

# West Sussex Asset Management Policy

## Introduction

West Sussex County Council provides services to more than 850,000 residents every day and has pledged to change the way it works, to do more, to embrace its communities and be ambitious.

The West Sussex Plan sets out how the County Council plans to shape its services for the next five years, focusing on:

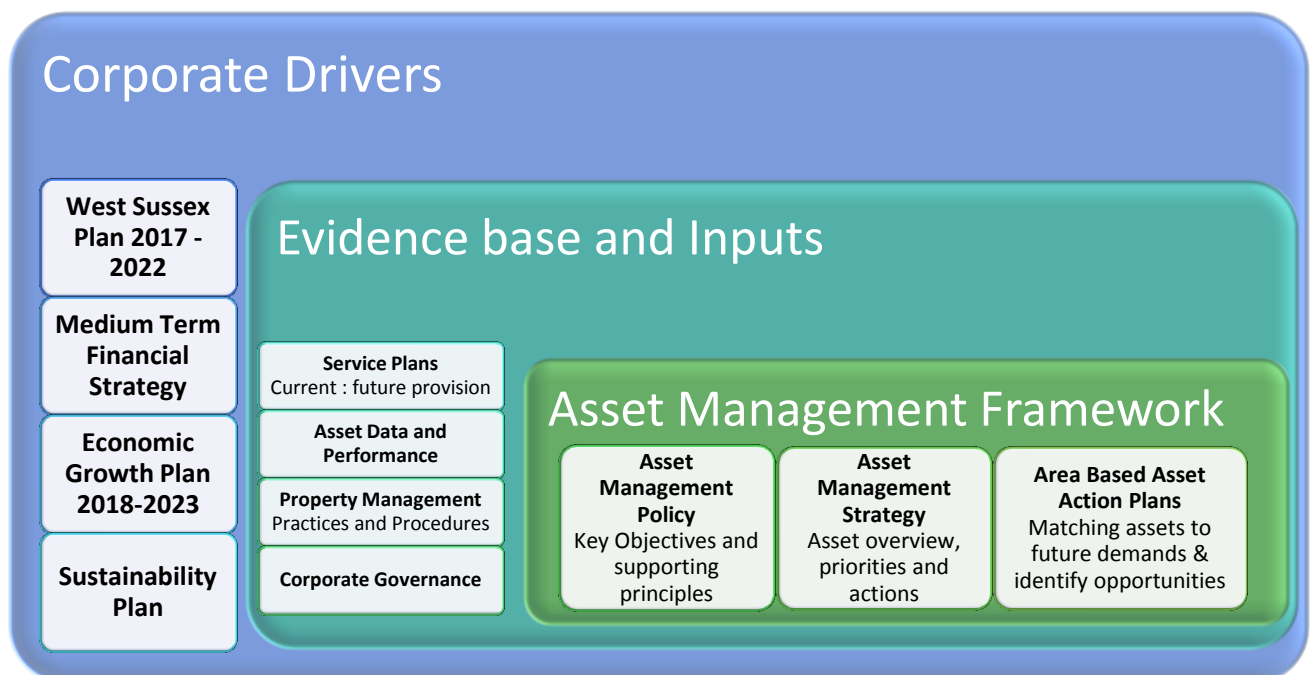
- Giving our children and young people the best start in life;
- Ensuring West Sussex is a prosperous place;
- Our communities will be strong, safe and sustainable;
- We will support you in later life to remain independent; and,
- We will be a council that works for our communities.

A key element of achieving our goals as a council is how we use all our resources, including 980 assets, including 5500 acres of land with a book value of over £1.35bn. How we invest in, deploy and manage these assets must be attuned to these priorities and support the delivery of our services.

To support this the Council has adopted a new Asset Management Framework which comprises three separate elements as follows:

- An Asset Management Policy
- An Asset Management Strategy
- Area Based Asset Action Plans

The Framework exists within the context of our corporate drivers and uses other inputs and enablers to support its delivery:



The benefit of adopting such a structure is that many areas relating to our approach to asset management are likely to remain constant for a number of years (such as the asset management policy). In addition the strategy is unlikely to change frequently but is likely to have a shorter life than our overall land and property policy objectives. Sitting alongside these two documents is a suite of Action Plans – relating to each of the 7 Districts/Boroughs in the County - which are 'living documents' and will be used in order to inform our decision making and our programmes of work on a regular basis.

