



Durham County Council

Corporate Asset Management Plan 2025-2030

“A dynamic, sustainable estate optimising our assets and promoting prosperity for the benefit of the Council, our people and places.”



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Foreword

The Council Plan captures the ambitions of the council and the role it plays in working to improve the lives of everyone who lives or works in the county. It also describes the wide range of public services that are delivered to make a positive difference to our residents and businesses as well as what we do to attract and welcome visitors.

Property is influential in the success of these ambitions as it provides suitable spaces and places from which to deliver public services and organisational transformation, either directly or together with our partners. Property is also vital for the creation of jobs, new housing and promoting economic growth through the regeneration of our county. Property can also generate income to invest in our frontline services and it can be effectively managed to help achieve our Net Zero ambitions contributing to the wellbeing of our region.

As with other councils, we face a range of economic, social, environmental and financial challenges that need be managed through careful allocation and use of resources to provide exceptional services. In support of our vision to provide a dynamic, sustainable estate optimising our assets and promoting prosperity for the benefit of the Council, our people and places, we believe in striving to be more effective in the way that we hold and use our property, to not only make savings on property-related expenditure, but to better link our property assets to service delivery and growth.

We are pleased to introduce this Corporate Asset Management Plan which sets out, for the next five years, the basis on which our property portfolio is managed, how we wish to improve the estate and how we are making a positive contribution to both the delivery of public services and to the growth and development of Durham as a vibrant and ambitious county.



Cllr James Rowlandson
Portfolio Holder for Resources,
Investment and Assets

Introduction

Durham County Council owns and operates a large and varied property portfolio which extends to 22,778 (9218 hectares) acres, which is about 10% of the county, supporting 961 buildings, from which we deliver a wide range of services. Many of our property assets are held as a historic legacy, having been inherited through amalgamation of Districts and the County Council, acquired over many years bringing specific challenges and responsibilities.

We are committed to providing value for money through managing our people and resources effectively which includes all our property assets. It is essential that we continuously review how we use our portfolio to deliver the best outcomes. This Corporate Asset Management Plan has been produced to help ensure that the property portfolio supports the achievement of our corporate ambitions set out in the Council Plan 2024-2028 and associated corporate strategies.

The purpose of the Corporate Asset Management Plan is to provide a clear picture of what we want from our property portfolio going forward and set out the overarching principles by which we will manage it to achieve these objectives. This will be used to guide future planning and use of our property portfolio and influence all property related activities.

Whilst our property portfolio includes mainstream schools and housing, the growth of Academies and the development of a Housing Revenue Account mean that these currently have or are developing their own management and governance arrangements and as such this Corporate

Asset Management Plan does not refer to these assets in detail. However, with regard to maintained schools and nurseries, these are supported through the Education Review Board which reports to the Corporate



Property Board. The Boards are working together to promote strategic decision making in these areas so that all parts of the portfolio are managed with consistency and as part of this asset management regime.

This Corporate Asset Management Plan also excludes the council's highway infrastructure and assets, the management of which is the subject of a separate Highway Asset Management Plan. This document sets out the extent of the road and footpath network that the council is responsible for and explains the approach to road safety, resurfacing and maintenance programmes, inspection regimes and major investment in the network. The aim of both the CAMP and the HAMP is to demonstrate that the council is making the best use of their assets across both the built estate, our managed land and our highway infrastructure.

Background and context

The Council's last Corporate Asset Management Plan (2023-2025) was adopted by Cabinet in April 2023. The Plan brought together the improvements that the council has made in its consideration of its property assets since the inception of the Corporate Property Partnership (CPP) model, also referred to as the Corporate Landlord model, in 2019. It provided a statement of intent, over the short term, on how assets were to be managed and how the management strategies would enable the portfolio to support corporate priorities and objectives. It also set out the context and environment in which we operate and how this directed property priorities.

Since its publication there have been changes to the make up of the estate, progress with the implementation of the action plan that will deliver the CPP model, and developments in policies and working practices within the property service. In a national context, the Council, like many others, continues to be affected by challenges in areas such as health inequalities and wellbeing, rising demand for services, ongoing impacts of austerity, health and social care challenges, climate change and challenges in children's social care. Similarly, the impact of and the lessons learned from the pandemic has had a major impact on how public services are provided and on the financial health of councils and citizens alike.

It is therefore timely that the two-year Corporate Asset Management Plan is reviewed and updated with a longer planning horizon to acknowledge the strategic role our estate has in supporting the overall ambitions of the Council. It is very much integral to the achievement of these wider ambitions and recognises some of the challenges that we face in trying to ensure the property portfolio plays its part effectively. Some of the main strategic areas where property can support, or the future estate and its management must be influenced by, are summarised in Part 1.

Document structure

This Corporate Asset Management Plan has three elements:

Part 1: The Asset Management Strategy

Part 2: The Asset Management Policy

Part 3: The Asset Management Action Plan

The content of each element is summarised below.

The Asset Management Strategy	<p>The direction for change</p> <p>This will set out at a strategic level what the Council wants to achieve from its property assets in the context of its organisational objectives and achieving its priorities. This will reflect different strategic issues including specific social, economic and environmental objectives as well as specific service and portfolio transformation objectives. It will translate organisational objectives into property objectives.</p>
The Asset Management Policy	<p>The rules, culture and behaviour</p> <p>This will set out the rules and principles by which the property assets must be managed.</p> <p>It will provide the framework under which all activities will be undertaken and will ensure that performance is effectively and consistently managed to support the Council's strategic objectives, in addition to statutory and legislative requirements.</p>
The Asset Management Action Plan	<p>The delivery plan</p> <p>This will be a medium term, 'live' action plan specifying detailed activities, timescales, resources and responsibilities to achieve the property objectives.</p> <p>This action plan will be actively managed and updated at least annually.</p>

Document status

This Corporate Asset Management Plan is a document to provide the context, direction and prioritised actions for property activities for the next five years. It will be subject to changes and refinement as the CPP Model continues to be implemented and as we continuously assess our corporate ambitions and priorities to ensure compatibility with our work.

In particular, the Action Plan will be used as a live tool to direct and reflect asset management programmes of work undertaken and will be actively managed and amended as required.

Achievements since 2023

Since its publication in 2023, there has been significant progress made in the implementation of the CAMP action plan which will deliver our aim for a fully corporate approach to property asset management.

Policies, procedures and processes

We have undertaken work to develop, review and refresh many **formal policies, procedures and processes** to reflect our ways of working and good practice. Examples include:

- A new Buildings Security Strategy (2024-2027) has been produced which aims to cohesively align security measures to potential risks and threats, with the goal of providing a safe and secure environment for those at work and those affected by our work activities. The principles have been utilised in the set up and management of Corten House, within phase 6 re-development of Green Lane offices and will lead to training and awareness programmes for all staff.
- A Surplus Property policy has been adopted by all officers, covering all aspects of the process from initial identification of assets to decision making and disposal and vacant building management arrangements. The policy aims are to manage surplus property efficiently, consistently, in a timely manner and with reference to the risks associated with holding the property while it may be vacant.
- A new Marketing Strategy report template has been developed by the Acquisitions and Disposal Team in CPaL. It is being used to enable officers to strategically plan the best way to market our surplus assets, when to market them, which agency tools to use such as method of sale, offering a guide price or not, timing of marketing, planning strategy and other relevant disposal related matters. Its use has improved communication across the council, helped consistency in working practices and it is a catalyst for continued professional staff development.



Policies, procedures and processes continued

- A Property Review Group has been established to take a systematic look at our property portfolios, concentrating on the rationale for holding assets, assessing value for money and challenging the status quo. The group is currently reviewing all portfolios on a geographical basis with an initial focus on general service delivery buildings and opportunities for quick wins to enable MTFP savings to be generated from the estate.
- In order to ensure we make the best use of our data and systems the CPaL Improvement Group (CIG) has been established to drive improvements and change in this area across the team. The team will oversee and implement key systems developments that are set out in the CPP programme, including the continuing evolution of Spiidur for operations management, a new quality management system, a performance monitoring framework and the integration/interface of property systems with the wider council systems.



Safety initiatives

In response to national/industry directives a number of **Property safety initiatives** have been implemented:

- In order to assess and address the risks associated with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in the council's estate, over 1300 buildings have been surveyed (includes schools) over a very limited time period. No RAAC has been identified in any council buildings so no correctional works will be required.
- Work is currently underway to ensure a rolling programme is formalised in relation to Reinstatement Cost Assessments, that are an insurance requirement. This will ensure that the information required to support the insurance and protection of council buildings is up to date and meets the changing requirements of our insurers. This will have cost and resource implications, but it is necessary in order to protect the value of our buildings.
- A review of radon gas risks and management across corporate property commenced in October 2023 to ascertain current levels of compliance and risk mitigation. Radon is a colourless, odourless, radioactive gas that occurs in rocks and soils, some building materials and water. Durham has many areas with high radon levels that are categorised as 'Radon Affected Areas'. The comprehensive radon management programme is testing circa 400 occupied premises, and all maintained schools. The council has worked closely with the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to undertake testing and analysis. To date more than 150 test results have been returned with only one premise requiring action.



