



Agenda Item 7

Strategic Property Review – Draft Implementation Plan

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Title: Strategic Property Review – Draft Implementation Plan

Meeting: Emergency Executive

Date: 17 September 2020

Submitted By: Acting Director of Development Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Strategic Property Review (SPR) and recommends further actions to finalise the Implementation Plan together with progressing projects and proposals to meet the Council's objectives as established through Council of the Future (CotF).

2. Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Emergency Executive agrees:

- (i) the draft Implementation Plan as the basis for further community engagement;**
- (ii) the creation of a Task Group as set out in para 5.4 to integrate and align proposals for the Council of the Future Learning and Community Estate with the Enabled Communities project;**
- (iii) to receive further reports on**
 - a. the implementation of measures arising from the work of the Task Group and its workstreams including community engagement;**
 - b. proposals for a corporate landlord approach to property asset management;**
- (iv) that a final draft of the Property Strategy and Implementation Plan is brought to a future Executive.**

3.0 Background

- 3.1 In October 2019 the Executive considered a report on the progress of the SPR which included a draft Property Strategy and action plan for its delivery. Members agreed that a series of workshops involving elected members and officers be conducted to consider the implementation plan with a view to this being finalised. A series of locality and ward based workshops has been undertaken over recent weeks to progress this work.

- 3.2 The SPR has identified that the Council's portfolio is too large, is deteriorating, and that over time it may be subject to property and/or service failures. Given ongoing budget constraints, the Council cannot sustain the number of buildings it has and the inefficiencies they present.
- 3.3 It is imperative that the Council invests in a smaller number of buildings, which are utilised to a much greater extent to deliver transformation and meet community need while creating cost efficiencies. The SPR aims to provide quality spaces and assets where services can be delivered that meet the needs and aspirations of communities. A programme to progress this ambition is required.
- 3.4 Through the series of workshops a draft Implementation Plan has been developed which is organised into 3 Workstreams:
1. **Learning estate and community based services** - to maximise use of schools for community, sports, educational and other service delivery purposes.
 2. **Specialist assets, services & corporate landlord** - to identify service provision beyond the availability in schools, and implement a system of corporate 'landlord' whereby the Council's properties are managed corporately.
 3. **Offices and HQ project** - to review office and related functions, reduce front facing offices and increase the colocation of services. The key projects being progressed include:
 - Front Facing Offices, reduction from 11 to 5 offices
 - Locality Hubs – West, East and Central
 - HQ and Arts Centre feasibility
- 3.5 Within each workstream properties and projects have been categorised into 4 themes, as detailed below. The purpose of this is to suggest how the SPR's objectives will be delivered.

Theme 1 – Transform: The CotF programme seeks to transform the way the Council does business and how it delivers services. These property investment proposals are aligned with the projects designed to enable significant changes in service delivery. Each project will be accompanied by a business case setting out the funding requirements to be allocated through the capital programme, revenue implications and how the project will meet Council objectives including modernising its approach to service delivery.

Theme 2 – Sustain: Properties recommended for retention - ongoing investment is required in the Council estate and it is suggested a capital fund is identified for prioritised lifecycle replacement/upgrades. In this way it can be ensured that buildings are fully compliant and components and services are upgraded at the right time to reduce risk of failures. This will be developed as part of the implementation of a more corporate approach to property.

Theme 3 – New Delivery Model: Requires transfer to a more cost effective delivery model e.g. community asset transfer, partnership or community management, private sector, third sector. Opportunities need to be fully explored and promoted and accompanied by a business case. It is recommended that a capital fund is created to support transfers as part of the implementation of a more corporate approach to delivering savings from the portfolio.

Theme 4 – Rationalise / Dispose: Buildings at the end of their life/use or that are made surplus as a result of a transformational project or re-provision of service elsewhere. These may generate capital or revenue funding to support the SPR and other regeneration objectives.

- 3.6 This framework has been applied to the projects and properties within each workstream and considered through the ward and locality level workshops.

