

EX53. Strategic Property Review

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Place Services providing an update on the Strategic Property Review (SPR) and setting out a programme of actions to deliver further on the approved objectives and principles set out in the Council's Property Strategy.

The recommendations of this report deliver on the 2022/27 Council Plan strategic priorities of supporting a thriving economy and green transition through the reduction of carbon emissions from rationalised and modernised assets.

Councillor Hannah, seconded by Councillor Paterson, moved that the Executive agrees to refer consideration of this item to the Council, to allow all members to participate in the decision.

The Executive adjourned at 10.35am to consider the motion and reconvened at 10.50am with all members present as per the sederunt, excluding Councillor Bouse.

In accordance with the terms of Standing Orders 20.7 and 22.1, a vote was taken on the motion, being a procedural motion, on a for and against basis. The vote was taken by roll call, there being 11 members present with voting as undernoted:-

For the motion (5) – Councillors Hannah, Nimmo, Paterson, Spears and Stainbank.

Against the motion (6) – Councillors Bundy, Devine, Garner, Kerr, Meiklejohn and Sinclair.

The motion was not agreed.

Councillor Garner, seconded by Councillor Meiklejohn, moved that the Executive:-

- (1) notes the previously agreed Property Strategy and the approach to the Strategic Property Review following extensive community consultations, and the progress made on implementation since;
- (2) recognises that the Council continues to have an operational property estate that cannot be sustained due to current financial constraints, its deteriorating condition, backlog repairs and declining performance;
- (3) agrees, in principle, to the proposed rationalisation of the properties identified within the implementation programme, and the phases and timescales outlined within the report;
- (4) agrees that a public consultation is undertaken into alternative delivery models and approaches suggested by communities/stakeholders for the retention of properties. The results of this and any EPIA impacts

and mitigations from the planned rationalisation will be reported back to Executive in February 2023 for final decision;

- (5) agrees officers bring forward a report on the closure of the four secondary school swimming pools identified in the report to Education, Children's and Young People Executive in early 2023 for a final decision. This will include further detail and EPIA considerations and implications;
- (6) notes that communities will be supported and encouraged to develop capacity to enable alternative delivery models and approaches for the assets proposed for rationalisation;
- (7) agrees that to support this activity and enable successful delivery of the SPR, a capital fund of £6m is established from the savings generated by this proposal;
- (8) agrees that any capital receipts received from rationalised property may be considered for reinvestment in retained properties subject to the appropriate business case, and
- (9) agrees to the establishment of a policy development panel chaired by the Education and Leisure portfolio holder to look at a future model for delivering leisure services for the district and that the panel commence work following the final decision in February.

As an amendment, in substitution for the motion, Councillor Hannah, seconded by Councillor Paterson, moved that the Executive:-

- (1) notes the previously agreed Property Strategy and the approach to the Strategic Property Review following limited community consultations in 2020, and the progress made on implementation since;
- (2) recognises that the Council continues to have an operational property estate that cannot be sustained due to current financial constraints, its deteriorating condition, backlog repairs and declining performance;
- (3) agrees that a public consultation is undertaken into alternative delivery models and approaches suggested by communities/stakeholders for the retention of properties. The results of this and any EPIA impacts and mitigations from the planned rationalisation will be reported back to Full Council in February 2023 for final decision;
- (4) notes that communities will be supported and encouraged to develop capacity to enable alternative delivery models and approaches for the assets proposed for rationalisation;
- (5) agrees that to support this activity and enable successful delivery of the SPR, a capital fund of £6m is established from the savings generated by this proposal, and

- (6) agrees that any capital receipts received from rationalised property may be considered for reinvestment in retained properties subject to the appropriate business case.

Councillor Kerr gave notice of a further amendment. Having been invited to intimate the detail of the further amendment, Councillor Kerr, seconded by Councillor Bundy, advised that the amendment would be to:-

- (1) adjust the text of clause (3) of the motion to read:-

agrees, in principle, to the proposed rationalisation of the properties identified within the implementation programme, and the phases and timescales outlined within the report, subject to recognising that Town Halls play a core function in serving and strengthening our communities, and

- (2) insert the following clause prior to the current clause (8) of the motion:-

Recognises that selling buildings will not reduce area-wide emissions; that retrofitting to raise Energy Efficiency in these buildings would reduce area-wide emissions; recognises that the retrofitting of buildings is expensive and unlikely to be afforded by community groups; and therefore, as part of the support package, the council works out the estimated costs of Energy Efficiency upgrades to national standards for the Town Halls and that officer report back on the cost of this at the point of final decision with a view to creating a specific fund from the £6m capital fund so community-led groups can afford to retrofit their building.