Reviewing and updating this suite of documents is vital to ensure they remain relevant and reflect changing corporate strategies and pressures.

## Asset Management Policy

This Asset Management Policy establishes some clear objectives and principles by which we will manage our land and buildings (excluding highways). It will remain in place for the next five years but be reviewed annually to ensure it is still relevant to what we are trying to achieve and to allow coordination with other corporate initiatives.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to ensure that assets are used efficiently and sustainably to provide suitable accommodation in appropriate locations to enable the County Council to deliver services and to generate revenues and growth.

## Our Objectives

To support the key strands of our mission we have set out five policy objectives below. These describe the Council's commitment to property asset management and provides a commitment to achieving the benefits that can be delivered through effective use of the portfolio.

- 1. To plan and manage property as a corporate resource for the benefit of the people of West Sussex.**
- 2. To provide the right property, fit for purpose, in the right place, to meet current service needs and plan for the future.**
- 3. To acquire, manage, maintain and dispose of property effectively, efficiently and sustainably, together with optimising financial return and commercial opportunities.**
- 4. To use land and buildings to stimulate development and growth.**
- 5. To promote joint working where it will provide benefit for service delivery and in securing efficiencies.**

## Delivering the Objectives

To deliver these objectives there are certain principles that we need to adopt in our stewardship of our land and buildings. These are set out under each objective but not in any particular order of priority. It is also accepted that there will be occasions where some of these principles may appear to be in conflict. The key challenge for the Council is ensuring that we maintain an appropriate balance between all these principles as decisions around land and buildings are taken.

### **1. To plan and manage property as a corporate resource for the benefit of the people of West Sussex**

- We have clear corporate decision making and challenge on all property matters which adheres to the Corporate Landlord protocols.
- Property budgets are managed corporately to prioritise key investment needs.
- We will ensure effective balance between corporate and service priorities.

- We will work to establish and maintain a full data set for our assets across the county ensuring it is accurate, current and comprehensive.
- Capital Projects will be managed efficiently and effectively and prioritised to support the Council's Strategic goals.
- Forward planning for property will be set out at 5 year intervals over a 20 year horizon across our 7 Districts/Boroughs.

**2. To provide the right property, fit for purpose, in the right place, to meet current service needs and plan for the future**

- We will work to ensure that property is suitable and sufficient for service delivery.
- We will work to ensure that property is flexible and is planned to respond to future need.
- We will work to ensure that property is secure, safe to use and fulfilling statutory requirements.
- We will work with our service areas to understand their longer term requirements in order to plan for the future.
- We will work with community organisations and partners to optimise the use of assets where most beneficial.

**3. To acquire, manage, maintain and dispose of property effectively, efficiently and sustainably, together with optimising financial return and commercial opportunities**

- We will ensure property is managed with probity, using the Corporate Landlord governance protocols, and maintained within budget constraints.
- We will challenge the use of assets where appropriate.
- We will seek efficiencies in occupancy and utilisation and continue to promote co-location and integration.
- We will monitor and challenge the cost of property activities to highlight opportunities for performance improvement.
- We will seek to optimise financial return and commercial opportunities.
- We will ensure that property is as sustainable as possible in design, construction, operation and maintenance.
- We will aim to reduce energy and water consumption and CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and use renewable energy where appropriate.

**4. To use land and buildings to stimulate development and growth**

- We will use key assets to stimulate and support regeneration and inward investment.
- We will manage our commercial portfolio effectively, maximising income generation, while at the same time taking account of other ancillary benefits such as service needs and the creation of jobs.
- We will identify a future supply of land suitable for housing and employment needs.
- We will support the objectives of the Economic Growth Plan when developing our area asset strategies.

**5. To promote joint working where it will provide benefit for service delivery and in securing efficiencies**

- We will work with other agencies and partners to seek and promote co-location and joint service delivery.
- We will support the one public estate programme.
- We will work to support the integration of health and social care.
- We will work in partnership with our district and borough councils on 'Growth Deals' that promote priority projects to bring local improvements for services, residents, businesses and visitors.