Plans have been developed through a series of meetings and discussions with several council officers who either occupy or manage land or buildings in the portfolio, and through an analysis of a few performance measures relating to the properties.
- 8.2. The Strategy was tabled at the Corporate Executive Team (CET) in April where it was accepted with amendments. The Strategy has been circulated to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for wider comment. The Strategy was considered at the Asset Management Group (AMG) on 1st May where it was accepted with amendments. The Lead Member has been briefed and had input into the draft strategy along with wider Cabinet via briefing.
- 8.3. The Corporate Landlord has been consulted and provided the following statement:
Property represents a high expenditure and carbon production liabilities for the Council going forward. It is a strategic resource for Denbighshire County Council and the Asset Management Strategy is therefore a core strategic document that will play a vital role in the delivery of services to the people of Denbighshire now and in the future. The Asset Management Strategy will ensure that the Council is utilising its assets efficiently and sustainably and will need to be and scrutinised and updated on a regular basis as relevant information becomes available via the Portfolio Plans.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 Given the financial constraints upon the Council now and in the medium term it is crucial that the council maximises the value and efficiency from the assets it owns and has the use of. The Asset Management Strategy sets out the need, prioritise limited resources, leverage opportunities to bring in external funding where possible, consider the impact of new ways of working on our asset base and progress opportunities for collaboration where possible.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1 There are no significant risks associated with the development and adoption of an Asset Management Strategy.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 Local Government Act 1972.

11.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act, 2000 and Section 7.4.1 of the Council's Constitution outline Scrutiny's powers with respect of policy development and review.