Joint/multi-agency working practices

The service has worked hard to **improve joint/multi-agency working practices** in a number of areas:

- The Vacant Property Working Group has updated its risk management protocols and has continued to bring together representatives from across the organisation and external partners to improve the way we deal with our vacant property. County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue and the Police work alongside our property, neighbourhoods and finance teams. There have been 10 buildings removed from vacant asset register since April 2024 through undertaking demolitions, re-occupation by a service, redevelopment, disposal and lease termination.
- The Community Assets Steering Group includes representatives from Culture & Sport, Neighbourhood protection, finance, legal, facilities management, compliance and from the Chief Executives Service. They are developing a corporate approach to the transfer of assets to community organisations and have recently facilitated the transfer of Great Lumley Community Centre to the Parish Council.



Joint/multi-agency working practices continued

- The Land Use Change Working Group review land use change opportunities and identify and resolve conflicts in proposed uses. The group includes members from Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, housing, clean & green, wellbeing, low carbon, ecology and landscape teams. They have identified sites for woodland planting which contributes towards the target within the Climate Emergency Response Plan -18.68 hectares were planted last winter. They also consider sites for nutrient neutrality and biodiversity net gain use.
- The Trespass Working Group discuss co-ordinated responses to trespass on Council land such as the use of caravans, trailers, abandoned vehicles and use of drones, metal detecting and encroachments. Key council teams such as Countryside, Highways and Ecology work alongside Police and Fire services to ensure a joined up approach. A Drone Policy was approved in 2024 and they are currently working on a Trespass Policy covering unauthorised use of Council land.



Enable economic growth

The CAMP makes a clear commitment to using our land and buildings to **enable economic growth**, celebrating our role as a key landowner and developer in the region:

- We are in the process of securing a delivery partner to work with the council on the development of land at Aykley Heads, which includes the former county hall site. It will provide a prime location for businesses to thrive and will form part of a wider innovation district which will bring together existing businesses and institutions with new land and opportunities.
- NETPark, one of the UK's premier science parks, is another successful model where the contribution of our assets and our leadership has supported opportunities to enhance and improve places and businesses in Sedgefield and the county as a whole. Over 40 successful businesses are operating on site, with the £62m third phase of development underway and scheduled to be handed over in March 2025.
- We are also currently seeking a developer for our Durham city centre site at Claypath which will create economic, employment and leisure benefits for the city and add to the vibrancy of Millennium Place and its historic surroundings.
- In addition to income from sales, the council's land has been disposed of to facilitate the building of new and affordable homes. Key amongst these developments are the former Roseberry College, land at Croft Street in Crook, self-build sites at Trinity Mews in Durham and the former Stanley School of Technology site. In 2023/24 the disposal programme facilitated 166 new homes and disposed of 4 vacant DCC buildings.
- Construction of a new bus station in Bishop Auckland has commenced. This project has been made possible as a result of the successful bid to the governments Future High Street Fund. When completed a modern, fit for purpose bus station will support increasing visitor numbers and provide a welcoming and positive experience for public transport users.
- In October 2020 the council has committed to a council house building programme of up to 500 homes by 2026. A main contractor is now appointed to construct the homes - in the initial stage of the programme, three council sites have been identified which should deliver c.51 dwellings.
- Work is underway to refurbish and expand the DLI Museum and Art Gallery to include an exhibition space, gallery and café to enhance its standing as a community asset and visitor destination.



Business as usual

As well as these strategic achievements, we have continued to **deliver our 'business as usual'** activities and deliver a number of major projects during 2023/24. This includes:

- undertaking capitalised maintenance to a value of almost £6 million
- prioritising the disposal programme to generate capital receipts of £71.8 million (including £70m for The Sands New HQ)
- undertaking 3,711 asset valuations for capital accounting purposes
- Corporately, the capital investment budget outturn in 2023/24 was £223.01m and officers across the team are instrumental in delivering this programme both in terms of construction and in land and property developments. Major projects that have been completed over the past year include:

The Story, a brand-new cultural venue and registry office for Durham and the wider county. The project involved the restoration of a Grade II listed manor house and a contemporary, state-of-the-art extension.



Corten House, new council administrative offices on the Aykley Heads estate. The building has been designed for energy efficiency and to support our workplace strategy by providing a wide range of working environments.



Durham Bus Station, a modern transport hub that offers a safe and welcoming space for residents and visitors. It has increased space for passengers and new facilities including toilets, a changing places unit, improved information displays and additional seating in the passenger waiting area. It also has an office space where security, cleaning, neighbourhood warden staff, representatives from Durham Constabulary and Arriva, are based.



Part 1:

The Asset Management Strategy

The direction for change

In Part 1, we set out at a strategic level what we want to achieve from our property assets in the context of our organisational objectives and achieving our priorities. This reflects different strategic issues including specific social, economic and environmental objectives we have set as our priorities. Whilst we need to undertake further work to develop this in more detail, we have set ourselves a number of high level strategic property objectives that will help us to manage the portfolio and use all our resources to best effect.



Corporate context

It is essential that the Corporate Asset Management Plan sits alongside our various strategic plans and that whatever we do with our property portfolio supports what the council as a whole is trying to achieve. This can often be a challenge as there may well be conflicting demands on the property estate, and it is important that we ensure we have a robust approach in our decision making. We also need to balance demands from our services for properties that support them in the delivery of their services and demands from our communities for properties to support local needs. More focused service specific strategies will require consideration of property implications as part of service

and project business planning. The council is embarking on a wide-ranging and extensive transformational review of its service provision and ways of working based around the themes of organisational productivity, demand management and service design. The way we use technology and work with partners - as well as how we use our assets – will be fundamental to the success of this programme and to the continuing evolution of our corporate approach to asset management. The following summary of our corporate strategies illustrate the issues that impact on, and direct how we manage the overall property portfolio.

The Council Plan 2024-2028

The Council Plan sets out the contributions that the council will make to help achieve the vision for County Durham which has three broad ambitions:



More and better jobs



Connected communities



People live long and independent lives



The themes and priorities in the Council Plan centre on our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council and provide the direction and context for all our supporting strategies (including the Corporate Asset Management Plan), service and improvement plans, project plans and the contribution to be made by teams and individuals.

The Council Plan sets out a commitment for the Authority to be regarded as an excellent council ensuring we manage our resources effectively, have effective governance arrangements, have a good grip on data, performance and finances and ensuring that we are fit for the future. This is a fundamental principle that underpins all our property activities and plans for improvements.

Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Strategy and Property Investment Strategy

We will always have financial pressures and expectations that the property estate will deliver both capital receipts from disposals and revenue income. Our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Capital Strategy provide the framework within which we ensure our financial resources are managed effectively such that service and financial planning is fully aligned with council priorities.

Despite additional funding from central government the sums received are not sufficient to fully cover the budget pressures the council faces and savings of over £16m are required and identified to 2028. Opportunities to increase rental income, review facilities management services and operating costs of our HQ will contribute to this savings target. The MTFP recognises that we have a good track record in rationalising our buildings and transferring assets to communities, and these are activities that we will continue to consider to ensure we achieve value for money.

Our Capital Strategy ensures we make capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly take into account stewardship, prudence, sustainability and affordability. The capital programme is prioritised and agreed through a corporate approval process and is supported in part by capital raised from the disposal of surplus property assets which is a funding source for the capital programme. By continually reviewing the performance of our property assets through our asset challenge

programme, we can ensure that we identify opportunities to rationalise the estate and maximise wider benefits, including the support of the capital programme.

We also have a Property Investment Strategy which sets out our objectives relating to investing in property, and identifies the benefits, risks and our approach to acquiring property in order to support the Council's priorities. We need to ensure that we only acquire investments which meet our objectives and provide a reasonable level of return after considering all risks as part of a robust business case and due diligence process. How we then manage these assets must reflect and be determined by performance against these objectives.



Inclusive Economic Strategy

The County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy sets a clear, long-term vision for the area's economy up to 2035, with an overarching aim to create more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy. The vision, priorities and areas of focus within the strategy have been shaped by an Economic Statement which establishes the state of the county's economy today and the opportunities and challenges for the future. The Strategy seeks to overcome barriers in order to transform levels of growth and harness the county's potential, with all partners actively working towards this shared vision. We want to ensure we use our property assets to support these objectives and will undertake further work to understand the contribution our own property portfolio, and the way we manage it, can maximise income and support opportunities to enhance and improve places and businesses.

The Inclusive Economic Strategy will use a Delivery Plan approach throughout the strategy period to set out clear, tangible and transformative outcomes and enable regular reviews to respond to economic changes; allow priorities to be reassessed and recalibrated by future administrations; and actions to be refined based on whether outcomes are being achieved. This will ensure the Inclusive Economic Strategy remains a relevant and live document throughout its lifespan. As part of the formation of these Delivery Plans, the role that the CAMP and wider property portfolio can play in delivering economic growth and in making better use of our public spaces and assets will be considered in detail.

Climate Emergency Response Plan and Ecological Emergency

Our Climate Emergency Response Plan sets our own targets for carbon reduction, aiming to become a net zero Council by 2030 (from a 2008/09 baseline), with at least a 80% actual reduction in emissions and to have a Net Zero County by 2045. In order to achieve this we need to drastically reduce the council's carbon footprint which includes emissions from the use and occupation of buildings and fleet over the next 5 years. Whilst we have already done much (achieving a 66% reduction in 24/25), through projects such as retrofitting LED street lighting, LED lighting in buildings, Solar PV installations, as well as improved energy efficiency works and the replacement of some gas boilers with Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP), there is still much more to do across our new and existing estate.