4.0 Update from Workshops

- 4.1 The key outcomes of the recent workshops are summarised as follows:

- The importance of community properties has increased as a result of Covid 19.
- The role of the school in a community is not consistent across the area and reflects differences in communities such as demographics, access and location
- The capacity of community groups to take on properties and their condition was a concern.
- Many neighbourhoods had their own identity and differing needs
- Local assets were preferable but the costs, benefits and impacts of alternative options need to be clearly set out.
- Involvement of the community is a pre-requisite to assisting decision making and allowing projects to reflect differences in neighbourhoods and settlements.
- Transformation projects and investment should reflect the ambitions of the community as well as meeting overall Council and service delivery objectives

- No specific issues were raised on workstreams 2 & 3 (specialist properties and Council offices) but these are separately reported projects.

- 4.2 The proposed Implementation Plan has been adapted to reflect the outcome of the workshops and is attached – Appendix 1.

5.0 Considerations

- 5.1 The SPR has reflected property performance e.g. use, condition, utilisation, suitability and service need in developing its approach. While the previously approved principles and themes still apply, particularly to the offices and specialist properties, it is evident that the options for assets in the Learning and Community Estate require additional consideration and engagement with the community.

Workstream 1 – Learning Estate and Community Assets

- 5.3 The feedback from the workshops highlighted the importance of a 'one Council' approach to engagement and on the development of options and opportunities brought from implementation of the Community Empowerment Act e.g. participatory budgeting, should be included in the considerations.
- 5.4 To address this a key action for the implementation plan is that a new corporate Task Group is established with the objective of aligning key CotF projects of *Success Today, Excel Tomorrow* with *Enabled Communities* and other relevant functions such as local planning and Falkirk Community Trust as they relate to the use of property. The purpose of the group is not to replace existing reporting or governance structures but co-ordinate the development of options and projects to meet service needs with the engagement of communities.
- 5.5 *Success Today, Excel Tomorrow* focuses on transforming how education services are delivered while achieving efficiencies and savings. There are 6 areas of transformational change proposed:
- Investing in People, Place and Partnership
 - Connected Falkirk
 - Investing in our ASN Schools
 - Investing in our Primaries
 - Falkirk Technical and Professional Academy
 - Investing in our Workforce.

Capital investment will be required to deliver these projects and it is important that any alterations or improvement to the school estate also reflects the SPR ambition to improve community access. A progress report for this project will be brought forward to a future meeting of the Education, Children's and Young People's Executive.

- 5.6 The Enabled Communities workstream aims to change the way that the Council works with communities, improving the relationship through working together, sharing decision making and co-designing services. It will build on the work that has taken place during the Covid 19 situation developing resilience and capacity within communities. This will change how the Council conducts its locality planning, community engagement and consultation. An Enabled Communities sprint team is currently being established to support this change.
- 5.7 A Community Choices (participatory budgeting) initiative will help build relationships with communities, enabling them to consider how money should be spent in their area. Falkirk Council has agreed to allocate £3m to capital projects over the next two years by Community Choices and it will be important to align this work with the proposals arising from the SPR. Where possible this can assist in delivering some 'early wins' which demonstrate the approach being pursued by the SPR. In this respect the alignment with the Council's capital programme process will be important.
- 5.8 Other SPR actions which apply across all localities include:

- the need to review and develop options to assist communities to participate in new delivery models. The objective of this is to provide advice, practical support and identify funding through participatory budgeting, external or internal funding opportunities
- determine ways to make better use of schools beyond the normal school day through engagement with a range of services (including partners such as NHS) and communities. The objective is to identify barriers to making better use of existing schools for community use

5.9 The draft implementation plan also sets out, at a locality level, a series of actions and implications for associated properties. Timescales for action will be defined through the process of consultation. The purpose of these actions is to develop options for consideration and subsequent development of detailed business cases. Following consultation these will be reported for approval to the Council, Executive or Education, Children's and Young People Executive, as appropriate.

