

West Dunbartonshire Council  
Property and Land Disposal  
Strategy  
2021 – 2026

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 West Dunbartonshire Council holds each of its assets as a resource to be used in the delivery of services and to support and contribute to its corporate objectives. This is the fundamental premise that underpins all the Council's actions in managing its assets.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to update on the previous Property and Land Asset Disposal Strategy that will, in turn, support the Council's approved Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Property Management Plan. From the acquisition of new assets, their operation throughout their lifetime, right the way through to their eventual disposal, the overall way in which the Council deploys and accounts for its assets can be tested against the contribution they make to the overall Council's strategic vision.
- 1.3 All assets of the Council must contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. ambitions. In particular property and land assets should contribute to the economic well-being of the area by increasing the supply of suitable houses in the area, assist in reducing unemployment by making West Dunbartonshire an attractive place for business and inward investment, thereby becoming the location of choice for businesses.
- 1.4 It is recognised that assets can make particular contributions in terms of:-
  - Optimising asset portfolios to meet changing service needs;
  - Stimulating the economic and physical regeneration of West Dunbartonshire through the release of key development sites onto the market;
  - Delivering financial benefits from savings in running costs and enhancing capital receipts;
  - Implementing corporate plans and strategies including Climate Change Strategy a Route Map for a Net Zero Future.
  - Acting as a catalyst for partnership working with other public service providers;
  - Supporting the development and role of the Third Sector to acquire assets and to provide key services within communities,

## 2. Aims

2.1 West Dunbartonshire Council has a statutory responsibility under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, not to dispose of land “best that can be reasonably obtained”. Historically in order to comply with this obligation asset disposal was, in the majority of instances, to seek to obtain market value for all surplus assets. However in a time of changing market and economic conditions there are circumstances where greater value can be realised by looking at the overall economic benefit to the community rather than the simple financial consideration for the property or land asset. This would take the form of a detailed options appraisal where there were more than one competing interest in a site.

2.2 This approach aligns with the Council’s Strategic priorities. The ultimate aim is to release as many property and land assets in a prioritised basis that supports the Strategic priorities.

They have been prioritised into the following categories:

- Strategic Sites/larger site disposals - sites that could bring significant Economic Impact.
- Rationalisation Programme - Land and buildings that are to be disposed of as part of any future Council Rationalisation programme; and
- Commercial and Private Small Plots- Those with commercial and/or private benefit to interested parties
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act – Asset Transfer

2.3 Asset Management will:

- Enhance value wherever practicable and appropriate, and strive to maximise economic regeneration opportunities especially with strategic sites/larger site disposals by advertising on the open market to encourage competition from likely purchasers and setting a closing date for offers.
- Enhance value where practicable and appropriate, and strive to maximise economic regeneration opportunities when approached by prospective purchasers for large scale sites which may not have been marketed. Any such approach will be subject to approval by the Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee based on a recommendation of best value to the Council
- Support the transfer of assets at less than market value to the Third Sector, where appropriate, in return for wider community benefits.
- Support the Asset Transfer under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act whether on a lease or sale basis.
- Generally recommending acceptance of the highest offer submitted in accordance with the above.
- Promote any possible lease/sale that may come about due to any unidentified sites which may arise due to future rationalisation project. where this cannot be dealt with under delegated authority, it would be subject to approval of the Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee.

- Seeking approval of all potential disposals which cannot be dealt with under delegated authority, to the Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee.
- Reporting in the second quarter of each year to the Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee any disposals which have been dealt with under delegated authority.

2.4 Asset Management will:

- Review on an annual basis properties which are in poorly used, in poor condition and not fit for purpose and bring to the market for sale/lease.
- Pursue disposal options that will maximise the return to the Council where possible and appropriate this may be either disposal sites which are currently available for marketing or those sites which may be not be marketed but offers are received.
- Seek out more innovative methods to dispose of property. For example to examine the possibility of delayed payments for land purchases by housing developers, setting up joint venture Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV's), where appropriate, with private sector developers to unlock the latent value of the Councils assets.
- Deliver revenue savings to the Council through the prompt and successful disposal of property.
- Ensure the cost of managing the disposal process and surplus property portfolio remains competitive through benchmarking, market testing and regular review.
- Contribute to the economic development and regeneration aspirations of the Council and Strategic Partners.
- Only use an external agent where internal resources cannot deal with possible demand at the time or a greater economic benefit as been assessed can be gained by doing so.