Cabinet formally declared an ecological emergency for County Durham in April 2022 and an Ecological Emergency Action Plan has been approved that in due course may merge with the Climate Emergency Response Plan. The Ecological Emergency Action Plan provides the reporting mechanism against the Council's enhanced Biodiversity Duty provided for in the Environment Act 2021. In line with our response to the climate emergency, we need to ensure that what we do with our landholdings and the way we deliver our services supports and benefits biodiversity and nature recovery. As such, our corporate processes will include planning for the ecological emergency and take into account the actions held within the Ecological Emergency Action Plan, including the allocation of capital and revenue funding within the annual MTFP planning cycle with a value for money outcome-based focus alongside other projects and programmes.

Towns and Villages strategy

Our Towns and Villages Strategy overlays and supports the delivery of the corporate vision, with a focus on improving benefits to the more deprived communities. Whilst it is aligned to existing and ongoing regeneration activity, it can assist in accelerating projects and tackling issues that are prioritised by individual communities. We will continue to anticipate and respond to how communities are being affected by issues and ensure our property portfolio and property management activities support improvements, strengthen community capacity and build resilience going forward.

Housing strategy (2025-2035)

The County Durham Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in County Durham and a vision to provide good quality housing that meets everyone's needs, is affordable for local people and supports the creation of great places to live. Its purpose is to set the context as to how we will meet the housing challenges we face for the next decade, setting out the following priorities such as increasing the delivery of new and appropriate housing to meet differing needs; ensuring the quality and energy efficiency of housing; and ensuring housing contributes to safe and accessible placemaking.

We continue to focus on tackling homelessness and identifying opportunities for the provision of housing. Over 100 properties have been acquired in the period since the last CAMP. These are properties which are used to address the Council's statutory duty to support the needs of the homeless and those in danger of becoming homeless required under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. We will continue to provide professional support when we acquire properties and ensure that appraisals of initial and ongoing costs are used to inform any investment decisions.



Workforce strategy

Our Workforce Strategy 2024-2027 helps deliver the council plan through our people and creating a great place to work. We have a clear vision and ambitions how we transform and modernise the council, our services and our people. Working in the post pandemic world has undoubtedly changed our operating model and will continue to impact on how we deliver services, how our residents access services and what we will need from our workforce. The Workforce Strategy recognises the different ways of delivering our services, different ways for the public to access our services, opportunities to embrace new technology, ensuring all that we do is accessible and inclusive, and working with partners could all impact on our future operating model and therefore the requirements of the future operational property portfolio. It is essential that the makeup of, and way the property portfolio is managed, is sufficiently flexible to support and respond to these changes.

North East Combined Authority

Under a devolution deal for the North East, the North East Combined Authority (North East CA) was formed on 7 May 2024. It is led by an Elected Mayor and Cabinet and covers the seven local authority areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. Local leaders will have greater control over funding across this area and be able to take decisions normally made by central government.

Its purpose is to champion the full potential of the region. Collaborating with partners and local authorities, it will create a better way of life by connecting communities, giving people the skills to succeed, and improving wellbeing for all, so that the North East is recognised as an outstanding place to live, work, visit and invest.

Programmes of work centred on themes such as transport, culture and housing are underway and these will be supported by the council and its land and property assets as required.



Key drivers

We want to ensure that the properties we use make a positive contribution to the way we operate and deliver our front line services. We will undertake further work to fully understand all our service priorities and how they may change in the future, and how the property portfolio can support wider corporate strategies.

Our property assets are costly to run and maintain and ever present pressures on council finances mean that tackling the maintenance backlog and increasing energy and repairs costs is affecting our ability to sustain the estate we have. All future property strategies that are developed will need to address this either in the form of asset rationalisation, a new approach to works prioritisation or increased investment for example – or a blend of all of these. We also want to ensure that we maximise the benefits that we derive from the estate. These benefits may be monetary, but there could also be benefits to service delivery, communities or opportunities to drive growth.

Many of our property assets are old and their design and structures provide us with challenges if we want to use them flexibly as our service and operational needs change. The use and occupation of buildings can also have detrimental environmental impacts, particularly those with ageing plant and services within them which will impact the drive to reduce the councils carbon footprint. Effective management of our portfolio, including consideration of investment and decommissioning could help us minimise these harmful impacts.

There are many factors that will shape our future property portfolio. Some will be

driven by our own direction and within our control, others will be externally influenced. Collectively they may well compete with one another, but by having clear strategic property objectives and strong corporate governance through the Corporate Property Board, we can ensure that the estate is managed, and that decisions are made in a way that supports the priorities and objectives within the Council Plan, and its associated strategic documentation.

Our property portfolio must be able to respond to these pressures and changes to meet the requirements of our services delivering both front line services and our back office functions. The future shape of our property portfolio and how we use it must be informed by the collective needs of all our users and we are developing this understanding through the implementation of the CPP model.

We want our property portfolio to provide fit for purpose, efficient and sustainable assets and we need to ensure we use all our resources to best effect to achieve that. By ensuring we routinely challenge the performance of our portfolio, we can ensure that we derive the maximum benefit from our most efficient, flexible and best quality buildings and that we ensure our buildings are appropriately utilised and support the user and customer experience.

The size, make up and geographic spread of our current portfolio gives us a real opportunity to reshape it to support our organisational transformations and changes to service delivery models and ways of working. By creating flexibility in our estate, we will be in a better position to respond to opportunities for change and to collaborate with partners and our communities.

Our vision

The Corporate Asset Management Plan 2023-25 presented key information about the estate in terms of its size, its make up, how much it costs and what it requires in terms of maintenance. This information is updated in the Action Plan (Part 3) for this plan and our approach to performance management and monitoring is also explained.

In broad terms, there has been minimal change to the size and value of the estate (excluding housing) over the past two years but the cost of running it has increased significantly as has the amount of backlog maintenance required. It is clear that this position is not sustainable and our strategy for the estate must reflect the need to reduce costs and to reshape what we are responsible for.

Our core vision:

A dynamic, sustainable estate optimising our assets and promoting prosperity for the benefit of the Council, our people and places.

This supports the council plan priority of delivering a high value service which is efficient, effective, financially sound and forward-looking. This vision is reflected through our strategic objectives and through our directing principles set out in the Asset Management Policy (Part 2).

Strategic objectives

Being an excellent council requires us to use all our resources to best effect. To help us do that we have set out the strategic direction and what we want to achieve from our property portfolio by defining a set of high level property specific objectives within the context of our organisational objectives.

The strategic objectives we will adhere to for our property portfolio are:

Strategic objective	Purpose
To only hold (or acquire) assets for a defined purpose in support of a corporate objective with demonstrable benefits	Ensure we have clear purpose to hold each asset Use asset challenge to identify assets not supporting objectives Ensure consideration of robust business case and appraisal prior to all acquisitions

Strategic objective	Purpose
<p>To improve the flexibility in use and efficiency of our property portfolio</p>	<p>Seek opportunities to rationalise the portfolio</p> <p>Use asset challenge to identify opportunities to improve utilisation, co-locate or reprovide space differently</p> <p>Use service improvement or development plans to inform strategic planning of the property portfolio</p> <p>Seek to achieve an optimum estate to maximise efficiency</p>
<p>To reduce the revenue impact/ operational cost of the portfolio</p>	<p>Reduce operational costs through more effective use of buildings</p> <p>Ensure effective performance monitoring and energy management</p>
<p>To reduce the carbon impact of our portfolio</p>	<p>Ensure sustainability and environmental impact is considered for all new build, refurbishment, and maintenance activities</p> <p>Ensure the way we use buildings minimises impact</p>
<p>To use the property portfolio to support and drive growth and regeneration objectives</p>	<p>Ensure we use our estate innovatively to identify opportunities to drive and support regeneration and development</p> <p>Ensure we consider growth and economic impact in the way we use and manage our property portfolio</p>

Strategic objective	Purpose
<p>To support the capital programme through the generation of capital receipts from the property portfolio</p>	<p>Use asset challenge to identify opportunities to release surplus assets</p> <p>Use our Disposal Programme to manage the delivery of capital receipts</p> <p>Seek to maximise capital value</p>
<p>To generate revenue income and maximise benefits from our portfolio</p>	<p>Ensure our management approach maximises financial returns and recognises other economic and social benefits</p> <p>Effectively manage the performance of our portfolio to meet target returns</p>

By defining these objectives to provide the framework for the holding and management of our property portfolio, we can create a clearer picture of how we want to shape our property portfolio going forward.

This Corporate Asset Management Plan provides the baseline for the current position and will be used to determine targets and performance measures by which we will be able to measure success against these objectives in the future. The development of a comprehensive performance management regime is one of the key tasks within the Action Plan for the coming year and our approach to this is set out in that section.

Implementation of the Corporate Asset Management Plan will be led by the Corporate Director of Resources reporting through the Corporate Property Board. Governance arrangements are set out in more detail within Part 2 (the Asset Management Policy).

Part 2:

The Asset Management Policy

The rules, culture and behaviour

In Part 2, we set out the rules and principles by which our property assets will be managed. It provides the framework under which all property related activities will be undertaken and will ensure that we can effectively and consistently measure and manage performance to support our services and corporate objectives, in addition to statutory and legislative requirements.

Our Corporate Property Partnership Model

The way we manage our property assets is important and as a council we made a decision in 2019 to adopt and implement what we call our Corporate Property Partnership (CPP) model. The principles of this approach are fundamental in directing the way we are now managing our property assets.

The aim of the CPP model is to establish clarity of direction, vision and purpose for our property assets and to:

- Enable us to more efficiently utilise our assets to deliver better services to our communities
- Unlock the value of our assets, seek efficiencies through joint arrangements with other public sector partners and maximise private sector investment.
- Integrate thinking about property with financial, regeneration and other considerations to support the delivery of our Council Plan.

