

District Asset Review: Next Steps

Update to District Executives

Background

An update report was presented to Leadership on 15th September which highlighted progress made to date and proposed next steps to take forward this ambitious programme of work.

Members will recall that strategic review of the Council's land and property portfolio was approached within a tri-track framework;

1. The core office estate
2. The operational asset base used for district based service delivery
3. Land

The Smarter Workplaces programme radically reviewed the Council's wider 'office portfolio', and realised significant efficiency savings by vacating a number of properties, and consolidating provision of back office functions within three key buildings.

Cabinet in November 2012 approved review/closure of a further tranche of properties which contained an element of back office provision, and progress in delivery of recommendations has been very good and is continuing at pace.

With regard to the review of operational district assets, we are working closely with services to ensure that portfolios are best fit for purpose.

Next Steps - LAND

- It is proposed that the schedules of land assets are assessed to cross reference how they can best support the following corporate initiatives;
 - (i) Self-build
 - (ii) Allotments
 - (iii) Get Oldham Growing
 - (iv) Sustainable Energy*

*Whilst a high level strategic review of the Council's portfolio has recently been completed with regard to solar potential, we remain open to offers.

- The sites will be progressed in tranches, anticipated to be spread over a 3 year period. Currently due diligence work is underway in order to identify, in addition to suitability for the above uses, any restrictions on title etc. In addition, there will be cases where the only feasible option is to offer to adjoining owner(s) for garden purposes.

- It is anticipated that this work will be completed by December 2014 and 'Tranche 1'schedule of sites will be reported to the District Executives thereafter, which will enable ward members views to be captured. This will be a pre-cursor to a first stage report seeking approval to potential dispose of open space.
- By approaching in this way, we will significantly streamline the current process whilst ensuring that we remain entirely compliant with our Protocols.
- We are currently exploring potential for implementation of a 'Community Dividend' as part of the process.

Cath Conroy
10/10/2014