

SUBJECT: Asset Management Strategy and supporting policies

MEETING: Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 15th January 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE

1.1 To seek receive pre-decision scrutiny on the 2023-2027 Asset Management Strategy and associated policies.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the committee conducts pre-decision scrutiny of the Asset Management Strategy and associated policies.

2.2 That the committee recommends approval of the Asset Management Strategy to Full Council.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The 2023-2027 Asset Management Strategy informs the way decisions and day-to-day management of MCC land and property is undertaken. It also establishes the supporting policy framework from which the strategy is implemented. The Asset Management Strategy is one of the Council's enabling strategies and supports the delivery of the Community and Corporate Plan.

3.2 The strategy reflects the strategic direction of the Council and establishes five core objectives for land and property:

- **A fit for purpose and collaborative estate** – providing assets necessary to deliver council services, in the right location, compliant and co-located where possible.
- **Be good role models for climate and nature practices** – managing our assets well, lowering our carbon footprint and promoting more sustainable practices.
- **Maximised and commercialised asset base** – generate more revenue and higher value outcomes (financial and non-financial) from sales of surplus assets.
- **Strengthen the enablement role of Landlord Services** – continue to support service objectives including job creation, tackling homelessness, constructing affordable homes, driving value for money.
- **Optimise social value from community assets** – support community assets equitably, transparently, and consistently.

3.3 The Asset Management Strategy is supplemented by a number of supporting policy documents that provide the framework from which decision making is undertaken. The relevant policies, their purpose, and changes are as follows:

- **Community Asset Transfer Policy** – strengthening of the application process, eligibility, and award criteria. This will enable long leasehold or freeholder transfer of

community assets in circumstances where not-for-profit groups can provide community services.

- **Rental Concessionary Policy** – changes to improve the parity and monitoring of rental grant on MCC assets. This will afford community groups that occupy MCC property the ability to apply for rental grant, i.e. a reduction in the rent payable, if they can demonstrate clear community and local benefits as a result of this concession.
- **Disposal Policy** – clarity on the obligation to achieve best consideration, establishing a consistent approach to the disposal of surplus land and property that will maximise financial and social outcomes.

3.4 The strategy confirms the Investment Committee and Asset Investment Policy is to be moved into abeyance, with portfolio performance updates reported to the Performance & Overview Committee. Any new investment decisions are to be considered by Cabinet or Full Council via the established governance arrangements.

3.5 The Strategy introduces and updates governance arrangements from which the strategy will be implemented. This includes implementation of revised Capital and Accommodation Working Groups and new Service Asset Working Groups to assist service area property matters and transformation.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation Assessment can be found alongside this Covering Report. The Asset Management Strategy will:

- A greater alignment to the Community and Corporate Plan, supporting policy objectives including the repurposing of surplus assets to meet affordable housing needs, increase the availability of employment space, to assist to address socio-economic inequality.
- A fit for purpose asset portfolio that will be more accessible for all, in the heart of the communities they support.
- A responsible and future focused strategy that emphasises the importance of biodiversity and the commitment for lower carbon design.
- A more collaborative asset base that will work together with partners to reduce budget pressures, operational costs and drive efficiencies.
- Establish a more equitable and transparent approach to property decisions, such to support community facilities continue to deliver social value

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 An options appraisal has been undertaken in Table One below and can be summarised as follows:

Table One – Options Appraisal

Option	Positives	Negatives	Recommended?
Do nothing	The existing policies and strategy are sufficient to undertake the property management work.	An updated context, policy justification, etc. will not be captured. The strategy will not build on the previous Audit Wales recommendations and feedback on the 2017-22 strategy.	No

		<p>The strategy will not benefit from clear strategic direction and alignment to the Community and Corporate Plan</p> <p>Will results in inefficiencies in day-to-day management.</p> <p>Confusion for public and wasted efforts (CATs, Farming tenders, etc.)</p>	
Adopt new Asset Management Strategy	<p>Alignment of strategy with Community and Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Clearer decision-making framework.</p> <p>Updated legislation and practice advice.</p>	None	Yes

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 The Asset Management Strategy's actions and performance framework is supported by an Asset Management Plan. The Asset Management Plan is updated annually and includes the performance framework and risks, which will be updated to reflect the priorities.