The over-riding tenet of the CPP model is that responsibility for all property related activity and expenditure is within the remit of the Corporate Property and Land (CPaL) service under the direction of the Corporate Property Board. This approach assures that finances are properly prioritised, management is consistent, and opportunities are realised across the whole estate. In this way, we can ensure that the needs of the whole organisation, as well as our individual service operations are met.

Services use property assets to support the delivery of their services. By transferring all property responsibilities and activities to CPaL under the CPP model, services can best use their skills and resources to focus on planning and delivering high quality services.

Directing Principles

In order to provide a strategic framework within which the property portfolio will be managed and to ensure we adhere to the strategic objectives set out in Part 1, we have defined five key principles. This is in effect an articulation of existing practice, but will ensure that all supporting policies, practices and management decisions are made consistently with a clear purpose.

The five directing principles are:



Corporate Resource

To ensure property assets are managed as a corporate resource and are used to support the council's ambitions and priorities.



Right space, right place

To ensure property assets provide the right spaces in the right places to support the delivery of services for the benefit of communities.



Well maintained and sustainable

To ensure property assets are managed and maintained safely, effectively, efficiently and sustainably to take account of whole life costs and environmental impact.



Optimise returns and support growth

To ensure consideration is given to the use of property assets to stimulate development and growth, support local business needs, optimise financial returns and support corporate ambitions and priorities.



Support community involvement and partnerships

To ensure opportunities for community involvement and partnership working are considered where they can provide efficiencies, benefits to communities and the property assets can be effectively managed.

Further detail of the aim of each of these five principles are set out below. We want to develop a culture whereby our behaviours and activities positively reflect these principles. As part of the adoption of each principle we have also included some core cultural values to provide a clear and consistent way of working.



Corporate Resource

To ensure property assets are managed as a corporate resource and are used to support the council's ambitions and priorities.

By adopting the CPP model, we have a clear directive that all our property assets are managed for the benefit of the council as a whole. The concept of this approach is that all property activities are coordinated through CPaL, including the strategic planning of the property portfolio, feasibility and option appraisals to support the needs of service areas as they evolve and ensuring decisions reflect corporate priorities.

We want our property portfolio to reflect our needs corporately and to support our objective to only hold (or acquire) assets for a defined purpose in support of a corporate objective with demonstrable benefits. This requires an in depth understanding of the needs of services and how they will develop in the future as well as full integration with our wider corporate strategies. It is essential that services consider property requirements and implications on the existing portfolio as part of their service development planning, and that any property implications are identified and considered in wider corporate strategies.

The Corporate Property Board has overall responsibility for ensuring a corporate approach is taken in the management of all our property assets. The establishment of the Corporate Property Board has given us the ability to have a single and integrated oversight of strategic property related activities by bringing together senior representatives of all service areas across the whole organisation.

The CPP Model remains the key programme of change that will ensure that the property portfolio is managed in a way that delivers our corporate priorities and that work is organised and delivered with consistency and efficiency. Significant progress has been made in implementing the CPP model but we continue to work through a comprehensive programme of activities which are reflected in the Action Plan (part 3 of this CAMP). The Corporate Property Board has a critical role in supporting, guiding and directing the work on the programme of activities to ensure it remains fit for purpose and representative of our corporate priorities and objectives.

To help us manage our property portfolio effectively and make informed and consistent decisions we have begun to categorise our property portfolio into 'family types'. Both the agricultural and commercial portfolios have been reviewed and work is underway looking at the reclamation portfolio. Each family type will have a defined management approach which will enable us to ensure the best use of our property resources in managing each type of asset. Fundamental to this work will be to challenge the rationale for holding assets both for the corporate estate and for 'grey areas' where management is uncertain or non-standard.

The rules, culture and behaviour

All decisions about our property portfolio must be evidence based and fully appraised. This requires reference to, and analysis of comprehensive and robust property data. The phased delivery of the Spiidur system, which is currently being implemented will see the alignment and integration of the property help desk, repairs and maintenance, compliance, deed management, case management, contract/SLA management with data held in Asset Manager. Further phases will be undertaken to integrate capital projects, remaining legacy systems and build on improvements from the initial phases of work.

By managing our property portfolio corporately, we are able to challenge and continue to review our assets against defined criteria ensuring that we continue to meet our defined strategic objectives. These criteria will include assessment against technical property performance measures (such as their condition, future maintenance liabilities and operational costs), but also assessment against suitability and sufficiency for current and future operational needs. The development of a comprehensive property performance management regime, supported by excellent data is a key project in the implementation of the CPP Model.

Implementing a formal programme of asset challenge reviews enables us to continually identify opportunities to use our assets to best effect, and to develop a programme of rationalisation and portfolio transformation. By doing this, we should be able to reduce the overall size of our property portfolio and achieve a more cost effective and efficient use of the estate long term.

Culture

To ensure property assets are managed as a corporate resource and are used to support the council's ambitions and priorities:

- We will recognise that all our property assets are held as a corporate resource and are managed by CPaL reporting through the Corporate Property Board
- We will ensure that services consider property requirements and implications as part of service development planning and liaise with CPaL to ensure this can be considered in strategic planning of the estate
- We will ensure that all assets are categorised correctly and managed accordingly
- We will ensure that a system of appropriate asset challenge is applied before property decisions are made
- We will ensure that CPaL coordinate all property related information and use it to inform strategic planning and decision making



Right space, right place

To ensure property assets provide the right spaces in the right places to support the delivery of services for the benefit of communities.

Our property assets have traditionally been the means by which we have delivered our services to our communities and are often the first point of access when interacting with us. This could be through the range of assets such as customer access points, libraries, museums, leisure and care facilities or parks and recreational amenities. We also provide office accommodation for our office based staff as well as depot and waste facilities.

The way that we deliver our services is constantly evolving. In the future there may be less focus on buildings as a base for service delivery and more about providing high quality services to customers where they need them, at home, in their communities or on-line. We need to ensure that we understand this evolution and that it is used to direct our future property solutions. Our Customer Access Strategy recognises that the way we interact with our communities is changing and that we need to be innovative in the way that we provide access in the future, whether through our own properties, those of partners or digitally.

Fit for purpose property is essential to the provision of quality services, and we will work to continue to better understand service and customer needs and ensure that the estate responds to and supports future service transformations. Whilst this primarily affects our operational portfolio, it is important that we also understand and respond to the needs of our communities and identify opportunities for property solutions. Our cross service working

groups, working under the auspices of the CPB, are a key feature of our service, community and corporate engagement.

The locations of our property assets are also historic and may no longer represent the best location for current needs. Also, demographic changes or changes in community needs may have resulted in some of our property assets not being fully utilised. Many services have historically operated from individual premises, and we will seek out opportunities to improve service delivery through more integrated provision of our own services as well as opportunities to work more collaboratively with partners.

Whilst we will continue to support the provision of essential services and seek to support community needs, we will look for opportunities to meet these through fewer but better buildings.

By continuing to understand service and community requirements, we can inform our asset challenge programme. Putting this understanding alongside property performance data, we can seek to ensure that our property portfolio of the future provides the best space or accommodation in the best locations to meet our needs. If we identify property assets that are not used effectively or efficiently, they may become part of our rationalisation programme.

Culture

To ensure property assets provide the right spaces in the right places to support the delivery of services for the benefit of communities:

- We will ensure that CPaL and services work closely to share understanding of space and locational requirements for effective service delivery
- We will continue to implement our asset challenge principles and programme to ensure that there is a coherent rationale for holding each part of the estate
- We will offer guidance and seek to identify opportunities to ensure that our property portfolio is suitable and sufficient to meet and respond to changing service needs
- We will seek to ensure that the property portfolio is supportive of inclusive environments for all users



Corten House



Bishop Auckland Town Hall



Well maintained and sustainable

To ensure property assets are managed and maintained safely, effectively, efficiently and sustainably to take account of whole life costs and environmental impact.

It is essential that we effectively maintain and manage our property portfolio to ensure all our properties are safe and function as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the needs of all users. We must also ensure that any expenditure on maintenance is prioritised and effectively managed to make the best use of our resources.

The implementation of the CPP model and our Property Maintenance Policy is enabling us to do this effectively across the whole portfolio, so that we move away from fragmented and unclear maintenance responsibilities and different standards and procedures in different parts of the portfolio. The use and occupation of our buildings play a significant part in meeting our carbon reduction target, and through our maintenance activities we will ensure we identify opportunities to mitigate this impact. Retrofitting can be costly, but we will consider the whole life costs and environmental impact of our maintenance activities in our decision making.

Like many other local authorities, our property portfolio comprises buildings of various ages and construction types giving us real challenges to maintain these assets safely, cost effectively and to appropriate standards.

Through our programme of condition surveys we are able to assess the condition of the properties in our portfolio and prioritise works and expenditure where it is needed most. The required maintenance

identified in the surveys is approximately £177m across our non-schools estate and around one third of this relates to urgent/essential works. This sizeable level of required maintenance is not a desirable nor a sustainable position. A review of the Maintenance Policy has highlighted the need to shift away from a reactive approach to repairs towards a planned programme of works; bringing the allocated budget more in line with market expectations for an estate the size of Durhams; and developing prioritisation mechanisms to assist with decision making on maintenance expenditure. In addition to this, by continuing to look at our portfolio strategically we can target resources to those properties that provide long term provision for our services and to ensure that all our holdings are safe and secure for all users and our communities.