Workstream 2 – Specialist Assets and Corporate Landlord

- 5.10 Properties which are of specific significance because of their specific use or are important district wide or regionally are considered in this category. Actions to develop options and projects are set out in this category within each locality.
- 5.11 The SPR concluded that property should be managed corporately to support the Council's objectives and priorities and a corporate landlord model adopted. Cipfa and PeopleToo were commissioned to review the Council's current property structure and processes. Their recommendations have been finalised and recommends that the Council should proceed with establishment of a corporate landlord model, managing its property assets corporately to align management, budgets and service delivery support. A separate report will be brought to a future Executive on the outcomes.

Workstream 3 – Offices

- 5.12 The primary purpose of this workstream is to review office and related functions, reduce front facing offices and increase colocation of services. This includes development of the Locality Hubs and the potential to replace the HQ and create an Arts Centre in the town centre to assist regeneration.
- 5.13 This approach to office space is currently being reviewed to reflect lessons learned and changes as a result of Covid 19. This is separately reported through CotF Board and Council or Executive, as appropriate along with associated options appraisals and detailed business cases. A report on progression of the Council HQ and arts centre project will come forward to the Council in September.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 The workshops concluded that engagement with the community is an essential component in considering options available in each neighbourhood or settlement. Some of the key feedback from the workshops reinforced the need to:

- Use neighbourhood networks and engage with as many residents as possible, not just specific interest groups. Parent councils, teachers, young people, CVS, carers, community and voluntary groups, school leavers were all highlighted
- be clear about the options & articulate the benefits of proposals
- use different types of consultation & media to include those with no digital access
- link consultation with other Council of the Future
- convey a positive vision of what is proposed for each community
- give people ideas to engage with, demonstrating how to advance and invest in communities
- speak to a broad range of service users in communities – noting concern about the means for access of other age groups to schools.
- the Health & Social Care Partnership can help to engage certain user groups including disabled peoples in our communities
- adopt a different way of engaging with our community councils and community groups due to COVID

6.2 A community engagement plan, embodying these items will be developed and taken forward in conjunction with the Enabling Communities project as noted above.

7 Implications

Financial

7.1 All property solutions and investments will require to be underpinned by the preparation of business cases setting out capital and revenue implications as a fundamental component of options appraisal and effective project management. Upon approval of proposals and projects this can, subject to Executive approval, be aligned with the Council's Capital Strategy and ongoing programmes of investment.

Resources

7.2 The SPR project is supported by a CotF Change Fund allocation for staff resources. One staff members has been appointed and funding for the learning and community estate workstream has been awarded to enable external assistance to be utilised in support of this programme.

Legal

7.3 All proposals arising from the project will be subject to conclusion of all necessary legal agreements.

Risk

7.4 The SPR has reinforced that the Council cannot financially sustain the number of buildings it has and it is imperative that the Council agrees a programme to invest in a smaller number of buildings, which are utilised to a much greater extent. This will reduce the risk of failure of assets arising from their poor condition.

Equalities

- 7.5 The implementation of the review will include measures to ensure that the scope for the Council to meet the needs of protected groups is addressed fully in the rationalisation and modernisation of the properties used by the Council for service delivery.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 7.6 A key outcome of the SPR is to assist the Council in meeting its climate change objectives and the need to move towards 'net zero carbon'.

Council of the Future

- 7.7 The SPR and Property Strategy are key elements of the Council of the Future initiative. This work is a key enabler for several of the related workstreams being implemented as part of the Council's revised business plan.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 This paper sets out the proposed programme of actions to progress implementation of the SPR and will, subject to conclusion of community engagement, form part of the Council's Property Strategy.
- 8.2 It is proposed to align key CotF projects for education, Succeed Today and Excel Tomorrow, and engagement and work with communities through the Enabling Communities Project with the next stages of work. A report on the outcome of this work will be brought forward to the Executive early in 2021.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Draft Implementation Plan

List of Background Papers:

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

Appendix 1

Strategic Property Review

Draft Implementation Plan

31 August 2020

Workstream 1 – ALL LOCALITIES

Aim: To maximise use of schools for community, leisure & educational purposes.

Property Types: Learning Estate – Nursery, Primary, Secondary Schools, Community Education Centres & Halls; Libraries; Local Sports Centres.