The Executive adjourned at 11.25am to allow members to consider the terms of the amendments and reconvened at 12.05pm with all members present as per the sederunt, excluding Councillor Bouse.

Councillor Kerr, with the consent of the convener, and his seconder, Councillor Bundy adjusted the terms of his amendment to alter his clause (8) to read as follows:-

- (8) recognises that selling buildings will not reduce area-wide emissions; that retrofitting to raise Energy Efficiency in these buildings would reduce area-wide emissions; recognises that the retrofitting of buildings is expensive and unlikely to be afforded by community groups; as part of the support package, the council works out the estimated costs of Energy Efficiency upgrades to the national standards for the Town Halls and that officer report back on the cost of this at the point of final decision with a view to creating a specific fund from the £6m capital fund so community-led groups can afford to retrofit their building; agrees to bring back any decision on the SPR to full council; and agrees to bring back the decision on the proposed closure of 4 school swimming pools to full council.

Having considered the terms of the adjusted amendment, Councillor Garner, with the consent of Councillor Meiklejohn, as his seconder, adjusted the terms of the motion to incorporate the terms of the amendment. The adjusted motion was that the Executive:-

- (1) notes the previously agreed Property Strategy and the approach to the Strategic Property Review following extensive community consultations, and the progress made on implementation since;
- (2) recognises that the Council continues to have an operational property estate that cannot be sustained due to current financial constraints, its deteriorating condition, backlog repairs and declining performance;
- (3) agrees, in principle, to the proposed rationalisation of the properties identified within the implementation programme, and the phases and timescales outlined within the report, subject to recognising that Town Halls play a core function in serving and strengthening our communities;
- (4) agrees that a public consultation is undertaken into alternative delivery models and approaches suggested by communities/stakeholders for the retention of properties. The results of this and any EPIA impacts and mitigations from the planned rationalisation will be reported back to Council in February 2023 for final decision;
- (5) agrees officers bring forward a report on the closure of the four secondary school swimming pools identified in the report to Council in early 2023 for a final decision. This will include further detail and EPIA considerations and implications;
- (6) notes that communities will be supported and encouraged to develop capacity to enable alternative delivery models and approaches for the assets proposed for rationalisation;
- (7) agrees that to support this activity and enable successful delivery of the SPR, a capital fund of £6m is established from the savings generated by this proposal;
- (8) recognises that selling buildings will not reduce area-wide emissions; that retrofitting to raise Energy Efficiency in these buildings would reduce area-wide emissions; recognises that the retrofitting of buildings is expensive and unlikely to be afforded by community groups; as part of the support package, the Council works out the estimated costs of Energy Efficiency upgrades to the national standards for the Town Halls and that officers report back on the cost of this at the point of final decision with a view to creating a specific fund from the £6m capital fund so community-led groups can afford to retrofit their building; agrees to bring back any decision on the SPR to full council; and agrees to bring back the decision on the proposed closure of 4 school swimming pools to full council;

- (9) agrees that any capital receipts received from rationalised property may be considered for reinvestment in retained properties subject to the appropriate business case, and
- (10) agrees to the establishment of a policy development panel chaired by the Education and Leisure portfolio holder to look at a future model for delivering leisure services for the district and that the panel commence work following the final decision in February.

Having incorporated the terms of the Conservative Group amendment, amendment into the motion, that amendment accordingly fell. As a further consequence of the adjusted terms of the motion, which requested reports back to Council, clause (3) of the Labour Group amendment accordingly fell.

In terms of Standing order 22.1, the vote was taken by roll call, there being 11 members present with voting as undernoted:-

For the motion (6) – Councillors Bundy, Devine, Garner, Kerr, Meiklejohn and Sinclair.

For the amendment (5) – Councillors Hannah, Nimmo, Paterson, Spears and Stainbank.

Decision

The Executive agreed the motion.