Our approach to proactive and reactive corporate building compliance enables the council to meet its statutory duties to ensure that buildings under its control comply with appropriate statutory, regulatory and corporate standards. As corporate landlord, it is essential that we have in place robust procedures, processes and documentation and ensures that they are implemented and followed. Statutory legislation places a general duty on the council as the 'employer' to "ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees" and also requires the council to conduct it's undertaking in a way that does not pose risk to the health and safety of non-employees. Duties also extend to give protection to the general public and other non-employees such as children at school and contractors. Therefore in achieving the aforementioned goals the council is able to meet its moral, legal and financial obligations and keep our employees and service users safe and healthy.

We are currently collating all agreed property policies in an accessible format and location on the council's intranet but, in addition, a comprehensive Property Policies Handbook will be developed which brings together all the published policies and work protocols that support, inform and guide our work on the estate. It is arranged according to the lifecycle stages of an asset – its acquisition, management, maintenance, improvements and disposal – and it is intended to be a single point of reference providing the framework to ensure consistency across the service.

Within our property portfolio, we are custodians of a range of heritage and cultural properties which give us additional maintenance challenges. Such structures and sites are a legacy of the past and are of a historic nature, and how they are managed can be a sensitive issue within our communities. Such assets include statues, memorials, bridges and viaducts. We want to ensure these assets are maintained and managed in the best and most appropriate way, and there may be other bodies better placed to do that than we are. We will look at opportunities to safely protect their long term future, formalise maintenance responsibilities and minimise our financial responsibilities.

Culture

To ensure property assets are managed and maintained safely, effectively, efficiently, and sustainably to take account of whole life costs and environmental impact:

- We will ensure that our property portfolio is safe and secure and meets all statutory requirements
- We will ensure that our property portfolio is maintained in accordance with the Property Maintenance Policy and available resources
- We will ensure that CPaL develop and share property maintenance plans with services and that all property maintenance activities are suitably managed
- We will seek to reduce energy and water consumption and carbon emissions and ensure that our property portfolio is as sustainable as possible in its design, construction, operation and management



Optimise returns and support growth

To ensure consideration is given to the use of property assets to stimulate development and growth, support local business needs, optimise financial returns and support corporate ambitions and priorities.

We are both a significant landowner and also play a major role in driving growth and regenerating communities across our area. As such, we have the unique opportunity to be able to utilise our property portfolio to support and promote economic growth and regeneration. This could involve investigating the potential of our land and buildings to provide development or re-use opportunities for commercial use, housing or using it as leverage or as a catalyst for other investment. The adoption of the CPP model will help us take a fully corporate approach in seeking out and appraising such opportunities.

Our own properties play a role in, and impact on the environment and local economies of our towns and villages. This could be through the use and utilisation of a property as much as its physical presence and we will consider this impact in the way that we manage the portfolio in the future.

Obtaining the best value from our property portfolio will continue to be a priority, including optimising financial returns. Financial returns include both capital receipts from disposals of surplus assets and rental from our income generating assets. Our strategic objectives require us to support the capital programme through the generation of capital receipts and to generate revenue income and maximise benefits from our property portfolio.

As we work to increase the efficiency of our portfolio, we will naturally identify disposal opportunities for inclusion in

the property disposal programme in accordance with our Disposal Policy. Over the past 3 years, we have delivered over £70m from the sale of surplus property assets, which has been a significant element in funding our capital programme in support of delivering essential services. The property disposal programme will continue to be a source of capital funding and our work to rationalise the portfolio will continue to identify opportunities to generate capital.

Our Surplus Property Policy aims to ensure that surplus property is identified in a timely and co-ordinated manner; that swift and rational decisions are made on its future; that it is managed efficiently in accordance with those decisions; and that vacant periods are minimised, and associated risks are well managed. Property that is surplus to the needs of a service will be managed centrally and decisions on its future will be based on any corporate or financial benefits to be achieved.



We hold a wide range of commercial and industrial properties that we lease out and manage. Our annual income from rents is over £11 million which makes a valuable contribution to our budget. We will manage these properties with a view to maximising our returns, minimising voids and arrears and meeting our obligations as landowner. However, we also recognise that some properties provide wider social and community benefits, and we will reflect these benefits in our management approach. For example, we may take a different approach in managing units focused on supporting start-up businesses (which is a priority in our Economic Statement) to that taken in managing properties let for income purposes to more established businesses.

We will keep our income generating assets under review to ensure they continue to meet our requirements and deliver acceptable returns. We will consider opportunities to reprofile our income producing portfolio, identify opportunities to generate new sources of income and to support growth and regeneration priorities.

Culture

To ensure consideration is given to the use of property assets to stimulate development and growth, support local business needs, optimise financial returns, and support corporate ambitions and priorities:

- We will use our property portfolio innovatively to stimulate and support development and regeneration opportunities at a local and regional level
- We will seek to optimise financial returns and commercial opportunities through our property portfolio
- We will manage our income generating assets effectively to balance financial objectives with wider corporate benefits



Support community involvement and partnerships

To ensure opportunities for community involvement and partnership working are considered where they can provide efficiencies, benefits to communities and the property assets can be effectively managed.

Whilst we have a large and varied property portfolio, we recognise the need to robustly manage its size and make up to achieve an optimum estate to maximise efficiency, at the same time ensuring we provide first class essential services. As the way that we work and provide our services is changing, so too are our needs for property. We want a property portfolio that is flexible and adaptable to these changing needs, and by working with other partners and organisations we may be able to better provide the 'right space in the right place' – one of our driving principles.

We continue to strengthen and develop our partnership working with the public sector and with our communities to deliver our services, such as through membership of the County Durham Together Partnership (CDTP), our Customer Access Strategy and through our working relationship with the North East Combined Authority. The CDTP brings together representatives from a range of public and voluntary sector organisations from across Durham and aims to foster community wellbeing by empowering communities, sharing decision making and working together. Through links with this group and others, we will seek to identify opportunities in respect of property provision and ongoing management. This could range from colocation within operational buildings to transferring premises responsibilities or ownership. We will strive to make this process transparent, responsive and reflective of the benefits to be gained.

Local people are often best placed to determine need and manage the provision of community facilities in their area. Through the community building asset transfer programme, we are supporting a pipeline of bids from community groups that are at various stages of the process from outline business case to full legal transfer. This is in direct support to the council's commitment to the development and empowerment of communities.

We will continue to look at opportunities to seek out community groups and other partners who can take on responsibilities for properties. We have developed a corporate approach and a new Policy to enable us to properly and consistently evaluate any proposal to transfer a property asset to partners (often referred to as community asset transfer). This will ensure we are confident there is a strong business case behind any proposal and that the long term future of the property is assured for the benefit of the whole community.

There may be occasions where we have a longer term strategic plan to use a property or piece of land for service development, but we could consider a temporary interim (or meanwhile) use until it is required, where there is certainty that it does not impact on our longer term strategic plans.

Culture

To ensure opportunities for community involvement and partnership working are considered where they can provide efficiencies, benefits to communities and the property assets can be effectively managed:

- We will work with community organisations and other partners to optimise the beneficial use and efficient occupation of our properties
- We will work closely with partners to identify opportunities for collocation and to drive efficiencies by working together
- We will consider opportunities for community and partner involvement in the management and longer term future ownership of our properties

Annfield Plain Branch Library



Freeman's Quay Leisure Centre



Property organisational arrangements and governance

The Head of Corporate Property and Land has managerial responsibility for all property services delivered through the Corporate Property and Land service (CPaL). The CPP model directs that all property related activities fall within the remit of CPaL which provides a complete property service through its in-house teams.

Decision making

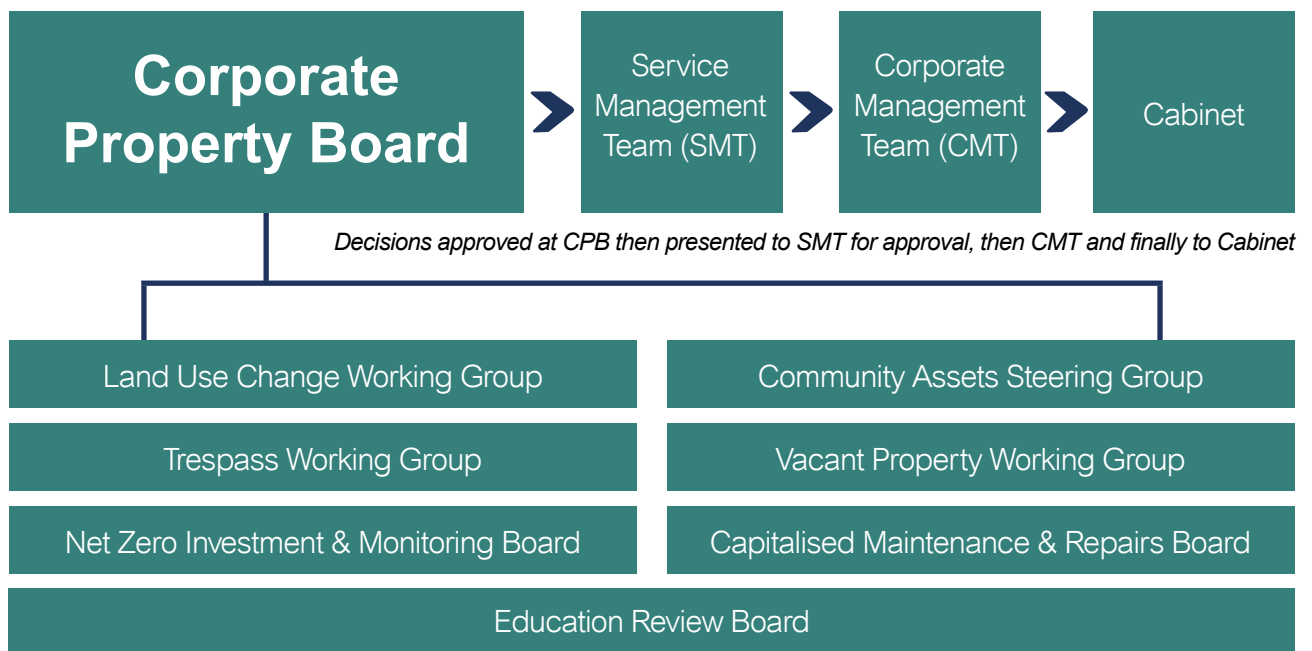
The Constitution sets out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the rules and procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

The Constitution designates the Director of Resources as being responsible for the management of the majority of our property assets, with certain matters being delegated to the Head of Corporate Property and Land. The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investment and Assets acts as custodian and steward for the property portfolio and endorses the strategic and operational plans which ensures its appropriate management.