7. REASONS

- 7.1 The Asset Management Strategy is to be updated to reflect the Community and Corporate Plan.
- 7.2 The Council has a necessity to continue to reduce running costs, promote integrated hubs and co-location. It has several policy objectives (tackling homelessness, development of affordable housing, revenue generation, community empowerment) which the strategy will support.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Asset Management Strategy provides the decision-making framework and governance arrangements for the Council's land and property assets. The supporting policies of the Asset Management Strategy, namely the Rental Concessionary Policy, Disposal Policy and Community Asset Transfer Policy, all impact the revenue and capital value received from the management of assets.
- 8.2 Informed by the Asset Management Strategy, individual decisions around the acquisition, disposal or sale of the Council's land and property assets will be accommodated as part of the Council's annual budget setting process or on a case by case basis in accordance with the constitution.

- 8.3 The core principles of the Asset Management Strategy acknowledge the necessity to ensure our assets are fit for purpose and generating a financial or non-financial value. In circumstances where such value is not being achieved, consideration should be given to rationalisation and/or disposal of assets such to ensure delivery of the policy objectives captured within the Asset Management Strategy and associated Asset Management Plan.
- 8.4 The Landlord Services department will carry responsibility for the strategy's implementation. The strategy is supported by an Asset Management Plan, which contains the actions arising from the strategy (live and proposed) and will be updated annually.

9. CONSULTEES

Cabinet

Senior Leadership Team

Landlord Services (Estates and Property Services)

Head of Finance

Legal Services

Communities and Place DMT

Resources DMT

The strategy has been formulated reflecting on examples of best practice, previous Audit Wales and Springing Forward reviews.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Asset Management Strategy

Appendix 1 – Asset Management Plan

Appendix 2 – Rental Concessionary Policy

Appendix 3 – Community Asset Transfer

Appendix 4 – Disposal Strategy

11. AUTHORS:

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12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Nicholas Keyse</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 6444773 Email: nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal Asset Management Strategy and supporting policies.</p> <p>The Asset Management Strategy provides the framework from which management of land and property is undertaken.</p>
<p>Name of Service area Landlord Services</p>	<p>Date 18th January 2024</p>

1. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The strategy will affect people of all ages as it relates to all property. Much of the operational estate is used to improve the well-being of all ages. The strategy will directly impact the provision of accommodation in Monmouthshire, such as the availability of social housing, housing associated with all ages and protected characteristics.	No negative impacts identified. The protected characteristics will be considered when taking any undertaking property decisions.	The Asset Management Strategy establishes the short and long-term objectives which will inform strategic decision making for the council's land and property. Any positive or negative impacts to these characteristics will be updated accordingly and at the point of any future Cabinet or Council decisions.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	The Asset Management Strategy reiterates the importance of having fit for purpose assets that are accessible to all. We will continue to support services in ensuring our assets meet the required standards for their user's requirements.	As above	As above
Gender reassignment	Equality and fairness for all characteristics and residents will be reflected in the decision making for any asset informed by this strategic document.	As above	As above
Marriage or civil partnership	Equality and fairness for all characteristics and residents will be reflected in the decision making for any asset informed by this strategic document.	As above	As above
Pregnancy or maternity	Equality and fairness for all characteristics and residents will be reflected in the decision making for any asset informed by this strategic document.	As above	As above
Race	Equality and fairness for all characteristics and residents will be reflected in the decision making for any asset informed by this strategic document.	As above	As above

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Religion or Belief	Equality and fairness for all characteristics and residents will be reflected in the decision making for any asset informed by this strategic document.	As above	As above
Sex	Equality and fairness for all characteristics and residents will be reflected in the decision making for any asset informed by this strategic document.	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation	Equality and fairness for all characteristics and residents will be reflected in the decision making for any asset informed by this strategic document.	As above	As above

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>The strategy will assist to address social inequality, including through the development of affordable housing and acquisition and/or repurposing of surplus assets to address the availability of homelessness accommodation. Landlord Services will continue to support the Social Services in the provision of improved facilities to support individuals within their care. This will assist to address issues of poverty, affordability, and access to services. Value will continue to be applied to the employment opportunities and apprenticeships schemes when undertaking development schemes (directly or indirectly through disposal of surplus assets).</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.</p>	<p>The opportunities to repurpose assets or invest to address policy objectives will continue to be assessed on their individual merits. The Asset Management Plan will carry an ongoing action relating to homelessness accommodation and collaborating with partners to undertake preventative action where the asset portfolio allows.</p>
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3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably	Opportunities to promote the Welsh language will continue to feature in the design decisions of new development schemes.	There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.	N/A
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	Neutral impact. The strategy does not stipulate changes to any staffing structure however we will continue to encourage the appointment of Welsh Language speakers when recruiting and offer staff training wherever possible.	There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.	N/A
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Landlord Services will continue to utilise the website to advertise lettings or disposal opportunities in English and Welsh.	There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.	N/A



4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!



Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Positive: The Asset Management Strategy will drive efficiencies in the way we deal with property matters, making for more effective use of our assets. The AMS will continue to support policy objectives relating to job creation, maximising the availability of employment space within the portfolio.</p> <p>Negative: None</p>	<p>Landlord Services already support colleagues in Housing and Social Care to acquire and refurbish properties to deliver their service objectives. This will continue to feature in the Asset Management Plan.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)</p>	<p>Positive: One of the AMS core objectives is operating as good role models for climate and nature practices. We will continue to action opportunities to lower our carbon footprint and promote more sustainable practices wherever possible. The AMS commits to utilise renewable technology and energy efficiency solutions on MCC assets where technically possible and viable, including incorporating carbon sequestration in new build design and decision making.</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p>	<p>When undertaking maintenance repair or replacement activity on Council assets, we will continue to feature whole life costings and carbon performance within our decision making.</p>


Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive: The AMS emphasises the importance of collaborating with community assets to optimise social value and outputs. This includes the availability of important recreation and community facilities that occupy MCC land or property. MCC will continue to explore ways of enhancing this provision, such as has been achieved via the Magor and Undy Community Hub project. Negative: N/A</p>	<p>Green infrastructure and active travel will continue to be supported, either through the repurposing of land or as part of the design considerations of any new schemes, improving the access to healthier and more carbon friendly means of travel.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe, and well connected</p>	<p>Positive: The AMS and its supporting policies clarify the requirements for community groups and not-for-profit organisations to occupy MCC assets, including eligibility and application for rental concessions and community asset transfers. This will assist MCC to continue to ensure these assets are being fully supported and achieving the desired outputs. It's core objective around a maximised estate will increase the availability for inward investment where voids are identified in the commercial portfolio. Negative: N/A</p>	<p>Landlord Services will continue to engage with occupiers of community assets to ensure the policies are being appropriately accessed and monitored accordingly. The AMS will improve the pathway by which community groups can explore opportunities for community initiatives on MCC land/property, including the support of colleagues in Communities and Place when formulating a business case or expression of interest in Community Asset Transfer.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local</p>	<p>Positive: Property decisions will be taken with the climate and nature impact/opportunity featuring firmly in its</p>	<p>We will continue to take a duty of care as a responsible landlord/property owner to identify those assets worst performing from</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
social, economic, and environmental wellbeing	<p>decision making. We will seek to deliver practical and cost-effective examples of low carbon measures to reduce the council's running costs and reduce its carbon footprint.</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p>	<p>an energy perspective and consider the required investment or alternative use to mitigate this impact. We will continue to increase access to community growing and allotment facilities, working with town and community councils to reduce waiting lists and increase the availability of growing opportunities.</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage, and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art, and recreation</p>	<p>Positive: The asset portfolio will continue to use and promote the Welsh language, including at reception facilities in our corporate buildings and on signage within our operational buildings and spaces.</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p>	N/A
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Positive: The AMS will ensure our buildings are being optimised, appropriate for staff and service users, with partnership as a core principle and an ability to evolve to the service demand. This will include ensuring they are appropriately accessible to all, in the right locations and best meeting current and future need.</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p>	<p>The AMS will continue to promote joint working and service co-location wherever the creation of integrated hubs can enhance service delivery, life-long learning and educational experiences. Service asset plans and a strategic mapping exercise undertaken with directorate leaders to review existing accommodation and if they accessible to meet the requirements of their users.</p>

