

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property

Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee:

12 May 2021

Subject: Property and Land Disposal Strategy 2021-2026

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the revised Property and Land Disposal Strategy 2021-2026.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the terms of the Report and approve the priorities and objectives set out in the Property and Land Disposal Strategy 2021-2026.
- (ii) Note that an update paper on progress of the Strategy will be provided to this Committee in the first quarter of each future year.

3. Background

3.1 The Strategy (Appendix 1) provides a platform from which decisions can be made in respect of the planned disposal of property assets. The ultimate aim of the Strategy is to allow a more pro-active and considered approach to the disposal of surplus property and land assets and to do so in a prioritised manner which best supports the Council's objectives, reducing the number of buildings that we own and operate out of, thus minimising overheads.

3.2 Those properties which have been declared surplus are grouped into three separate categories based on importance. In prioritised order, they are:
Strategic Sites – sites that could bring significant economic impact;
Rationalisation Programme – land and buildings that are to be disposed of as part of any Council rationalisation programme;
Commercial and Private – land and buildings with commercial and/or private benefit to interested parties.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Strategic Sites/ Rationalisation Programme

4.1.1 Over the past 5 years a number of key strategic sites have been available for disposal and going forward the Council may wish to develop some other sites not currently identified for commercial development and this Strategy will

enable us to look at sites to take to the market for future commercial development which are of a larger value.

4.2 Small Plot Disposals

4.2.1 The Council has continued to market small plots on an ad hoc basis. This Strategy allows us to bring additional sites to the market on an ongoing basis.

4.3 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act – Asset Transfer

4.3.1 A report in respect of Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act – Asset Transfer was submitted to the Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee on 15 March 2017. As part of this strategy we will continue to promote and assist Asset Transfer which will in turn reduce revenue liabilities for the Council.

4.4 The ongoing purpose of the Strategy is to set out the planned approach for Property and Land Asset Disposal that will, in turn, support the Council's approved Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Property Asset Management Plan.

4.5 Surplus property and land assets should contribute to the economic well-being of the area by, for example, increasing the supply of suitable houses in the area and / or assisting in reducing unemployment by making West Dunbartonshire an attractive place for business growth, employment creation and inward investment.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications with this report other than the resources required by the Asset Management and Legal Services to conclude any disposals arising from the implementation of the Strategy"

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 By pursuing and prioritising the disposal of sites, the Council are seeking to maximise capital receipts and improve opportunity for the economic regeneration of West Dunbartonshire.

6.2 The disposal of assets will allow savings attributed to vacant running costs and a reduction in the level of capital borrowing by the Council

6.3 In relation to the marketing of sites, if we require to use an agent their fees/marketing costs will be deducted from the capital receipt achieved. A considered approach to marketing to maximise value will be undertaken on a site by site basis.

6.4 Having a planned approach to property and land disposal will support the reduction in resources required to manage and maintain sites.

6.5 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 It was not necessary to carry out a risk assessment on the proposal contained within the report. Any risk assessment will be undertaken on a site by site basis, if and when a report to Committee is required.

7.2 As part of the marketing strategy consideration will be given to the competing interests in the market to ensure that the properties we are disposing of are released at the appropriate time to ensure maximum value is achieved.

8. Environmental Sustainability

8.1 Any requirements would be taken into account in the future use of any disposed sites and captured through the Planning Application process.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not applicable.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 The release of development sites onto the market will contribute to the economic well-being of the area, the supply of housing, and increased employment. In turn this will make West Dunbartonshire a more attractive prospect for inward investment and assist in delivering a strong local economy and improved job opportunities

10.2 Through the Community Asset Transfer Policy and Procedures, the Council are seeking to encourage and enable community organisations to take on assets and provide services which will contribute to the overall benefit of the community assisting in delivering meaningful engagement with active, empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged.

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Chief Officer

Date: 30 April 2021

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Appendices: Appendix 1

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All