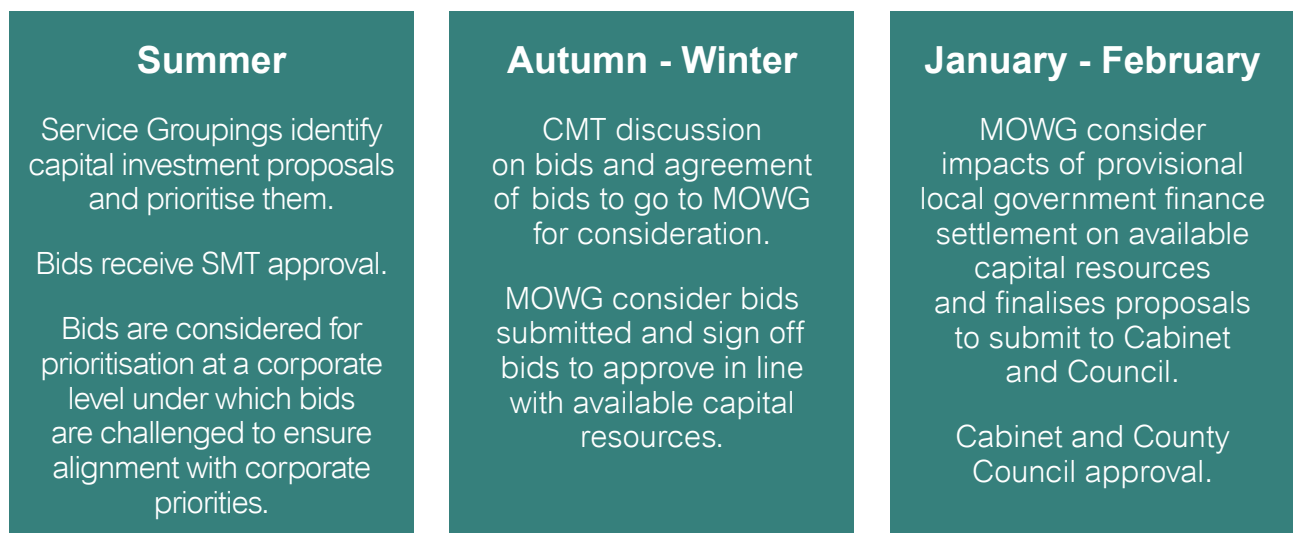
Any decisions about our property portfolio are made in accordance with the requirements of our Financial Procedure Rules which are also set out in our Constitution. The Council's Capital Strategy provides a framework to enable the Council to consider how it prioritises spending to meet corporate and service aims and objectives. It takes account of the resources which are forecast to be available and the effect of any investment on the achievement of priorities and outcomes. It also requires the council to assess the revenue impact of any planned capital investment.

All capital investment decisions are made in accordance with this strategy. Bids from services are challenged and consolidated before they are presented to the Capital Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) which gives political oversight to the proposals. Proposals must be developed with stakeholders – including Corporate Property and Land – and must have been weighed up against alternative options and against the whole life costs of the scheme.

Asset Management governance and decision making



Annual Capital Investment Process



The Corporate Property Board was established in late 2020, and through its Terms of Reference is given overall responsibility for ensuring a corporate approach is taken in the management of all our property assets.

The Corporate Property Board is chaired by the Corporate Director for Resources, supported by the Head of Corporate Property and Land as vice chair. Meetings are held monthly and are formally minuted and outcomes reported. The Corporate Property Board will receive reports from the cross service working groups and from individual services for consideration. Work is ongoing to review and refresh governance arrangements across property activities to ensure they make best use of time and reflect the principles of the CPP model.

Resourcing

The Corporate Property and Land (CPaL) service was established in 2019, and since that time it has been working to develop a more corporate approach to the management of the property portfolio. Key landmarks in that development are highlighted below:



The implementation of the CPP model, and other corporate transformations have influenced the current CPaL structure in order to ensure the requirements of the CPP implementation are effectively met. This work is ongoing, and delivery of the various activities referred to in the Action Plan (Part 3) will be dependant to some extent on the availability of resources, both financial and staffing.

The development of the programme of activities for the coming year will reflect resource availability. The Corporate Property Board is responsible for managing this programme of activities and ensuring appropriate resources are put in place.

Part 3: The Asset Management Plan

The delivery plan

In Part 3 we set out our short term, 'live' action plan specifying detailed activities, timescales, resources and responsibilities to achieve our property objectives.

This action plan will be actively managed and updated at least annually. It is overseen by the Corporate Property Board and it is managed on the board's behalf by the CPaL Improvement Group (CIG) which also has responsibility to improve data, systems and management and performance information that will help the service drive through improvements.

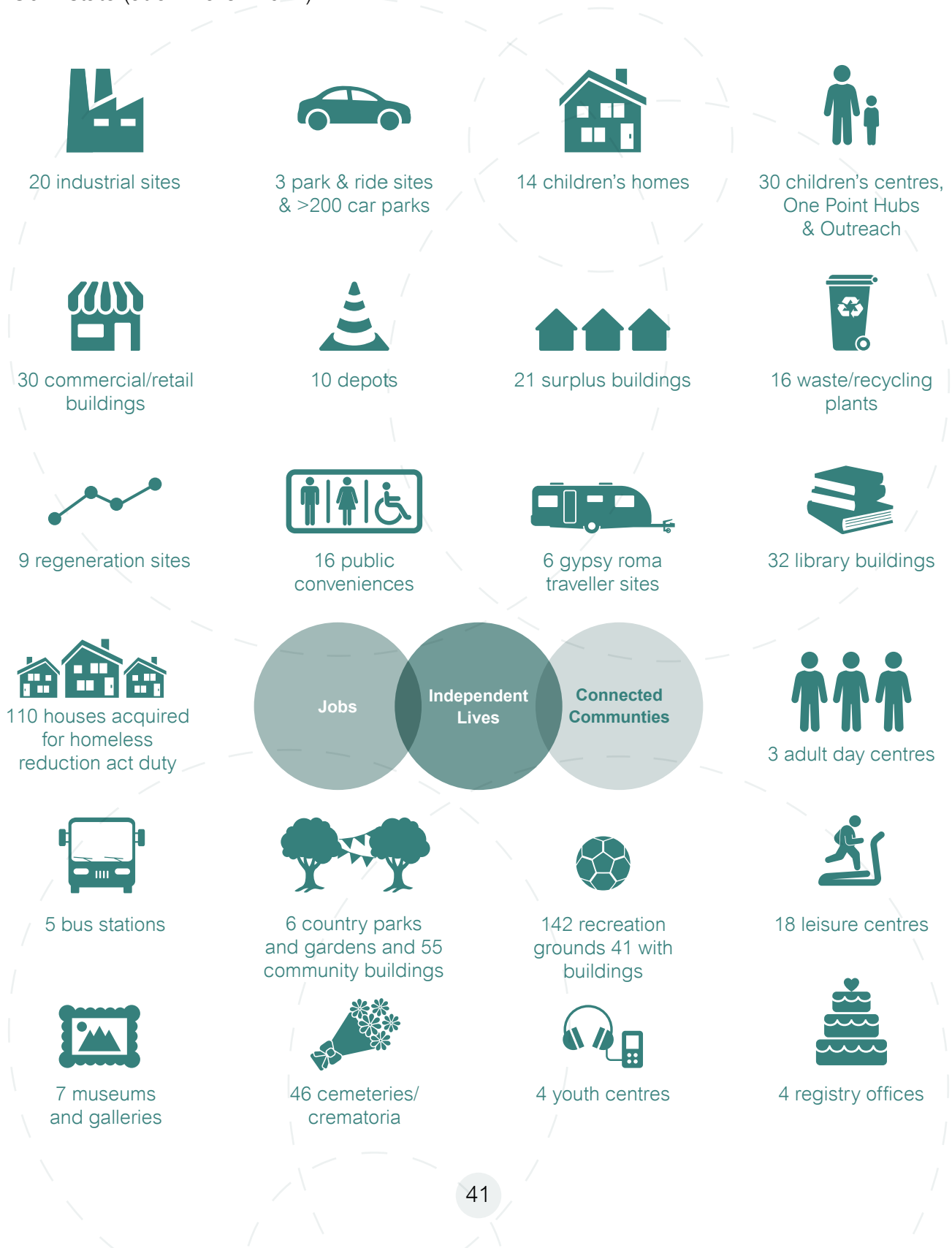


Annand House

Our property portfolio

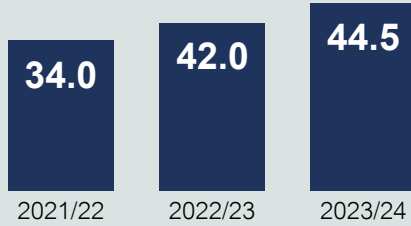
We have a very large and diverse property portfolio which we are responsible for running and managing. It is made up of a wide mix of buildings, structures and land reflecting our historic heritage and transition to a unitary council in 2009. The range of assets within our portfolio includes operational assets used for front line service delivery, assets to enable our communities to access our services and administrative buildings along with others such as depots, car parks, recreational and cultural assets. We also have a commercial portfolio, a number of heritage assets, parks and other land.

