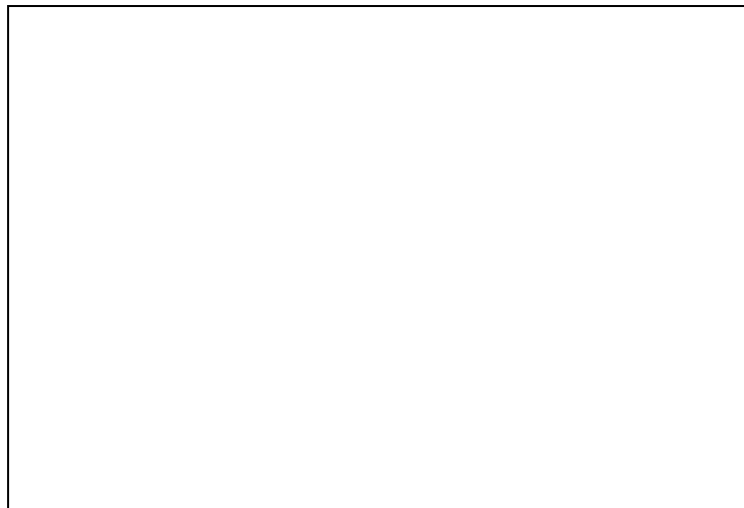


NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2014-2017



Version – 02/01/14

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Property is a technically difficult asset to provide and maintain, slow to change and can be expensive to run. If the Authority is to get the best out of its use of land and buildings, it is important that it has a clear vision of what it expects from its properties, and that it resources them appropriately.

The property estate must be regularly reviewed and actively managed to ensure that it supports changing needs and offers continuing value for money. This management process depends on full engagement from Senior Officers, Councillors and from the operational service units that occupy the properties. Additionally it is vitally important that users of Council-owned land or premises, along with other stakeholders (including local residents), are afforded the opportunity to comment upon Council decisions affecting property. This may be particularly important in cases where the Council is seeking to dispose of, or disinvest in, land or property. In such cases consultation will be proportionate to the scale and nature of any such decisions.

In order to demonstrate that the Council is managing its resources effectively, in the context of an overall aim of delivering efficient public services, the Council must produce a suite of key documents on an annual basis; the Asset Management Strategy/Plan is one of these documents (others include the Council Plan, the annual budget, the Capital Strategy and the Medium Term Financial Strategy). Up to date Government guidance and acknowledged best practice has informed the structure and context of this Strategy.

2.0 ASSET MANAGEMENT – A STRATEGIC APPROACH

2.1 CONTEXT

The Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme is part of the conurbation of North Staffordshire. It is the most populated district in Staffordshire with a population of around 125,000 and has an area of 81 square miles. The two main towns within the Borough are Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove, but there is an extensive rural area in the west.

The industrial base of the Borough has changed significantly in the last century, with the closure of local coal mines and the development of the distribution sector. Service industries are the largest employers in the area, with the number of people employed in water, energy and construction industries being higher than average. The presence of Keele University with the development of its innovation centres for small businesses, new medical school and the growth in hi-tech, research and medical technology businesses demonstrates the potential for added value growth of the area. Newcastle town centre is recognised as being one of two strategically important centres in the North Staffordshire conurbation, with further growth predicated upon its good connections to major transport routes.

There have been big reductions in funding provided to local authorities, central government and its agencies, arising from the need to restrain public expenditure owing to the ongoing economic recession and to rebalance public finances. At the same time, the Council's own resources available to finance capital projects have diminished and will need replenishing before any substantial further capital investments can be made. Services are therefore under increased pressure to reduce costs and it is particularly important to keep fixed outgoings such as property related costs under review. The Council has initiated an Assets Disposal Programme (details set out in Appendix 1). However given the current economic climate and the virtual stagnation of the property market, it will be important to balance the desire to dispose of surplus property assets with recognition of local prevailing market conditions. Each case should therefore be considered on its own merits.

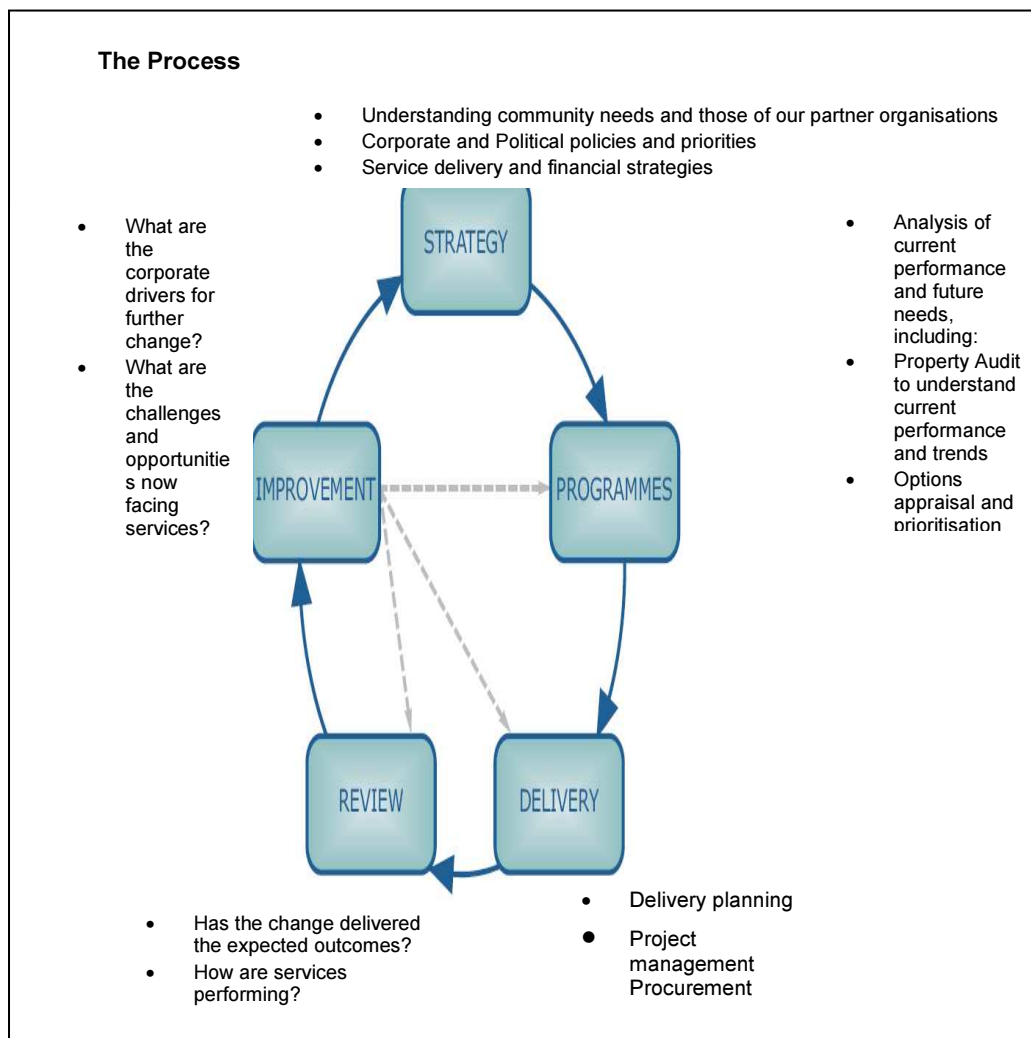
2.2 MAIN ELEMENTS OF GOOD ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The main elements of good asset management for public authorities are listed below:

- Leadership – political, corporate and technical.
- Culture – establishing an environment that sets high standards and measures performance.
- Strong customer focus – consultation and feedback – last year's scrutiny review process of a proposed surplus land disposal programme demonstrated the importance of this element.

- Clarity of Structure, Roles and Responsibilities.
- Resources and Capacity – adequate staff, time and funding.
- Clear Governance – support of senior management and political leadership.
- Data – decisions should be properly informed.
- Sustainability – outcomes are sustainable organisationally, environmentally and financially.

In order to facilitate good asset management it is also necessary to design a process that can be readily understood by all interested parties and, most importantly, be clear to those involved with administering it. It is proposed to adopt a similar five stage process for asset management in this Council as described in the annotated diagram below:



1. Strategy

This document is the strategy at the head of the diagram which seeks to clarify the Council's approach to asset management, particularly balancing the corporate context with service delivery requirements.

2. Programmes

The programmes of work should be derived from the strategy and these will typically relate to investment in retained stock and disposal of surplus property.

3. Delivery

Delivery of agreed programmes is the vital ingredient that translates the strategy into action and recent experiences of managing capital projects, such as the building of the new Jubilee 2 centre, demonstrate the importance of good project management and effective procurement.

4. Review

Continual review is a key element of the process too in order to ensure that the property estate continues to support efficient service delivery.

5. Improvement

The latter should lead into improvement planning in order to ensure that any change in direction in corporate priorities can be responded to.

2.3 **BENEFITS OF GOOD ASSET MANAGEMENT**

- Improved services through better buildings and co-location of services
- Improvements in efficiency, which generate financial savings
- Reduced maintenance backlog
- Better utilisation of property
- Release of capital through sale of surplus assets
- Potential to drive regeneration outcomes both economic and housing growth

2.4 **ASSET MANAGEMENT IN PRACTICE**

Office rationalisation programme

The Council has reviewed its office accommodation in Newcastle town centre and has, as a result, consolidated the Borough Council staff in a more space efficient manner within the Civic Offices to free up space which has been let to other public sector partner organisations which include the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership Trust, Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Police. This has produced:

- a significant annual revenue income;
- a reduction in running costs to the Borough Council;
- a reduction of carbon emissions from the Council;
- improved partnership working and;
- potential to deliver more seamless public services.

Depot review

The Council continues to review its depot facility following the rationalisation of the overall site which enabled the Staffordshire Fire

and Rescue Service to build a new Community Fire Station on surplus land. Council owned land opposite the depot on Silverdale Road (see Appendix 1) has been identified as a possible requirement for future operational purposes.

Green Space Audit and Strategy

The Council has conducted an audit of green space in the Borough and assessed the needs of the community to ensure that it is adopting the right approach to green space provision, management and maintenance. The North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy (jointly commissioned with Stoke on Trent City Council) has been developed and a playing fields and sports pitches strategy has been commissioned with a view to completion April 2014. These strategies will direct resources into the areas which provide the greatest benefit to the community and to identify areas where disinvestment, change of use or disposal may be appropriate.

2.5 DEVELOPING A CLEAR PROPERTY STRATEGY FOR NEWCASTLE

Scale of Activities

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is a significant property owner within its administrative boundaries with substantial legacies around the two main town centres of Newcastle and Kidsgrove as well as in the urban villages/rural hinterland.

As at March 2013 the Council's property assets were in the Asset Register at £73,048,019.43. The properties are valued in accordance with RICS Appraisal and Valuation Standards ("Red Book"). This involves a variety of valuation methods dependant upon the particular asset and its use. This estate comprises a mix of property, some 220 buildings and various land holdings which form two distinct portfolios, the Commercial/Regeneration Portfolio and the Operational Portfolio (see section 4).

(a) Operational Portfolio

This consists of land and buildings from which the Council carries out its own business activities/service delivery. This comprises a mix of 100 buildings that are typical of a local authority estate and result from the history of diverse activities in which local authorities have been involved in the past.

Examples include the newly built Jubilee 2 Health and Wellbeing Centre, the Civic Offices which is a 1960s building providing some 6,500 sq.m of administrative and civic space in the town centre and the works depot, located on the edge of the town, which provides workshops, stores and garaging for the Council's direct works departments.

The Council no longer holds social housing stock but still owns and maintains significant land holdings within these neighbourhoods.

The Council owns and manages approximately 1800 acres of land for the purpose of providing parks, gardens, outdoor sports facilities, children's playgrounds, Local Nature Reserves, woodlands, allotments, cemeteries, footpaths and cycle ways for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.

