

## **Cabinet**

Meeting to be held on 4 February 2016

## **Report of the Head of Asset Management**

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| Electoral Division affected:<br>All |
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## **Property Strategy – Consultation Process**

Contact for further information:

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### **Executive Summary**

The Property Strategy – Neighbourhood Centres was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 26 November 2015. The Property Strategy sets out a methodology to achieve a sustainable long term reduction in the County Council's corporate property portfolio to align with the aspirations of the draft Corporate Strategy and to enable the future delivery of public facing services through a range of multi-functional Neighbourhood Centres.

This report sets out the proposed timescale for completion of this property review, taking into account the views of public sector partners and county councillors in order to identify a set of recommendations for the retention of premises within scope of the strategy that will serve as Neighbourhood Centres. The resulting list of recommendations will be subject to a public consultation, which in turn will be considered in the final decision making process and will shape implementation of the Property Strategy.

### **Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the process and timescale for consultation on the identification of properties to be retained for use as Neighbourhood Centres through implementation of the Property Strategy as set out in the report.

### **Background and Advice**

As set out in the Property Strategy, Neighbourhood Centres will provide a base for the provision of services currently delivered through a range of single function buildings such as: children's centres; libraries; child and parenting support centres; and, adult day centres. Neighbourhood Centres will be community focussed, multi-

functional buildings equipped to deliver a mix of universal and targeted services tailored to the needs of the area they are located in.

There are currently no recommendations or decisions made as to the outcome for individual properties in scope of the strategy, and it is intended that this exercise will ensure that the right number of premises are retained within Lancashire to effectively meet the needs of communities.

In summary, this approach seeks to deliver:

- A smaller and more affordable property portfolio
- A move away from service specific premises to a corporately managed property portfolio offering flexibility of use in order to ensure future efficiency savings can be coordinated and realised.
- A network of Neighbourhood Centres which provide community focussed multi-functional buildings tailored to deliver specific services within identified areas.

There are several stages to the process of identifying the right portfolio of properties that will serve as Neighbourhood Centres in order to ensure that they are established within the right locations. This will provide sufficient time to fully consider the available evidence and to ensure that the views of partners, councillors and communities are heard.

### **Stage One**

The first stage is identification of a long-list of properties considered suitable for front-facing service delivery. The list of properties, their location and the range of county council services currently delivered from them is set out in the Property Strategy.

### **Stage Two**

The second stage will take account of a number of different information sources. The Property Strategy sets out a range of hard data that will form part of this evidence for decision making. Central to this is the 2015 English Indices of Multiple Deprivation but also considerations such as:

- Accessibility of buildings in terms of location
- Financial efficiency of buildings
- Legal – how straightforward are buildings to vacate
- Larger premises to deliver multiple services (Sufficiency)
- Premises more suited to flexible multi-service delivery (Suitability)
- Status – where LCC may already be in negotiation to vacate

However this does not provide the whole picture of a property, and so these findings will be 'sense checked' against local intelligence from communities, councillors and partners to ensure that there is a holistic understanding of the current role the county council buildings play locally and how the right ones can be retained to deliver a more flexible range of services in neighbourhoods.

The information will be gained through:

- engagement with public sector partners to explore opportunities for co-location and sharing of service delivery

- a series of briefings with county councillors on how the Property Strategy has been formulated. The sessions will provide an opportunity to identify where there may be opportunities for working differently with partners and communities in local areas

### Stage Three

Stage Three will utilise the information gained in Stage Two in order to set out a full list of properties with recommendations against those considered most suitable for retention as Neighbourhood Centres, and will be subject to a public consultation.

### Stage Four

Taking account of the findings from the public consultation, this stage will identify the most appropriate premises in which to develop Neighbourhood Centres that will provide an accessible and flexible multi-service delivery within communities. This will be subject to formal decision making by Cabinet to agree a set of properties for retention. By default, this will then identify the range of properties available for alternate use or disposal.

A summary of the timescale for this activity and resulting decision making process is set out in the table below:

| Activity  | Decision Making | Date                      |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Property Strategy approved  | Cabinet         | 26 November 2015          |
| Explore opportunities for co-location and shared services with public sector partners |                 | January to February 2016  |
| Analysis of property information and data   |                 | December to February 2016 |
| County councillor events  |                 | 22, 25, 26 January 2016   |
| Timeline for decision making and implementation agreed                                | Cabinet         | 4 February 2016           |
| Consideration of data review analysis, partner and councillor views                   |                 | February - March 2016     |
| List of properties setting out recommendations for retention as Neighbourhood Centres | Cabinet         | 12 May 2016               |
| Public consultation on recommendations  |                 | May to July 2016          |
| Decision on each property   | Cabinet         | 8 September 2016          |

### Consultations

A public consultation will be conducted on the list of properties and recommendations.

## **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

#### **Financial**

Retention of the corporate property portfolio as it stands will result in a failure to realise revenue budget savings in total premise running costs that have previously been agreed as part of the current financial strategy including, most significantly, £5m in 2017/18. (The total running cost for the 220 premises within scope of is £6.4m, were a reduction of 108 sample premises to be achieved this would result in an estimated £1.95m in full year savings once vacated and sale has been achieved which will form a contribution towards delivery of the previously agreed savings.)

The timeline for implementation of the Property Strategy is also underpinned by the need to achieve further revenue budget savings within the Asset Management service identified in Money Matters - The Financial Strategy for 2016/21 (BoP12).

### **Equality and Cohesion**

The Equality Analysis for the Property Strategy will be reviewed throughout the implementation process.

### **List of Background Papers**

| Paper  | Date             | Contact/Tel                   |
|--|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Property Strategy –<br>Neighbourhood Centres | 26 November 2015 | Mel Ormesher, 01772<br>536936 |

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A