Our Estate (at 31 March 2024):



Performance of the estate over three years:

Running Costs (£m)



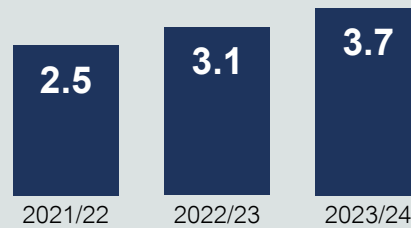
Increased by a third mainly due to fuel and general repair cost increases but also estate deterioration over time.

Reduction target to be set.

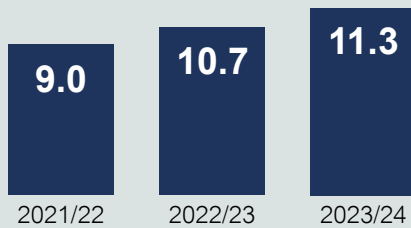
Increased by 48% due to changes across several service areas.

Target for reduction to be set.

Rental Outgoings (£m)



Rental Income (£m)

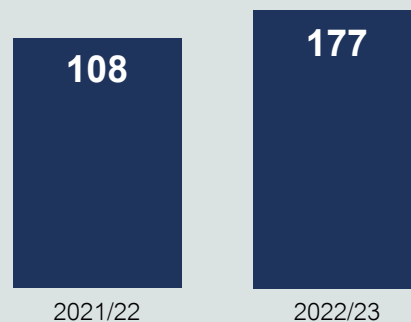


Increased by 26% due to changes across several service areas.

Target for increase to be set.

Increased by 65% over two years largely due to a re-basing of maintenance costs. Nearly one third of backlog is classed as essential or urgent work. For 2024 the team has commissioned a strategic review of condition surveys to consider implementing a lifecycle model approach to planned maintenance and to inform performance management/target setting.

Required Maintenance (£m)



Our operational property portfolio represents a considerable resource – it has a book value of £986.7 million and it costs almost £45m each year to run. Although the overall acreage of the estate has remained fairly static over the past two years, running costs have increased by over 30% largely due to the increases in fuel costs. Required maintenance on the estate has also increased and will continue to do so as the estate ages and deteriorates and the baseline costs for repairs continue to increase.

Current survey data on the condition of the estate provides limited information that supports accurate investment planning. We plan to develop a bespoke stock condition survey which includes capital, planned and cyclical requirements over a longer period (20 years+), resurvey our estate on this basis during 2025 and set up regular independent reviews of our investment plans.

Over the last 15 years our carbon emissions across the whole council have reduced by 66% but the target of Net Zero by 2030 is not guaranteed. Buildings in the estate are a significant component of our carbon footprint and a considerable programme of work, investment and review, focussed on the most energy inefficient parts of the estate, is underway.

Whilst we also use the portfolio to generate income and capital receipts, fiscal, environmental and resource pressures will be ongoing and the retention of the existing portfolio is neither sustainable, nor an efficient use of resources. This Asset Management Plan and the activities set out in it reflect and support our vision for **“A dynamic, sustainable estate optimising our assets and promoting prosperity for the benefit of the Council, our people and places.”** A smaller estate will result in lower running costs and emissions, better conditions in the estate to be retained, provide support for investment and will enable resources to be prioritised to support growth and development.

Actions for 2025-2030

We continue to refine and implement the CPP model. We have made a lot of progress in developing the culture of corporate working, centralising responsibility for property within the property service, and setting out operational policies that guide and inform the organisation about our work. Whilst all aspects of the action plan are important, the focus for the CAMP 2025-2030 will be on our vision for the estate and the strategic objectives and directing principles that will help achieve that vision – these are:



The theme throughout this strategy is that we must understand the needs of the organisation, collect and collate detailed information about the properties we hold and use that knowledge to challenge the holding of assets where appropriate. This highlights three key areas of work within the action plan that are still being developed but that we can set the scope for here:

Engagement with the Organisation

Since the implementation of the Corporate Property Partnership, Corporate and Property Land have approached engagement with services and the council in general by establishing cross service working groups. This way of working breaks down barriers between teams, fosters more corporate and strategic decision making whilst providing platforms for specific service or special interest needs to be presented. A diagram showing how these relationships work in terms of governance and decision making is provided in the policy section of this CAMP.

These working groups are configured around specific operational objectives such as trespass or the way we manage maintenance; they can support service functions such as Education place planning or Community Asset Transfers; or they are set up to tackle our wider corporate targets such as biodiversity or NetZero investment.

Understanding organisational needs and expectations and working together across organisational boundaries is critical to the success of asset management planning and also feeds into the implementation of strategic plans by our services.

Performance Data and Management

Having a robust approach to property performance management and measurement is fundamental to ensuring that the wider benefits of the organisation are realised. It is key to understanding the efficiencies and effectiveness of the Council's estate in order to understand whether it is fit for purpose and delivering our objectives. The current performance regime is centred on Building Services' corporate performance indicators that monitor some compliance and health & safety activities and general quantitative indicators covering work carried out within budget and time tolerances. The scope of work to develop effective performance regime for the whole portfolio will include:

How do we manage the Strategy we've put in place? We will set out our performance management and governance approach which will be a forward looking process used to set goals and regularly check progress towards achieving those goals. A dashboard of performance measures will be developed and monitored by the Corporate Property Board. Progress and trends towards our goals will be evaluated and strategies adjusted as appropriate.

How do we describe what success looks like? We will set performance objectives and statements that quantitatively describe the required outcomes of the activity in terms of the identified measures. Our targets will reflect the vision for a reduced estate and will identify reductions in total square meterage which in turn will enable reductions in running costs, carbon emissions and backlog repairs. We will set value for money targets for our commercial and investment portfolios which will highlight where there is an imbalance between input of labour and output of benefit. Qualitative targets relating to the suitability of buildings for the purpose they are held will identify how effective properties are in helping to meet service objectives.

How do we track the progress of the Strategy and the objectives we've put in place? We will develop a performance measurement process that defines and monitors important aspects of our activities, programmes, systems, and processes.

Typical measures will include:

- running costs - totals and by elements; carbon emissions or other environmental factors
- space efficiency / utilisation
- building condition / backlog (assessment currently subject to a strategic review)
- disposal targets and turnaround of vacant buildings

It will be important to benchmark across the 'family type' and between buildings to identify best/poorest performance. For specialist spaces suitability and 'right space' indicators will be developed with emphasis on, and explicit links to the Corporate and Service needs for this part of the estate. For other parts of the estate such as our commercial or investment properties and surplus buildings time and process measures will be important to demonstrate an appropriate return on financial investment as well as compliance with safety responsibilities. It will also be important to consider measures that demonstrate a return on social investment, i.e. the ability to measure social, economic or environmental value and improved outcomes created by the management activity in this area.

Initial Performance targets / dashboard indicators:

20% reduction in Gross internal floor area of the general service delivery portfolio by 2030.

£8.58m capital receipt income by 2027.

By 2030, reduce the carbon emissions from buildings in the CAMP that contribute to the council's carbon footprint by 50% from 2023/4 levels.

1% increase in rental income across the estate, year on year to 2030.

Identify (and plant) 21.22 ha of land under the Woodland Creation Programme by December 2026.

Asset Challenge

This is a regular and formal process, underpinned by our aims and objectives, that tests why assets are being held and assesses assets for their potential to be a catalyst for change. Asset Challenge is overseen strategically within CPaL by the Property Review Group.

The scope of the Asset Challenge process will include assessments of:

Strategy – aims and objectives from the Corporate Plan, Service Plans and from the CAMP together with cross cutting strategies which consider environmental, social and economic priorities.

Opportunities/Risks – internal and external programmes or activity that could impact on decisions relating to our assets.

Purpose – consideration of both stakeholder needs/aspirations; the intended purpose of holding assets, individually or across a portfolio; and the wider vision for the estate.

Performance – baselining and analysing data to assess property performance and whether the performance has an impact on the delivery of strategies or programmes.

Options and Engagement – balancing all the above assessments and collation of proposals and recommendations for consultation.

Programmes of work – the resulting activity to retain, invest or dispose of assets.



