(b) Commercial Portfolio

The Commercial Portfolio comprises land and buildings let to business tenants on the basis of open market rents, as well as the Council's fee paying car parks. Whilst the basic approach to the commercial portfolio lettings is market driven there may be occasions where the Council's economic regeneration objectives influence this position. Any such adjustment to purely market-led criteria has to be approached with caution to avoid distorting the market and creating a spiral of decline in investor confidence. A commonly used approach, particularly in difficult economic conditions (such as those prevailing over the past three years), is to incentivise prospective tenants with rent-free periods as opposed where possible to reducing market rental levels, however particularly in the retail sector there have been some rent reductions in line with current market evidence; it is intended that this practice will continue for the foreseeable future in order to both promote economic growth and to optimise rental income.

This Portfolio comprises 120 freehold buildings and 13 leasehold units: offices, town centre retail, a multiplex cinema and premises on industrial estates. There are also street markets and hybrid premises (operational properties which have an element of commercially let space within them), such as the lettings to Staffordshire County Council.

The Portfolio itself has arisen out of various regeneration initiatives that the Council has undertaken from the 1930s onwards when it undertook the development of the Lancaster Building shops and office complex at the time of an economic depression. In response to the recent weak global economic conditions, the Council invested significantly in this Listed Building through a comprehensive refurbishment to achieve a "very good" BREEAM standard.

In recent years, additions to this portfolio have included the construction of a small block of industrial units for the small business/new enterprise market at Church Lane (Knutton) which are now fully let. Additionally the Council facilitated the BREEAM "outstanding" commercial building at Chatterley Valley, known as Blue Planet, on land which we held as a result of an intervention

in the market to deal with a heavily contaminated parcel of land. In the last 6 months these premises have been successfully let to JCB. In addition the Council has granted JCB an option to purchase adjacent land which will facilitate future expansion on this site.

2.6 ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Asset Management Policies will be influenced by various factors including current government policy; the needs of the community; the needs of the organisation in delivering services and economic conditions. Taking account of these the Council's key policies for asset management are as follows:

- The Authority will only hold sufficient property to meet a service need or strategic objective;
- Property is a corporate asset and will be managed as such
- Service demands on the estate will be met in the most cost effective manner available to the Authority;
- Properties held for service needs will be suitable for their intended purpose and;
- The condition of the Authority's estate will be maintained at the best level to meet the needs of the operational activities with best endeavours being used to optimise the environmental performance of all properties

2.7 PROPERTY-RELATED ASSET MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

- Support improvements in service delivery
- Achieve optimum utilisation of property assets
- Invest available funding in areas of greatest need or opportunity
- Raise awareness of spending on properties occupied by the Authority
- Formulate an "asset challenge" to Service Directorates
- Minimise the opportunity cost of holding land and property assets
- Minimise the environmental impacts of the portfolio
- Optimise capital receipts from disposal of surplus land/property to provide funds for capital programme expenditure
- Optimise income from the Commercial Portfolio
- Engagement with local community and third sector organisations
- Property should support the achievement of wider objectives e.g. social inclusion and regeneration

3.0 THE WIDER POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 THE NATIONAL CONTEXT:

Government Policy

Many Government initiatives, policy statements and/or guidance influence the Authority's asset policies, including:

- The Quirk review of ownership of public assets
- The Gershon Review, and the drive to improve efficiency
- The Prudential Code for the management of capital finance
- Leamer and Greener Report – Delivering effective estate management
- Leamer and Greener II – Putting Building to Work
- Penfold Review
- Laying the foundations of a Housing Strategy for England
- The Localism Act - Community Right to Bid
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIF)
- The National Planning Policy Framework

Statutory Responsibilities

The Authority as an employer, a landowner, a landlord and a provider of services, has a wide range of responsibilities with an accommodation implication including:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1998
Management of the risks associated with property assets
Including regular maintenance and servicing to address matters such as:
- Legionella – A managed programme of water testing is carried out
- Asbestos – An on-going programme of surveys provided a register
of the presence of asbestos across the portfolio
- Fire Safety – The Authority undertakes Fire Risk Assessments in respect of its properties and tests fire safety equipment e.g. alarms
etc on an annual basis
- Gas Safety – Inspections and services are carried out on an annual basis
- Electrics - An ongoing programme of periodic tests is carried out along with Portable Appliance Testing.
- Lifts, pressure vessels, safety line, chimney maintenance -
Checks are carried in accordance with best practice
- Lightning Conductors – checked in accordance with best practice
- Inspection and repair/maintenance of assets including tree stock, playground stock, railings and structures, footpaths and roads etc

NB: The above summary is not an exhaustive list of statutory inspections/maintenance arrangements.

3.2 THE LOCAL CONTEXT

The Asset Management Strategy draws from a number of strategic Council documents including:

A Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020

Council Plan – 2013/14 to 2015/16

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013/14-2015/16

Capital Strategy 2012-2015

Revenue Budget 2013-2013

North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy 2007

Economic Development Strategy 2012-2017

Housing Strategy 2011-2016

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012/13

Carbon Management Plan 2011

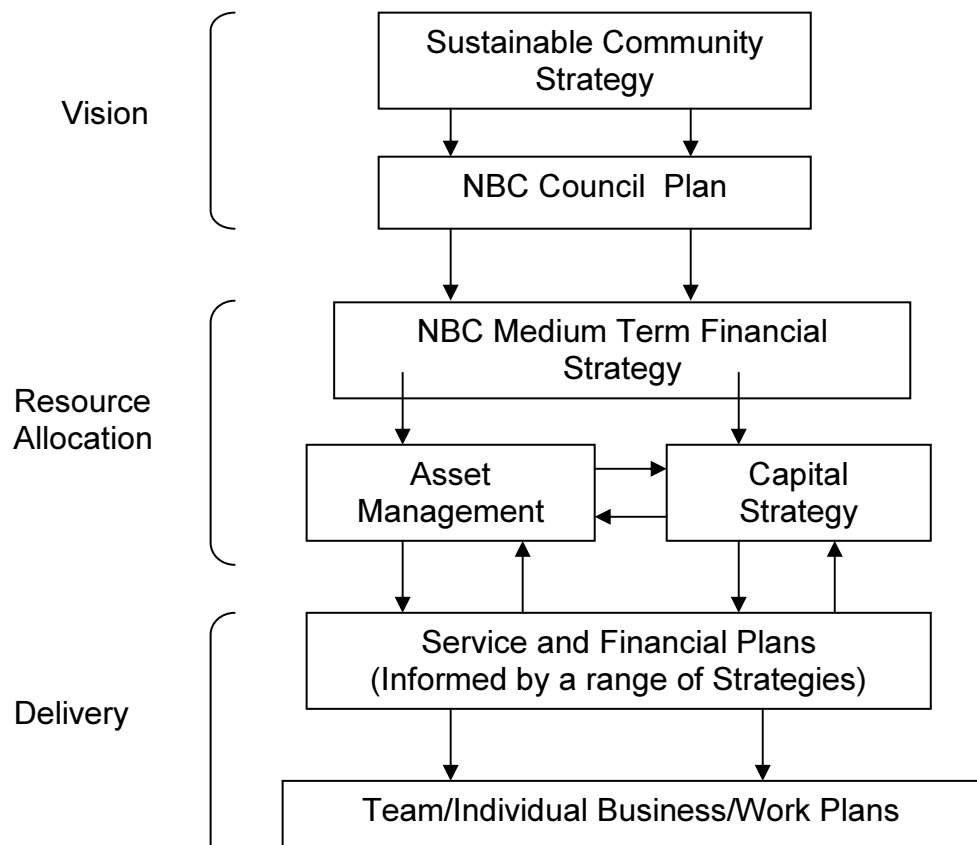
The Staffordshire Compact and Third Sector Commissioning Standards 2009-2012

Safe and Stronger Community Strategy 2012-2017

Health and Wellbeing Strategy (emerging)

Contaminated Land Strategy 2007

The diagram below shows the relationship the Asset Management Strategy has with key Council/partner strategies/plans



Links to Council Plan

The Council Plan (2013/14 to 2015/16) has four main priority areas which are:

- A Clean, Safe and Sustainable Borough
- A Borough of Opportunity
- A Healthy and Active Community
- Becoming a Co-operative Council which Delivers High Quality Community Driven Services

It in turn sets out a number of key actions which the Authority will take to ensure that best use is made of its property assets which included:

- Aim for optimal use of the Council's asset portfolio
- Develop the Council's role in the Staffordshire and S-O-T Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with the aim of seeking funding for regeneration
- Make the Town Centre vibrant and attractive
- Promote high quality facilities for those who live, work or visit the Borough
- Ensure sustainable initiatives for the community and the environment

Performance Management Context

The performance of the Authority's estate is subject to scrutiny by the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with oversight, in respect of the financial elements of the strategy, also being provided by the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Review of assets is an ongoing job for officers. Such reviews will inform the budget setting process as an ongoing matter but recognition of the effects of the property market on timing and amounts of capital receipts have to be allowed for.

The action logs of the Assets Review Group are reported to the Executive Management Team. Significant decisions re potential disposals or acquisitions are reviewed there and if agreed in principle then reported for a Cabinet decision. This may require consideration at the Capital Projects Review Group when capital expenditure over £20,000 may be required on a property or parcel of land.

The main performance indicators pertaining to the Council's operational and commercial property portfolios are listed below:

- Percentage of the investment portfolio which is vacant
- Percentage of investment portfolio in arrears
- Percentage of statutory inspections completed on time

A number of other performance indicators have recently been introduced in relation to the performance of contractors employed by the Council.

Partner Organisations

Community leadership is often delivered through partnership, and it is probably seen in the best light when it tackles “cross-cutting” issues. The Newcastle Partnership brings together key players from the public, private and voluntary sectors with the aim of enhance the quality of life of local communities. Two key priorities have been identified around enhancing economic growth and tackling vulnerability, based on the Council’s key strategies. The Partnership has developed a Work Programme focused on these key priorities and has in place a number of projects designed to deliver against this Work Programme. Our ability to lead and contribute to partnerships is increasingly important to help us secure improvements in service delivery through the physical estate for the residents, investors and visitors to the Borough.

Staffordshire and SOT Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The Local Enterprise Partnership is a public and private sector partnership which will focus on enterprise and innovation initiatives which unlock the potential of the private sector to create employment and wealth to begin growing, restructuring or sustaining the local economy. It is anticipated that the Council will be increasingly expected to adopt an approach to the disposal of surplus land to facilitate economic growth and/or house building (consistent with Government policy).

Newcastle Town Centre Partnership

Newcastle Town Centre Partnership is a public and private sector partnership, which has been established to bringing together local businesses and the Council to support the development of the town centre. The Council has provided funding to employ a Town Centre Manager who is a key driver in this initiative.

Disposals to Third Sector

For a number of years, the Council has pursued a policy of disposal of Assets to the ‘Third sector’ through the engagement of active community groups.

The Council’s disposal strategy in respect of these groups recognises the strengths of pro-active community organisations – independence, specialist knowledge of particular activities, community focus and access to third sector funding streams.

The Council seeks to access and support these strengths for the benefit of the community by adopting a number of different approaches to community engagement and management of assets. The approaches range from a totally devolved community management structure where the asset is leased to an organisation

who then assume complete control of it including repairs/maintenance, running costs etc and who also receive and control income generated by the asset e.g. letting to Newcastle Rugby Club through to a supported management structure where the Council retains responsibility for the costs associated with the asset and the income generated by it e.g. football pitches, to a "stewardship" role for the community where volunteers or Friends Groups provide an input and influence to the Council's management decisions.

In some cases this involves granting long leases of land and property to third sector organisations at nominal rentals. The grant of such leases, as opposed to outright disposal of the freehold, ensures that where such groups experience problems, (for example through loss of key members), the asset (land/property) returns to the Council (and the greater community) to be utilised again for a similar purpose or some other purpose outlined in the corporate priorities.