Overall Actions:

1. Establish a corporate task group to align key CotF projects of *Succeed Today, Excel Tomorrow* with *Enabling Communities* and other relevant functions such as local planning & FCT assets.
2. Review and develop options to assist communities to participate in new delivery models.
3. Determine ways to make better use of schools beyond normal school day

Objective:

1. **To lead and co-ordinate the development of options and projects to meet service needs with the engagement of communities.**
2. **To provide advice, practical support and identify funding through participatory budgeting, external or internal funding opportunities**
3. **To identify & overcome barriers to making better use of existing schools for community use**

Outcome:

1. A “One Council” approach to engaging with communities on the costs, benefits and implications of transformational projects.
2. Community participation in delivering local services including CAT is maximised.
3. Maximise use of assets that are retained

Workstream 1 - WEST LOCALITY

Aim: To maximise use of schools for community, leisure & educational purposes.

Property Types: Learning Estate – Nursery, Primary, Secondary Schools, Community Ed Centres & Halls; Libraries; Local Sports Centres.

Transformational Projects

Action	Properties	Timescale <i>(to be confirmed through consultation)</i>		
		Short	Med	Long
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop options for future leisure provision at Denny High and Banknock area to align with expansion of housing development and demand. 2. Develop options appraisal for amalgamation into a new campus 3. Continue to identify options to improve community and sports facilities in line with education investment to meet capacity pressures 4. Review schools in Bonnybridge to identify options to address future educational and community need. 	<p>Denny High, Denny Sports Centre, Football Centre</p> <p>Carron and Carronshore Primaries Larbert High</p> <p>Bonnybridge, St Joseph's and Antonine Primaries</p>			

New Delivery Models

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify options for community buildings including CAT, partnerships and leases, together with available support transfer or new operating arrangements. Needs to reflect resilience capacity in light of Covid experience. 2. Develop options to increase use of libraries including outreach, community and partnership activities to reflect importance to town centres 	<p>Bonnybridge CEC, Dobbie Hall, Tryst CEC, Airth / Carronshore , Broompark Community Halls</p> <p>Bonnybridge library, Larbert Library, Denny Library</p>			
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Sustain				
1. Develop prioritised lifecycle replacement / upgrade plan & identify funding as part of implementation of a more corporate approach to property.	Bankier/Denny/Dunipace/Nethermaines/St Patricks/Head of Muir/Airth/Kinnaird/Stenhousemuir/St Bernadettes/Larbert Village/Ladeside Primaries, Carron Gymnastic Centre,			
Rationalise/Dispose				
1. Buildings at end of life or subject to reprovision of service elsewhere	Larbert Day Nursery			

Workstream 2 – WEST LOCALITY				
Aim: To provide asset support to enhance service provision (outwith the availability in schools) and implement Corporate Landlord service.				
Property Types: Crematorium; Regional & National Sports/Leisure Centres; Depots; Bothies; Residential/ Intermediate Care Homes; Adult Services Centres.				
Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
Sustain				
1. Develop prioritised lifecycle replacement / upgrade plan & identify funding as part of implementation of a more corporate approach to property.	Roughmute Recycling Centre			
Rationalise/Dispose				

1. Buildings at end of life or subject to reprovision of service elsewhere	Torwoodhall – subject to completion Care Home Review			
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Workstream 3 – WEST LOCALITY				
Aim: To review office and related functions, reduce front facing offices and increase colocation of services				
Property Types: HQ, Front Facing Offices; Back Offices; Hubs.				
Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
Sustain				
1. Develop prioritised lifecycle replacement / upgrade plan & identify funding as part of implementation of a more corporate approach to property.	Carronbank House			
Rationalise/Dispose				
1. Buildings at end of life or subject to reprovision of service elsewhere	Denny Town House – subject to HSCP, HQ & back office review. Denny Enterprise Centre – as above, can be relet commercially			

Workstream 1 – CENTRAL LOCALITY

Aim: To maximise use of schools for community, leisure & educational purposes.