The methodology for Challenge will be flexible to meet any demand or scenario and it will be property led in each circumstance:

- Review by geographical area
- Service Review/alternative delivery models
- Change programmes or initiatives
- Property Type/family of properties
- Partnership or redevelopment opportunities
- Community outcomes/community strategies, etc

Our property portfolio remains vital to the provision of high quality services to our communities, and it also gives us the ability to support the wider economic growth in our area. Closer corporate working between CPaL and services will help ensure this is achieved, and at the same time ensuring that our property portfolio is the right size and shape and is effectively utilised. Working with partner organisations and communities will help us identify joint property solutions to further improve our services and support community sustainability.

Developing our property data systems and enhancing understanding of our property information is a key element in the strategic planning of our property portfolio. By having a clear vision and direction of how we want our property portfolio to look in the future gives us the ability to ensure that our activities all work to meet this common goal. The way we manage the properties in our portfolio will reflect their individual contributions and use all our resources to support corporate priorities.

Corporate Property Partnership (CPP) Achievements

Achievement	Complete
CPP governance in place	
Corporate Property Board created	
2 year CAMP approved at Cabinet	
Groups and boards established:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vacant Property Working Group ● Land Use Change Working Group ● Community Assets Steering Group ● Trespass working Group ● Education Review Board ● Net Zero Investment & Monitoring Board ● New maintenance board ● Property Review Group ● CPaL Improvement Group 	
Realignments to CPaL:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Construction Programme and Project management unit (now known as Construction Consultancy Services) ● Strategic Programme and Major projects team (created and aligned) ● Health & Safety team ● Compliance team – moved under Health & Safety 	
Strategic Property Management restructure	
Creation of a programme management function for place-based built environment projects (Portfolio office)	
Construction Project Management policy developed	
Initiated a review of project brief setting to better manage 'project creep'	
Post Project Evaluation model established	
Generic building output specifications developed	
New approach to the management of project contingency budgets established	
Project undertaken to establish holding acts for all DCC property ownership and GIS layer created	
Agricultural & Commercial family group portfolios reviewed	
Guidance and process on appropriation of land	
Change of function process and report introduced	
Prioritisation matrix developed as part of capitalised maintenance board	
Spiidur implementation phase 1 (integrating property maintenance database and helpdesk to other property systems including compliance, deed & case management and customer/contractor portals)	

Corporate Property Partnership (CPP) Achievements continued

Achievement	Complete
Successfully achieved capital receipt target for 2022/23 and 95% of target achieved for 2023/24	✓
Vacant Property Inspections – updated risk assessment templates	✓
Vacant Property Inspections – updated decommissioning template	✓
New Marketing Strategy report adopted and utilised for disposals	✓
Review of surplus property assets and annual review established	✓
Review and standardise Heads of Terms (disposals) for use with legal services	✓
Garden Land Brochure for applicants implemented	✓
Surplus Property Policy developed and agreed	✓
IFRS 16 leasing policy and procedure document	✓
Landowner Consent process (including defibrillator policy)	✓
Catering Concessions on Council Land Phase 1 implemented	✓
Drone Policy developed and agreed	✓
Tree Management policy revised and agreed at Cabinet	✓
Approach to volunteering on DCC woodland established	✓
Compliance Review	✓
Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) – over 1300 buildings have been surveyed	✓
Radon gas management testing programme complete and identification of necessary remedial works	✓
New Building Security Strategy developed	✓
Interim Maintenance policy developed	✓
First phase of centralisation of repairs and maintenance budget concluded	✓
Repairs & Maintenance Review	✓

CAMP Action Plan

Action Ref.	Action Description	Strategic Plans	Strategic Objective(s)	Directing Principle(s)	Owner(s)	Timescales/Target for completion
AM1	Full implementation of restructure	Council Plan - Our Council Workforce Strategy	Portfolio is flexible & efficient	Corporate Resource	Head of CPaL	31/03/2026
AM2	Cleaning Review	Council Plan - Our Council MTFP 14 savings proposal	Reducing revenue impact/operational costs	Corporate Resource Well maintained & sustainable	Head of CPaL Strategic Facilities Manager	31/10/2025
AM3	Catering Review Internal	Council Plan - Our Council MTFP 14 savings proposal	Reducing revenue impact/operational costs	Corporate Resource Well maintained & sustainable	Head of CPaL Strategic Facilities Manager	31/03/2025
AM4	Catering Review External	Council Plan - Our Council MTFP 14 savings proposal	Reducing revenue impact/operational costs	Corporate Resource Well maintained & sustainable	Head of CPaL Strategic Facilities Manager	31/03/2026
AM5	Repairs & Maintenance Service Implementation	Council Plan - Our Council	Reducing revenue impact/operational costs	Corporate Resource Well maintained & sustainable	Head of CPaL Strategic Facilities Manager	31/03/2026

Action Ref.	Action Description	Strategic Plans	Strategic Objective(s)	Directing Principle(s)	Owner(s)	Timescales/Target for completion
AM6	Construction Review	Council Plan - Our Council	Reducing revenue impact/operational costs	Corporate Resource Well maintained & sustainable	Head of CPaL Construction Consultancy Manager	31/03/2026
AM7	Asset Categorisation – Portfolio/Family groups	Council Plan - Our Council	Assets have defined purpose & benefits	Corporate Resource Right space, right place	Strategic Property Manager	31/12/2028
AM8	Development and implementation of Spiidur phase 2 for purposes of replacing and integrating systems in CPaL	Council Plan - Our Council	Portfolio is flexible & efficient	Corporate Resource	Business Development Manager	31/12/2025
AM9	Development and implementation of Spiidur phase 3	Council Plan - Our Council	Portfolio is flexible & efficient	Corporate Resource	Business Development Manager	2027/2028

Action Ref.	Action Description	Strategic Plans	Strategic Objective(s)	Directing Principle(s)	Owner(s)	Timescales/Target for completion
AM10	Delivery of disposal programme	Council Plan – Our Council Our Communities Our Economy Capital Strategy	Support capital programme through generation of capital receipts	Corporate Resource Optimise returns and support growth	Head of CPaL Strategic Property Manager	Annual
AM11	Community Assets Policy Development	Council Plan - Our Communities	Reducing revenue impact/operational costs Supporting growth & regeneration	Support community involvement & partnership	Community Assets Steering Group	30/04/2025
AM12	Trespass Policy – unauthorised use of DCC land	Council Plan - Our Environment Our Communities	Portfolio is flexible & efficient	Well maintained & sustainable	Trespass Working Group	30/04/2025
AM13	Continuous review of surplus and vacant property policy and action plan	Council Plan – Our Council	Reducing revenue impact/operational costs Reducing carbon impact Supporting investment through sales	Right space, right place Optimise returns & support growth	Vacant Property Working Group	Ongoing

Action Ref.	Action Description	Strategic Plans	Strategic Objective(s)	Directing Principle(s)	Owner(s)	Timescales/Target for completion
AM14	Creation of a housing revenue account	Council Plan - Our Communities Housing Strategy	Hold/acquire assets for defined purpose	Corporate Resource Right space, right place	Head of Planning & Housing	To be confirmed
AM15	Review of Industrial Lease terms	Council Plan - Our Economy	Supporting growth & regeneration	Optimise returns and support growth	Head of CPaL/ Head of Business Durham	31/05/2025
AM16	Delivery of the Climate Emergency Response Plan and 80% actual emission reduction target across DCC by 2030	Council Plan - Our Environment Climate Emergency Response Plan	Reducing carbon impact	Corporate Resource Well maintained and sustainable	Head of Environment	31/03/2030

Action Ref.	Action Description	Strategic Plans	Strategic Objective(s)	Directing Principle(s)	Owner(s)	Timescales/Target for completion
AM17	Implementation of Building security policy and action plan	Council Plan - Our Council	Portfolio is flexible & efficient	Corporate Resource	Strategic Facilities Manager	31/03/2026
AM18	To review, develop and implement a maintenance policy	Council Plan - Our Council	Reducing revenue impact/operational costs Reducing Carbon impact	Corporate Resource Well maintained & sustainable	Strategic Facilities Manager	31/03/2026
AM19	Centralise all property maintenance budgets	Council Plan - Our Council	Reducing operational costs Portfolio is flexible & efficient	Corporate Resource Right space, right place Well maintained & sustainable	Strategic Facilities Manager/ Strategic Property Manager/ Corporate Finance	31/10/2025
AM20	Undertake a commercial review of all income generating activities	Council Plan - Our Council	Supporting growth & regeneration Generate income	Optimise returns & support growth	Business Development Manager	31/03/2026

Action Ref.	Action Description	Strategic Plans	Strategic Objective(s)	Directing Principle(s)	Owner(s)	Timescales/Target for completion
AM21	Develop FM Strategy	Council Plan - Our Council	Portfolio is flexible and efficient Reducing revenue impact/operational costs Reduce Carbon impact	Corporate Resource Well maintenance & sustainable	Strategic Facilities Manager	31/03/2026
AM22	Delivery of capital projects as per the 2025/26 – 2028/29 MTFP (15) Capital Programme	Council Plan - Our Council Capital Strategy Programme	All	All	Strategic Programme Team/Scheme managers	2025/26 – 2028/29
AM23	Expand the number of council run homes in line with the Sufficiency Statement 2025-2029	Council Plan - Our People	Hold/acquire assets for defined purpose	Corporate Resource Right space, right place	Head of Children & Young People's Service	2028/29
AM24	Adaptation/resilience of buildings - review building and service level risk assessment to take into account climate extremes	Council Plan - Our Environment Climate Emergency Response plan	Reduce carbon impact Reduce revenue impact/operational cost of the portfolio	Well maintained & sustainable	Head of Environment, Net Zero Manager	31/03/2026