Examples of successful leases (typically of 20/25 year duration) previously established by the Council include:

- Kidsgrove Ski Club
- Newcastle Town Football Club
- Newcastle and Hartshill Cricket Club
- Newcastle Rugby Club
- North Staffs Special Adventure Playground
- Kidsgrove Citizens' Advice Bureau

There are also a number of examples of community green spaces which are managed and/or leased by local community groups, including:

- Audley Millennium Green
- Lyme Valley Allotments

In addition the Facilities team have assisted community groups/sporting organisations in relation to project managing improvement schemes recent examples include the rebuilding of the bowls pavilion at Westland Sports Ground and the refurbishment of the Sports Centre in the Lyme Valley.

Capital Programme and Stock Condition

Another key area relates to the maintenance and repair of the significant operational land and buildings. Whilst key properties remain under review (e.g. Civic Offices) a modest investment programme has been approved as part of the Council's Capital Programme and a longer term programme will be the subject of a refreshed survey in 2012-14. Provision is made in the Council's General Fund Revenue Programme annually to meet the ongoing costs relating to land and property maintenance

A stock condition survey is reviewed at regular intervals in order that a clear record of the condition and repair of the assets is maintained.

This enables the identification of major repairs requiring capital investment and assets which require urgent attention due to health and safety will be flagged to ensure that the Council complies with its Statutory requirements.

A stock condition review has been carried out again in 2013 and moving forward the repairs identified have been categorised as Red (urgent repairs required to meet Health and Safety obligations or similar imperative), Amber (repairs which can be left in abeyance for a time but will result in deterioration of the asset as time goes on) and Green (repairs which can be put in a planned maintenance programme spread over a number of years).

This has enabled preparation of an indicative costed and planned schedule of capital works over a 5 year period to enable better planned maintenance and capital accounting planning.

In assessing the future maintenance repair of the Council's operational estate there will need to be a balance between providing the financial resources to undertake a pro-active maintenance programme and the risk that not doing so will impact on future capital costs (since the fabric of assets will deteriorate over time and maintenance work will become more costly due to this).

Summary table of the likely stock condition survey cost requirements 2014/17

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
£193,000	£1,795,400	£2,315,650

Current planned maintenance / improvement

Whilst it might be desirable from an asset management viewpoint for the Council to move towards a planned maintenance programme in the next few years based on the Stock Condition Survey, given competing priorities for expenditure and limited available capital funds the Council has adopted a targeted approach to investment for 2014/15 and into 2015/16 as follows:

- Former St. Giles and St. George's School - Maintain whilst seeking appropriate end use.
- Clayton Sports Ground - work has commenced on drawings and specifications for a new roof to the sports hall, a new heating system together with part refurbishment of the interior of the facilities in order to extend the life of the building and provide enhanced facilities. The cost is to be financed by various grant funds exploited by the Council in conjunction with the cricket and badminton club and the scheme is currently waiting for final sign off by Sport England.

- Newcastle Town Centre Street Market - Procure and place new market stalls on site (target for completion Easter 2014)
- Hassell Street pedestrianisation - complete scheme Easter 2014
- Civic Offices - essential works to upgrade the electrical system will be undertaken in 2013/14 and this will continue in the following two years.
- Accommodation Review - Undertake further work to establish the medium/long term accommodation needs of both the Borough Council and other public sector partners in order to secure more efficient occupation of operational buildings.
- Silverdale Community Facility - Completion of the construction of outdoor sports pitches/parking facilities and commencement on construction of the community building (funded entirely through developer contributions) on course for completion in November 2013 (i.e at the time of writing this strategy).
- Clayton Community Centre - External cladding work has been completed to the main part of the building to considerably improve its appearance. The cladding used is specialist insulating which will also considerably improve the heat loss/carbon emissions' from the building. A new central heating system is also to be installed in November together with new UPVC windows.
- Croft Road Industrial Estate - Through a collaborative approach between the Council and 4 new tenants 6 industrial units have been let by identifying essential items of repair and maintenance. By granting a rent free period, the work has been carried out by the tenants and as a result, industrial units which were previously incapable of occupation due to their poor state of repair are now income producing.
- Essential works will be undertaken during 2013/14 at Red Street community centre together with partial refurbishment.
- Further improvement works proposed to other community centres and potential tenanted properties to preserve the assets and enhance potential rental income.

As with the capital programme, due to limited availability of revenue funds, planned maintenance work has continued at minimum levels for 2013/14 and a more reactive approach has been adopted and this will continue into 2014/15. Consequently it is inevitable that the condition of property assets will deteriorate until a more proactive maintenance programme can be funded. With regard to maintenance

of land this is restricted to urgent health and safety works and prioritised works to preserve reasonable levels of amenity.

Structures - Bridges, Watercourses etc

An asset register of all structures for which the Council are responsible has been prepared. A full inspection programme will be implemented to monitor the condition of the structures and identify any repairs during 2014/15 so that the council is fully informed in relation to the liabilities and responsibilities. A risk based and targeted approach for future inspection regimes will then be undertaken.

It is already known that there is a partial retaining wall collapse at which will require substantial rebuilding for Health and Safety reasons during 2014 and this is reflected in the stock condition survey.

However, until the full inspection regime is completed it is only possible to estimate the full extent of the Council's liabilities over the next 5 years.

A list of these structures is contained in Appendix 3.

Carbon Reduction/Energy Efficiency

The Council monitors energy use in all operational properties. It has been seeking to reduce energy usage over the last 2 years and where it carries out repairs/improvements to the properties it seeks to reduce its carbon footprint/energy use further as a direct result of these works, thereby saving costs.

The Council published a Carbon Management Plan in 2011 (accredited by the Carbon Trust). This developed a Carbon Management Strategy which identified the drivers for carbon management, targets and objectives to be achieved and the strategic themes considered.

In order to deliver the said objectives, the Plan sets out a number of projects; there are existing projects, planned/funded projects, near term projects and medium to long term projects.