Property Types: Learning Estate – Nursery, Primary, Secondary Schools, Community Education Centres & Halls; Libraries; Local Sports Centres.

Transformational Projects

Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop options for future leisure & community access at High Schools with initial focus on Braes. 2. Develop options appraisal for amalgamation into a new campus 3. Identify options & contributions to improve access to community, health and sports facilities to meet capacity pressures from new housing developments in settlements 4. Complete development of nursery 	<p>Falkirk, Graeme, Braes and St Mungo's High Schools, Carmuir's/Easter Carmuir's Primaries All wards</p> <p>Woodburn Day Nursery</p>			

New Delivery Models

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify options for community buildings including CAT, partnerships and leases, together with available support or transfer or new operating arrangements. Needs to reflect resilience capacity in light of Covid experience. 2. Develop options to increase use of libraries including outreach, community and partnership activities to reflect importance to town centres 3. Identify and progress options for transfer of sports facilities in line with 1 above 	<p>Dawson CEC, Excellence in Child Care unit, Camelon CEC, Bainsford / Thornhill / Etterick-Dochart Community Hall, Park Street CEC, Greenpark / Grange CEC / Westquarter CEC, Laurieston /</p>			
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	Westquarter / Reddingnuirhead Community Halls Meadowbank Library / Falkirk Library subject to potential relocation to Arts Centre Grangemouth Golf Course, Polmont Sports Centre			
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Sustain				
Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
1. Develop prioritised lifecycle replacement / upgrade plan & identify funding as part of implementation of a more corporate approach to property.	Bainsford / Langlees / Victoria / St Xaviers / Comely Park / Bantaskine / Windsor / Hallglen / Laurieston / St Margarets / Westquarter Primariesn, Camelon ELCC, Laurieston campus..			
Rationalise/Dispose				
1. Buildings at end of life or subject to reprovision of service elsewhere	Queen Street Nursery, Victoria Buildings, Hallglen Sports Centre,			

Workstream 2 – CENTRAL LOCALITY

Aim: To provide asset support to enhance service provision (outwith the availability in schools) and implement Corporate Landlord service.

Property Types: Crematorium; Regional & National Sports/Leisure Centres; Depots; Bothies; Residential/ Intermediate Care Homes; Adult Services Centres.

Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
Transformational Projects				
1. Ongoing upgrade & remodelling to meet market demands for a variety of leisure options	Mariner Recreation Centre			
2. Refurbishment & Extension to meet demand & revised legislation	Crematorium			
3. Progress development of new Arts Centre following report to Council on HQ project	Replace Falkirk Town Hall, subject to HQ project report			
New Delivery Model				
1. Identify and progress new model of operation, transfer or partnership	Polmont Ski Slope			
Sustain				
1. Develop prioritised lifecycle replacement / upgrade plan & identify funding as part of implementation of a more corporate approach to property.	Archive, Grahamston House, Helix visitor Centre, Helix Store, JLES, SW File Store, Callendar Park etc, Burnbrae Home, Joint Dementia Unit, Travelling Peoples Site			

Rationalise/Dispose				
1. Buildings at end of life or subject to reprovion of service elsewhere	Former Sign Factory – subject to storage review, Printworks – subject to future business need, Redding Depot			

Workstream 3 – CENTRAL LOCALITY				
Aim: To review office and related functions, reduce front facing offices and increase colocation of services				
Property Types: HQ, Front Facing Offices; Back Offices; Hubs.				
Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
Transformational Projects				
1. Finalise options for replacement HQ / Back Offices	New / Other locations			
2. Continue to implement front facing Locality Hubs	Falkirk One Stop Shop, West Hub, East Hub			
Sustain				
1. Develop prioritised lifecycle replacement / upgrade plan & identify funding as part of implementation of a more corporate approach to property.	Brockville, SW Community Hospital, Laurieston / Meadowbank SW Offices			
Rationalise/Dispose				
1. Buildings at end of life or subject to reprovision of service elsewhere e.g. HQ / back office project	Abbotsford House, Lodge House / Rossvail / JITB, Cemetery Office (Crematorium), Leaving Care Team (Etna Rd), Caledonia House, Criminal Justice (Grahams Rd), Car Park office (Meeks			