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p data-bbox="405 363 555 619">Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p data-bbox="226 579 358 611">Long Term</p> <p data-bbox="203 624 291 655">future</p>	<p data-bbox="589 312 1312 639">The AMS introduces alignment of the policy objectives of the Community and Corporate Plan with the strategic direction of the land and property estate. This core principles of the AMS reflects both the immediate objectives and long-term considerations of the portfolio, including whole life costs, the commitment towards net zero, and the necessity to reduce running costs whilst increasing revenue and capital generation.</p>	<p data-bbox="1335 312 2022 491">The Asset Management Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it aligns to the immediate priorities of the organisation, however it's performance indicators and actions will be inclusive of several long-term objectives.</p>
 <p data-bbox="405 799 555 1015">Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p data-bbox="203 1010 371 1042">Collaboration</p>	<p data-bbox="589 722 1312 1086">The AMS targets a collaborative and maximised land and property portfolio within its core principles. The strategy establishes the framework from which day-to-day property management decisions can be taken to continue to strengthen the relationships between MCC and existing community partners and occupiers. This includes partnerships that facilitate opportunities to reduce budget pressures, MCC's operational costs and where service delivery can be improved.</p>	<p data-bbox="1335 722 2022 938">MCC already benefits from strong working relationships with Housing Associations, the Health Board, Gwent Police and Town/Community Councils. We will continue to work with these partners to deliver the objectives of the Asset Management Strategy.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The Asset Management Strategy has been formulated through a combination of professional advice (from RICS-qualified surveyors) and engaged with directorate leads and service providers. The supporting policy changes are informed by experiences with tenants of community buildings and the ambition to improve the efficiency of our property and asset management.</p> <p>The Asset Management Plan will enable the success of this strategy and its engagement (from partners, community groups, MCC colleagues, etc.) to be monitored and reviewed.</p>	<p>Landlord Services will continue to engage with our tenants and occupiers of community assets to communicate the implementation of these policies. We continue to reflect on these proposed changes in our engagement on live matters, including during the negotiation of lease renewals or extensions.</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The Asset Management Strategy will clarify the strategic direction of property assets and establish a clear policy framework that will inform property recommendations and decisions. The core objectives will provide greater clarity on the decision making and governance arrangements, such to drive efficiencies and maximise the use of resources. This includes the use of vacant accommodation within the portfolio to offset the need for more expensive or inappropriate temporary accommodation with the associated expenditure.</p>	<p>To continue to enhance the availability of data to inform strategic decisions, a new asset management system is being designed and procured. This will replace the existing property management system and seek to improve the availability of property data across directorates.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p data-bbox="237 555 376 587">Integration</p> <p data-bbox="203 603 528 740">Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p data-bbox="589 312 1290 600">The Asset Management Strategy reflects the working principles set out in the guidance for compliance with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act. The core objectives will asset the Council's land and property to contribute to well-being goals, including making sure the decision making is considering long term impact alongside any immediate or short-term decisions.</p>	<p data-bbox="1335 312 1391 336">N/A</p>

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	The Asset Management Strategy will support services with direct responsibility for safeguarding our residents, including through the provision of safe and secure accommodation.	None.	N/A
Corporate Parenting	The Asset Management Strategy will support Corporate Parenting through the implementation of the actions within the Asset Management Plan.	None.	N/A

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

The Asset Management Strategy has been formulated through engagement and workshops with Cabinet Members, Senior Leadership Team and service managers in different directorates and support services. This strategy has also been informed by overlapping strategies including the Decarbonisation Strategy and the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy. This has assisted in collating information on the service priorities, their experiences with assets and property requirements, as well as an opportunity to communicate the required governance around property decisions, management and occupation. The strategy's contents have also been informed by the findings of Welsh Government's Springing Forward Review, Audit Wales' capital monitoring review and Audit Wales' review of the 2017-22 AMS. The strategy is aided by relevant guidance from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyor's (RICS) and legislation such as Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the General Disposal Consent (Wales) Order 2003.

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

Positive -

The positive impacts of this proposal are:

- A greater alignment to the Community and Corporate Plan, supporting policy objectives including the repurposing of surplus assets to meet affordable housing needs, increase the availability of employment space, to assist to address socio-economic inequality.
- A fit for purpose asset portfolio that will be more accessible for all, in the heart of the communities they support.
- A responsible and future focused strategy that emphasises the importance of biodiversity and the commitment for lower carbon design.
- A more collaborative asset base that will work together with partners to reduce budget pressures, operational costs and drive efficiencies.
- Establish a more equitable and transparent approach to property decisions, such to support community facilities continue to deliver social value

Negative

None identified.

9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Implementation of the strategy and its associated actions. The Asset Management Plan will be updated annually to reflect the Council's priorities.	On-going.	Head of Landlord Services.

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to

keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built-in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1.	Governance and Audit Committee	11 th January 2024	
2.	Performance and Overview Committee	15 th January 2024	
3.	Full Council	18 th January 2024	