In October 2011 the Council received a grant allocation of £35,000 from the West Midlands Low Carbon Fund to reduce the Council's carbon footprint which in turn will save money in respect of energy consumption. A number of energy saving proposals were implemented in the spring of 2012 using this grant money as follows:

- Automated Meter Readers (AMRs) were fitted on Gas and Electricity supplies to the council's 5 highest energy-consuming buildings. Additionally the majority of operational buildings have had electricity AMRs fitted at no cost to the

Council.

- Bathpool Ski/Rugby Clubs - Cavity wall insulation.
- Museum - Low Energy Lighting & double glazing.
- Knutton Depot offices - Cavity Wall insulation.
- Knutton Depot - Lighting controls.
- Alexandra Road Changing rooms - Cavity wall insulation.
- Kidsgrove public offices - Cavity Wall insulation.
- Crematorium, House, Toilets, Canteen area - Cavity Wall insulation.
- Merrial Street Toilets - Installation of low energy hot water system.
- St Georges Chambers - Lighting controls, Cavity wall and loft insulation.
- Midway - Controls to close for overnight parking so lighting is turned off
- Civic Offices - Lighting controls

As a result of the installation of AMR's to a number of sites, the Borough Council have developed a robust web based energy management data base which has energy consumption automatically uploaded from the information supplied by AMR's and half Hourly meters which allows us to monitor energy consumption on a half hourly, daily, weekly monthly and annual cycle, measuring consumption, Co2 emissions', peaks of consumption and comparisons with previous years.

This has provided a firm framework to enable a pro active energy management in identifying peak and unusual usage and eliminating waste or unnecessary usage.

Together with the installation of PIR's in a number of sites this has contributed to a reduction in the overall consumption of electricity by 31% during 2012/13 as compared to 2011/12.

Particular examples from the projects undertaken are 23% reduction in electricity consumption at Bathpool Park which is heated by electric convector heaters and where cavity wall installation has been installed. At Midway, Merrial St, Hassell St, Crematorium and

Birchinwood Pavilion where a combination of PIR's and energy efficient water heaters were installed, the reduction in energy usage has been 13%, 83%, 8% and 179% respectively. In the case of Midway alone the modifications carried out resulted in a saving in electricity of £4,000 for the year.

Further work is being carried out to source funding in order to implement more of the planned projects (set out in the Carbon Management Plan) which would reduce the Council's carbon footprint and save both energy and costs.

Additionally other initiatives currently being explored include:-

- LED lighting at the Depot and Civic offices.
- BIO MASS projects (wood burners)
- Heat recovery schemes

Strategic Property Review

It is essential that the Council has an efficient property assets approach to ensure that all opportunity to maximise use, rental income, resources and management are taken.

Each property asset from both portfolios will in the next 12 months be scrutinised in detail in terms of operational use, maximisation of use, rental income, maintenance cost, capital requirements and general overheads in order that individual property needs or failings can be identified and this will deliver an overall strategic plan for all the property assets.

4.0 THE CURRENT ESTATE

The Council owns an eclectic mix of over 180 properties (buildings) ranging from crematoria to sports centres to industrial premises. As previously indicated (section 2.5) the Council's property assets are divided into two portfolios – the operational and commercial portfolio – see below:-

Operational assets

In broad terms this is property that is held, occupied, used or contracted to be used on behalf of the authority in the direct delivery of services for which it has a responsibility, whether statutory or discretionary or for the service of strategic objectives of the authority. For reasons of simplicity we also include 'Community Assets' in this category.

This category includes (not exhaustive list):

- Civic Offices
- Guildhall Customer Contact Centre
- Kidsgrove Town Hall Customer Contact Centre
- Knutton Lane depot
- Jubilee Baths and Knutton Recreation Centre*
- Jubilee 2 Health & Wellbeing Centre
- The Museum/Art Gallery
- Crematorium and Cemeteries
- Land associated with operational property
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Historic Buildings/Monuments
- Allotments
- Sports facilities and pitches
- Community Centres
- Off-street car parks
- Fee paying car parks
- Structures bridges, watercourses etc
- CCTV infrastructure

*These 2 assets are now surplus following completion and hand over of Jubilee 2 in December 2011.

Commercial Assets

These property assets are those held by the Council but not directly occupied, used or concerned in the delivery of services, although they are likely to align with the authority's strategic objectives. Examples in this category include (list not exhaustive):-
Commercial land and property, leased/rented to other parties and generating income which include:

- Town Centre Retail Premises
- Industrial Units
- Offices
- Keele Golf Centre
- Ground Leases including the multiplex cinema
- Market
- Town Centre Car Parks
- Former Sainsbury's supermarket (owned in conjunction with Staffordshire Council for regeneration purposes)

Asset Transfers between Portfolios

There are occasions where assets can be transferred between portfolios as a result of changes to service delivery or corporate priorities; examples include the following:

- The Guildhall which transferred from the commercial portfolio to the operational portfolio.
- Pitfield House (Brampton Park) which was originally within the operational portfolio and is now let on a commercial basis as a Children's Nursery.
- Former Audley Council offices which is now let on a commercial basis to a local business.

5.0 PROGRAMMES

5.1 ASSET REVIEWS

Any responsible organisation will continuously challenge its use of resources, and the Authority has instituted a programme of reviews of its operational property portfolio, which is used to deliver services.

Property can be expensive drain on both capital and revenue budgets, and is slow to change. It is essential that the organisation has the right type of premises in the right locations, and accommodation must be sufficiently flexible to be able to be adjusted to the changing needs of the service market. It must also be used as efficiently as possible; vacant or under-used space is an expensive waste.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Local Plan

On the 16 October, 2013 the Council resolved to suspend work on the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan (Plan). This decision took into consideration a number of serious issues which had arisen in relation to the 'soundness' of the plan making process. A key issue was the evidence in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which indicated that there was an insufficient supply of identified, available and deliverable sites to build enough new homes to meet the Core Strategy target of 5,700 dwellings by 2026. Furthermore, there was a shortage of commercially attractive and viable employment sites. As a consequence it would not be possible to implement or deliver the objectives of the adopted Core Strategy.