	Rd), Municipal Buildings, The Forum, Falkirk OSS, Old Burgh Buildings			
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Workstream 1 – EAST LOCALITY				
Aim: To maximise use of schools for community, leisure & educational purposes.				
Property Types: Learning Estate – Nursery, Primary, Secondary Schools, Community Education Centres & Halls; Libraries; Local Sports Centres.				
Transformational Projects				
Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop options for future leisure & sport provision in Bo’ness. 2. Develop options & proposals for schools in Bo’ness to meet education & community needs. 3. Identify options for increased provision of community & leisure at Grangemouth High. 4. Explore options for development of a Professional/Technical Academy 5. Explore options for development of a 3 -18 ASN campus 6. Develop options for future school provision in the Upper Braes villages to meet community and educational needs 	<p>Bo’ness Recreation Centre, Bo’ness Academy, Blackness Primary, Grange Primary, Bo'ness Public School on site of St Mary's Grangemouth High</p> <p>Avonbridge/ Shieldhill/ Drumbowie / California Primaries</p>			
New Delivery Models				

1. Identify options for community buildings including CAT, partnerships and leases, together with available support or transfer or new operating arrangements. Needs to reflect resilience capacity in light of Covid experience.	Cowdenhill / Dalgrain / Newlands / Bowhouse / Brightons / Shieldhill / Avonbridge Community Halls, Kersiebank Community Project, Maddiston / Slammanan CEC, Bo'ness / Grangemouth Town Hall, Kinneil Museum			
	Bo'ness / Grangemouth Library			
2. Develop options to increase use of libraries including outreach, community and partnership activities to reflect importance to town centres				

Sustain				
Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
1. Develop prioritised lifecycle replacement / upgrade plan & identify funding as part of implementation of a more corporate approach to property.	Oxgang School (ELCC), Sacred Heart / Bowhouse / Beancross / Wallacestone / Maddiston / Whitesross / Moray Primaries, Heathrigg Inclusion & Wellbeing Service, Rannoch ELCC, Carrongrange ASN,			
Rationalise/Dispose				
1. Buildings at end of life or subject to reprovision of service elsewhere	Slammanan Library,			

Workstream 2 – EAST LOCALITY

Aim: To provide asset support to enhance service provision (outwith the availability in schools) and implement Corporate Landlord service.

Property Types: Crematorium; Regional & National Sports/Leisure Centres; Depots; Bothies; Residential/ Intermediate Care Homes; Adult Services Centres.

Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
Transformational Projects				
1. Upgrade & remodelling to current standards to meet market demands for a variety of leisure options	Grangemouth Sports Complex			
Sustain				
1. Develop prioritised lifecycle replacement / upgrade plan & identify funding as part of implementation of a more corporate approach to property.	Kinneil Kerse Civic Amenity Site, Grangemouth Athletics Stadium, Dalgrain / Earls Rd / Inchyra Depots, Dundas Resource Centre, Oswald Ave Day Centre, Cunningham House, Muiravonside Outdoor Centre / steading etc, Braes Residential Unit, Tremanna Children’s Home			

Rationalise/Dispose				
1. Buildings at end of life or subject to reprovision of service elsewhere	Museum Workshop, Finance Store (Newhouse), Zetland Bothy			

Workstream 3 – EAST LOCALITY				
Aim: To review office and related functions, reduce front facing offices and increase colocation of services				
Property Types: HQ, Front Facing Offices; Back Offices; Hubs.				
Action	Properties	Timescale		
		Short	Med	Long
Transformational Projects				
1. Identify options for future training requirements, internal & partners	Grangemouth Municipal Buildings			
Sustain				
1. Develop prioritised lifecycle replacement / upgrade plan & identify funding as part of implementation of a more corporate approach to property.	Grangemouth East Advice Hub, Grangemouth SW Office,			
Rationalise/Dispose				

1. Buildings at end of life or subject to reprovision of service elsewhere e.g. HQ / back office project

Sealock House