

# TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration and the Corporate Director for Place

## Report Title

10 Year Estates Strategy 2023-2033 and Community Estates Policy

## Summary

This report seeks Executive approval to adopt the new 10 Year Estates Strategy 2023-2033 and Community Estates Policy and note the process for the future management of the Council's Community Estate.

## Recommendation(s)

The Executive are recommended to:

1. Approve the 10 Year Estates Strategy
2. Approve the Community Estates Policy
3. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Place to authorise short term lettings at undervalue of assets or parts of assets contained within the Community Estate for community purposes

## Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Richard Roe  
Background papers: None

## *Implications*

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Changes	Supports the Council's vision is for a Trafford where all our residents, businesses and communities prosper. Supporting this vision, this strategy sets out the Council's approach for the management and operation of its Estate provides the ability for a long term plan to support the sought outcomes as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan (2021-24).
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	N/A
Financial:	The strategy will support the Council's finance and change programme to deliver savings and investment growth, and improve value for money from the overall estate.
Legal Implications:	As set out in the report.
Equality/Diversity Implications:	None as a consequence of this report
Sustainability Implications:	The strategy is written to limit sustainability

	implications over the life of the policy and introduce measure across our estate to ensure that all decision regarding estates are sustainable and holistic.
Climate Change / Carbon Reduction Implications	The strategy outlines the focus and measures needed for our estate to reduce carbon implications and provide a long term plan for implementation of measures.
Resources Implications: eg Staffing/ICT/Assets	Existing resources have been identified to support the policy.
Risk Management Implications:	The delivery of the strategy will be supported by a risk management plan setting out the key risks to delivery and proposed mitigation measures.
Health and Wellbeing Implications:	None as a consequence of this report.
Health and Safety Implications:	None as a consequence of this report.

## Background

- 1.1 In February 2022 the Council brought in house the Estates Service from AMEY. The Council has also recruited and assembled an in-house Development Team to deliver the 2020 Investment Strategy. The result of this is that the Council now has a skilled in-house Development and Estates team to deliver on the ambitions of the Council.
- 1.2 Insourcing the Estates function provides an opportunity to align the Council's property estate with its corporate priorities. In recent years the Council and the Community's property requirements have changed following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and an ambitious savings and change programme. The new 10 Year Estates Strategy ("The Strategy") provides a clear direction and framework for decision making, linked to the Council's corporate priorities.
- 1.3 In recent years the Council has also had success co-locating its services with public sector partners. This is a successful service delivery model and one that the Council wants to develop further in the future. The Community Estates Policy applies to Council assets that are occupied by either community organisations or other public sector bodies. Like the 10 Year Estates Strategy, the Community Estates Policy ("The Policy") provides a clear framework for decision making on assets that can either be shared or are located in communities.
- 1.4 This report will detail the headlines of the both the Strategy and the Policy which are attached in Appendix 1 and 2.

## 2.0 10 Year Estates Strategy

- 2.1 Trafford Council's vision is for a Trafford where all our residents, businesses and communities prosper.
- 2.2 The Council's Corporate Plan 'Our Trafford, our future 2021-2024' provides a vision for the priorities of Trafford which this Estates Strategy will support.
- 2.3 Council budgets have never been under greater pressure, and it is therefore critical that we plan for the long term with a 10-year Estates Strategy. This

strategy will create a sustainable asset base for future generations of residents, businesses, and staff.

- 2.4 The Strategy will manage and deliver a modern, fit for purpose portfolio that aligns with the Council's ambitions and enables Trafford Council to continue to provide high quality services and value for money for the taxpayer.
- 2.5 The Council is also delivering a savings and change programme to help address the Council's budget position which the Strategy will support.

The 10-year Estates Strategy is underpinned with the following core principles:

- Right sized and fit for purpose
- Asset management focussed on low cost and maximising revenue
- Investing for growth
- Transparency

In all circumstances, the Council will work with partners and communities, working collaboratively to ensure the best outcome. This could mean that Council assets are repurposed through redevelopment, or that assets are disposed of to support future capital investment.

### **3.0 Community Estates Policy**

- 3.1 The Council recognises the vital role that our health partners and community groups play in achieving the Council's vision, priorities and outcomes as set out in the Corporate Plan.
- 3.2 The Community Estates Policy comes at a time when we are being asked to do more with less, so it is right that we make the best of our resources to deliver these priorities, while achieving best value from our estate. This will mean working closely with our partners and communities to deliver a fit for purpose community estate that puts the needs of our communities at the heart of everything that we do.
- 3.3 The Council has a successful track record of working with Public Sector and Third Sector partners to provide better services in the Borough and both policy and strategy support this vital work. Our health partners share space in our corporate buildings and across our estate and we have successfully supported community organisations to run and manage community buildings as we recognise that the Council is not always the best organisation to deliver services to communities. This new policy will continue to support this way of working and will provide a framework for decision making.
- 3.4 Our Community Estate, which is a group term for all our property and land assets that are located within the community and contribute towards the ambitions of the Council, requires its own policy. The Community Estates Policy aligns with the 10 Year Estates Strategy and provides the specific framework for how we will deal with our community assets, which often have different reasons for existence than our more commercial assets. The Policy will ensure that we deal with these assets in a fair and transparent manner and that they are sustainable and provide value for money in the future.

## **4.0 Lettings at undervalue**

- 4.1 There are properties within our Community Estate that, in their current form, may no longer provide best value or meet the Council's vision. The Council will work with communities to review these properties. If the Council decides to dispose of a property to a community organisation then the disposal may be at below the true market value. This would be because the Council receives other non-financial benefits from the disposal such as health and wellbeing.
- 4.2 The constitution requires that any decision to dispose of, including letting of, Council property at undervalue is reserved to the Executive Committee. This is intended to ensure that the Council complies with its legal duty in section 123 Local Government Act 1972 to obtain best value.
- 4.3 The Council has the discretion to allow a disposal at undervalue where the undervalue is less than £2m and provides a social, economic, or environmental benefit as provided for by the Secretary of State, for example a letting to a Scout Hut or similar.
- 4.4 This requirement that all decisions relating to disposals at undervalue are reserved to the Executive Committee creates a disproportionate administrative burden where there is a clear social, economic, or environmental benefit at a low risk to the Council for example short term leases or disposals of community assets to local community groups, or the renewal of such leases.
- 4.5 It is therefore proposed that the Executive delegate authority for the decisions on these lettings to the Corporate Director of Place in consultation with the appropriate Executive Member.

## **5.0 Other Options**

- 5.1 The alternative to the recommended approach would be to do nothing. This would mean that the Council's property estate is not aligned to the Corporate Plan which would hinder the delivery of good services and would not support the savings and change programme.

## **6.0 Consultation**

- 6.1 Consultation on the policy and the strategy has taken place, and comments have been reviewed. The feedback indicated broad support for both with comments noted and agreed that both should be reviewed periodically.

The Council will continue work with partners and communities as the policy and strategy is implemented.

## **7.0 Reasons for Recommendation**

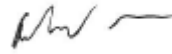
- 7.1 The Council is committed to deliver a fit for purpose estate, aligned to the Corporate Priorities. The approach outlined in this report will ensure that the Council has a long term, sustainable property estate that provides income to support service delivery, and provides the assets that are required to deliver good quality services.

**Key Decision**

This is a key decision currently on the Forward Plan: Yes  
If key decision has 28 day notice been given?

Finance Officer Clearance MB  
Legal Officer Clearance TR

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name followed by a horizontal flourish.