### **3. Review Process**

- 3.1 This Disposal Strategy 2021 – 2026 is a dynamic statement of how West Dunbartonshire Council expects to better manage the disposal of its property assets. The Asset Management Team will continually track and monitor the asset management landscape nationally. As such, it is intended that the Strategy will be reviewed annually and updated, where appropriate, to reflect emerging best practice, changing market conditions and any new statutory obligations including relevant legislation.
- 3.2 The Team are committed to ensure that the Disposal Strategy and approach to the disposal of all assets remains “fit for purpose” and ensuring best value is achieved with every disposal/lease transaction.
- 3.3 Currently there are a number of areas of asset management practice that will be assessed by the Team in terms of their potential implications for the disposal of assets by local authorities. These are:-
- The Scottish Futures Trust.  
SFT lead on a number of reviews across a number of projects for Scottish Government based on strategic asset management planning and collaborative working across the public sector. These projects across Scotland will continue to be tracked by the Team for signs of emerging best practice and tangible benefits relating to possible disposal/lease opportunities.
  - Private Sector Developers  
The Team will engage with private sector developers to ensure that they are fully aware of market conditions and discuss potential release of surplus assets and explore the best possible transfer or sale of the assets to contribute to the economic development and regeneration aspirations of the Council. Specifically, the Council supports the view that by adopting a more holistic approach to economic development and asset management it is more likely that demand, and returning commercial confidence, will be achieved.
  - Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.  
The Team will work with colleagues to ensure that where appropriate community-led action for community ownership is viable. This will involve monitoring funding model available to assist community groups as ownership of land and buildings for community groups is a powerful tool for communities to drive change and achieve their own goals.
- 3.4 By developing the centrally recurring message that West Dunbartonshire is a key destination for a range of potential business sectors, the Council can draw upon the expertise that exists within its Economic Development, Planning, Roads Infrastructure and Property Services to ensure that key sites and properties are identified and readied for disposal, and redevelopment, in a coordinated and effective manner.

This can be achieved not only through the implementation of a measured and consistent approach to disposals but also one which will allow the Council to react quickly and positively to any opportunities that may arise but through collaboration.

#### **4. Governance and Delivery**

- 4.1 The delivery of the asset management agenda within West Dunbartonshire Council is undertaken by the Corporate Asset Management Team, under the direction of the Corporate Asset Manager.
- 4.2 The Corporate Asset Management Team, in turn, is supported by the Strategic Asset Management Group. This Group is chaired by the Chief Officer Supply, Distribution and Property. Its role is to ensure that the Corporate Asset Management Strategy, and all asset management activities that flow from it, will remain effective and progressive.
- 4.3 The Strategic Asset Management Group has the responsibility to consult with, and make recommendations to, Elected Members.
- 4.4 A decision to dispose of any significant property and land asset will be based on a recommendation from Council officers and be taken by the Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee once declared surplus by the appropriate service.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 The economic pressures facing the public sector at this present time will continue to present all local authorities with significant financial challenges for the foreseeable future.
- 5.2 An imperative to continue re-focussing and refreshing a Corporate Asset Management Strategy to meet these challenges is recognised, as is the key role that an effective Disposals Strategy has to play in this process.
- 5.3 West Dunbartonshire Councils' Asset Disposal Strategy 2021-26 will provide an improved platform from which Council officers and Elected Members can make informed and effective decisions in respect of Council property that will also support the Councils' Strategic Ambition and Direction.



## 6. Current Sites

Planned Sale Site	Expected Receipt 2021/22	Expected Receipt 2022/23	Expected Receipt 2023/24	Expected Receipt 2024/25	Expected Receipt 2025/26
25 Douglas Street	Expected				
Land at Leven Street, Alexandria	Expected				
Council Offices, Church Street, Alexandria	Expected				
322B Dumbarton Road, Old Kilpatrick	Expected				
Former ATC, Auchentoshan Estate	Expected				
Garshake Road	Expected				
OLSP	Expected				
Heather Avenue, Alexandria	Expected				
Crosslet House	Expected				
Site at 193 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank	Expected				
102 Main Street, Alexandria (upper floors)	Expected				
Dalreoch Care Home, Dumbarton	Expected				

<b>Planned Sale Site</b>	<b>Expected Receipt 2021/22</b>	<b>Expected Receipt 2022/23</b>	<b>Expected Receipt 2023/24</b>	<b>Expected Receipt 2024/25</b>	<b>Expected Receipt 2025/26</b>
Boquanrahan House, Clydebank	Expected				
Queen Mary	Expected				
Frank Downie, Clydebank	Expected				
Playdrome Plot 1		Expected			
Playdrome Plot 2		Expected			
Playdrome Plot 3		Expected			
World of Golf		Expected			
Land at St James Retail Park (Part 1)		Expected			
Land at St James Retail Park (Part 2)		Expected			
Queens Quay				Expected	