

REPORT TO: Corporate PPB

DATE 22 February 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director: Environment and Economy

SUBJECT: Council's Property Portfolio

WARDS: Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with information on the Council's land and property portfolio and to advise Members of the procedures and protocols the Council has developed to manage its land and property assets.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 **Members consider the information provided regarding the Council's Land and Property portfolio.**

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Central Government has recently announced initiatives which will have a bearing on how the Council will be required to report on its land and property portfolio in the future. Further details on these announcements are set out in section 4 of this report. It is, therefore, timely that Corporate PPB is giving this matter its consideration.
- 3.2 Members will be aware that the Council is required to ensure that its assets are efficiently managed and that the size and condition of the Council's land and property portfolio reflects present service delivery requirements, as well as, planned future developments.
- 3.3 The Council's Asset Management Plan (AMP) is an important document which provides a strategic overview of the Council's property and land assets, and also sets out the systems, processes and policies in place to manage and maintain them.
- 3.4 The AMP is designed to ensure that Council assets are not treated in isolation, but are treated as a package. The AMP also serves to ensure that decisions relating to the management of these assets are consistent and are in the best interests of the Council, but acknowledges that individual assets are unique and may present differing challenges and opportunities.
- 3.5 Linked to this, the Council also has protocols in place which are aligned with the principles outlined in the AMWP notably around the disposal of surplus property assets. A review of office accommodation is also taking place to reflect the need to make efficiency savings, improve the stock as well as

provide offices which will meet future workforce planning and service delivery objectives.

- 3.6 Members will appreciate that the scale and size of the Council's Land and Property Portfolio is significant. For this reason, within the timeframe available, information has been provided specifically on Council Sites. It is acknowledged that further work is required to gather additional information on the Council's other assets including land holdings and this can be provided at a future meeting. This work will complement activity we will need to undertake to respond to Government requirements as set out in section 4.
- 3.7. The Council's property assets fall within a number of categories; for example, Office Accommodation for Council Employees; Industrial Properties; Schools; Community facilities (including libraries, community centres, direct links; residential homes).
- 3.8 Appendix 1 of the report provides a list of property sites per se. Appendix 2 provides information on premises either owned or leased by the Council to third sector partners.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Earlier this month Housing Minister Grant Shapps announced plans to give members of the public the right to reclaim and develop hundreds of acres of unused public sector land and buildings. The new Community Right to Reclaim Land will help communities to improve their local area by using disused publicly owned land for new development.
- 4.2 It is too early to fully assess the impact of this announcement but there are potential resource implications for the Council. By the summer, it is proposed that a national new one-stop shop will provide residents with information about empty land and buildings they can develop to improve their local area.
- 4.3 The announcement also stated that a new online tool will combine information from existing databases to form the bedrock of a new Community Right - the Right to Reclaim Land - which will also include an improved system for members of the public to request that empty public sector land or buildings are sold off, so they can be brought back into use.
- 4.4 In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government has set out its intention to map public sector assets at an area level as opposed to an organisational level. Government intends to produce a demonstrator map in April which will be used to gather data on public assets. Local Authorities will be expected to publish information it holds on its assets.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The effective use of these assets plays an important part in the achievement and delivery of the Council's core priorities. The AMP is intended to be used as a tool to help maximise the deployment and use of land, buildings and other assets to support service delivery.

As a major owner of land and buildings it is important for us to be able to clearly justify why we hold such interests and what overall benefit is derived from them.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

This report has implications for all the Council's priorities (6.1-6.5) because the work we undertake on asset management ultimately helps us to ensure that we constantly maintain the level of physical assets that reflect organisational needs and that we continue to deploy and use and manage these assets to best effect.

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

6.3 A Healthy Halton

6.4 A Safer Halton

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

6.6 Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency

In the Corporate Plan 2006-11, the theme of 'Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency' has an overall aim 'to create the maximum effect on the quality of life in the communities of Halton through the efficient use of the Council's resources'. The Asset Management Plan plays a key role in achieving this.

7. RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Not applicable

8. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

	Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
8.1	Asset Management Plan	Property services	Wesley Rourke