A report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet on the 11th December seeking a resolution to formally withdraw the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and to proceed to prepare a joint full Local Plan in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council. If it is agreed to collaborate with Stoke-on-Trent City Council the process of preparing and adopting the joint Local Plan could take between 3 - 5 years.

The SHLAA will continue to be updated and will be used to inform and contribute to the background evidence for the joint Local Plan. The purpose of the SHLAA is to help identify land suitable and available to meet future housing requirements

Surplus Assets Disposal Programme and Consultation

Each year operational managers are challenged to ensure that any underutilised/surplus space is identified and where appropriate allocated for disposed. Disposals in 2012/13 included the sale of a former plant nursery site at Clough Hall Kidsgrove and retail premises which required significant expenditure on the structure of the building.

A Green Space Audit and Strategy was undertaken in 2007 which identified those sites which are key to providing for the needs of the community and also those which are not required to meet the adopted local standards for green space.

An assessment of all Council owned land has taken place to identify land that is considered to have a better alternative use. These sites fall into one of the following categories:

- Brownfield sites.
- Green sites that do not form part of the Green Space Strategy.
- Sites identified in the Green Space Strategy that are considered to have a better alternative use.
- Sites identified in the Green Space Strategy which form a small part of a larger site and the removal of which would not impact on the green space.

The sites are listed in Appendix 1. They are potential residential development sites. Approval is being sought, through the Asset Management Strategy, to explore options for the alternative use of these sites in order to contribute towards the funding of the work/schemes identified in the Capital Strategy/Capital Programme to assist the Council in achieving its corporate and service objectives.

The informal views of the Planning Service have also been taken into consideration.

The capital receipts generated from any disposal of these assets would fund the works/schemes identified in the Capital Strategy 2014/17 and the Capital Programme which in turn assists the Council in achieving its corporate and service objectives.

In addition the releasing of these sites for residential development will go some way to reducing the shortage in the 5 year housing supply.

It is estimated (subject to planning permission being granted and to the sites selling at open market value) that the capital receipts likely to be generated in respect of the sites listed in Appendix 1 for 2014/15 is circa £700,000 and 2015/17 is circa £7.4m.

Finally, within the Appendix 1 is a list of sites which it is proposed be offered to Registered Housing Providers to redevelop.

A detailed scrutiny process was undertaken during 2011 in respect of proposals to dispose of surplus land. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee report made a number of recommendations as to the way the disposal programme was dealt with, in particular with respect to public consultation. The Council's Cabinet has taken these

recommendations into account and resolved that the Asset Management Strategy will be amended to reflect these recommendations (see Appendices 2).

There will however be some circumstances in respect of certain disposals, such as the disposal of disused public toilets, where a public consultation process will not be necessary or may be scaled to a more proportionate level. Other examples could include land or property where the future use is consistent with the present use (e.g. a shop premises in a shopping parade) where there is unlikely to be any public interest at stake. The approach to consultation in each case will seek to ensure that any public/stakeholder consultation is proportionate to the particular disposal.

Staffordshire Strategic Property Review

Staffordshire County Council invited all District Councils across the County, along with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and other public bodies including the NHS and the Police to participate in a project to review the public sector estate within Staffordshire.

The project had the following two main objectives:

- Comprehensive identification of the Public Sector Estate across Staffordshire
- Analysis of the information to promote the most effective and efficient use of the combined assets.

External consultants were engaged to co-ordinate/manage the project. The report to identify the findings of this project was published in February 2012. One of the primary aims of the review was to identify specific rationalisation opportunities. There were three joint development opportunities identified within Newcastle Borough which are now the subject of joint delivery arrangements to take the schemes forward. These are:

- The rationalisation of the office estate within the Newcastle area
- Newcastle Town Centre redevelopment (Ryecroft, the former Sainsburys and the Civic Offices sites)
- Knutton urban village (site of the former Knutton Recreation Centre and adjacent land and buildings)

Car Parks

In view of the Council's aspirations for strengthening the Town Centre economy it will be important to keep these car parks under review with a view to either optimising their use or to facilitate regeneration.

Commercial Portfolio (income generation)

The commercial portfolio (including the Market) in 2012/13 generated a gross income circa £1.1 million and provides business accommodation for over 200 small to medium sized businesses.

Community Centres Review

The Council's Cabinet has agreed to the establishment of a dedicated Community Centre commissioning and capacity building team to review and modernise community centre provision; there are currently 15 such centres with the Borough.

The aim is to develop options for the long term sustainability and management of the Community Centres in partnership with the community and voluntary sector and by April 2014 to review the management arrangements linked to these options and implement the proposals.

5.2 PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Public Sector GIS based database

Staffordshire County Council is working in conjunction with Newcastle Borough Council and the other District Authorities to develop an intranet database which holds the land ownership details of all the Councils and other public bodies such as Police and Fire Authority etc.

Regeneration

The Authority has worked with various public sector partners to bring about the regeneration of various sites throughout the Borough. Examples of this include the regeneration of a redundant industrial site on Lower Milehouse Lane, Newcastle which has had a catalytic effect on the wider area, along with investment in a number of housing-led initiatives in the wider area.

Newcastle Town Centre Redevelopment

In 2011 the Borough Council in partnership with Staffordshire County Council purchased the former Sainsbury's premises in order to assemble a site for a comprehensive retail-led regeneration scheme in the Ryecroft area of the Town Centre, which will contribute towards broader regeneration objectives within the town. The potential development site includes the current Civic Offices. The Borough Council at its meeting on 27th November 2013 approved the following:

- The commissioning of the demolition of the former Sainsbury's property.
- The commencement of formal marketing of the Ryecroft site. Consultants have been appointed to undertake this work.

Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm

The Borough Council is working in partnership with Staffordshire County Council to bring about the following improvements to the Town Centre:

- A new taxi rank has been created by the Queens Gardens on the Ironmarket and the disabled parking has been modernised.

- A new bus lane has been created on Barracks Road and the bus station has been re-aligned to take buses out of Hassell Street
- A daytime taxi rank has been created in lower High Street .
- The market will be realigned to follow the pedestrian flow in the Town Centre with new stalls in place by Easter 2014

Shared Accommodation/Public Sector Hub

The Authority currently shares accommodation with its public sector partners examples of which are listed below:

- Civic Offices is shared with Staffordshire County Council, Staffs Police and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership Trust.
- Kidsgrove Town Hall is shared with Staffordshire County Council, Staffs Police and Kidsgrove Town Council
- Part of the Guildhall is being used by Staffs Police as their Enquiry Office

Officers are in the process of working with key partners to prepare a full business case for the relocation of the Civic Offices in order to facilitate the comprehensive retail-led redevelopment of the Ryecroft area (see Newcastle Town Centre Redevelopment page 26). The preferred location for the new Civic hub is the former St. Giles and St. Georges School

Facilitating Community Assets

- Disposing of part of the former Knutton Depot to Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to enable the construction of a Community Fire Station at Knutton Lane, Newcastle
- Disposing of land at Loggerheads to the SFRS to facilitate the construction of a community fire station

5.3 Funding and Investment Strategy

In the current economic climate and following the Strategic Spending Review, government funding for Council projects (e.g. RENEW Housing project) has been severely restricted and in some cases stopped. Consequently this Council along with others is having to generate funding from other sources one of which is through the disposal of assets which no longer support service delivery. The capital receipts from these disposals will allow the Council to develop an investment strategy which is aligned with communities needs and requirements.

6.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANNING

6.1 CORPORATE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE REGARDING ASSET MANAGEMENT

The diagram at Appendix 4 shows the Council's structure in terms of Asset Management. Since January 2008 the Assets Section has been consolidated into the Regeneration and Development Directorate.

Portfolio Holder Responsibility

Asset Management falls within the portfolio of the Cabinet member with responsibility for Planning, Regeneration and Town Centres Development.

Corporate Property Officer

The Corporate Property Officer (CPO) is the Head of Assets who reports directly to the Executive Director of Regeneration and Development (a member of the Executive Management Team).

Assets Review Group

The Assets Review Group is chaired by the Executive Director of Regeneration and Development with the CPO as Vice Chair, and meets once every three months (or more frequently if required). The overall objective of the Group is to review the performance of and provide strategic management for, the Authority's portfolio.

Capital Programme Review Group

The Capital Programme Review Group (CPRG) meets monthly and is chaired by the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services), with the CPO as Vice Chair. This group controls capital expenditure.

The ARG and CPRG monitor the use of both Assets and Capital, and approve the release of Assets for specific purposes, having reviewed the business case for the use. Similarly they make recommendations to the Council's Executive Management Team (EMT) about Capital expenditure, having examined the business case, and subsequently monitor the capital expenditure programme.

The recommendations and decisions of these two groups directly inform the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme. In terms of broader governance arrangements the decisions of both groups have to be ratified by EMT (as is the case with all Corporate Working Groups).

Membership of the Assets Review Group ensures that the CPO receives direct and pertinent user information about the Council's Operational Portfolio. The ARG effectively provides feedback as to any asset management proposals/plans being considered either corporately or from a service perspective. Any plans or proposals

requiring new capital expenditure require endorsement by the CPRG before proceeding through the formal decision-making processes of Cabinet or Council.

The output from both the ARG and the CPRG will form the basis of the Council's Capital programme (which is reviewed annually along with the Council Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy).

As well as ensuring the efficient and effective use of the Council's property assets, the role of the CPO, ARG and the CPRG is to ensure a consistency between the Council's asset portfolio and the Council's Council Plan, as well as the service-specific Service and Financial Plans.

Day to Day Asset Management Planning

The Head of Assets is responsible for Assets, Facilities Management, Engineering and Car Parks. All the day-to-day work connected with this asset management planning is undertaken within this service area. Significant expenditure is allocated through the capital planning process whilst small scale works and reactive maintenance is funded from a Repairs and Renewals Fund.

6.2 ASSET MANAGEMENT DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The Council's land ownership mapping system (terrier), property data, Asset Register and property management and maintenance records are held on one computerised system. Paper filing systems are used for other property management functions.

The Council subscribes to the IDOX Uniform suite of applications which includes the asset register and property management modules, which contains key property information. This system links with other modules throughout the authority, which means that departments such as Planning, Land Charges Operations and Building Control, which use plan-based systems, will be able to access shared information.

The system also allows for each property to be given a unique property reference and will allow this reference to be linked to the National Land and Property Gazetteer.

6.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY

In 2010 the Council purchased a computerised health and safety system (BS Target 100). This system along with the CAPS Uniform system are used to manage, record and monitor all aspects of health and safety across the Council including the inspection and servicing of the building utilities and any other statutory inspections. These systems are supplemented by a database of statutory inspections.

Land and Property Disposals - Approved and ongoing 2014

SHLAA No	Address	Site Area acres	Site Area (Ha)	Position Statement	Site to Market
	Plot D Apedale Road Chesterton	4.5	1.82	Land is being marketed for industrial development purposes. No interest at present time.	
	Lyme Valley Road Newcastle	0.26	0.1	Former playground site which is currently being marketed for commercial uses and investigations ongoing re possible residential use. Current market interest.	2014/15
	Former Jubilee Baths			Terms agreed for disposal for commercial/residential purposes subject to planning permission	2014/15
	Silverdale Road Newcastle	1.38	0.56	Following a review by Operational Services it has been identified that this land may be required for future operational purposes. If this is not the case then the site will be looked at again for disposal.	

Land and Property Disposals to Facilitate Regeneration objectives – Approved and ongoing 2014

	Former St Giles and St Georges School Newcastle			The site is the preferred location for the new civic hub subject to the outcome of the redevelopment of the current Civic Offices and the former Sainsbury's site.	
	Former Sainsbury's Supermarket, Liverpool Road and Civic Offices Merrial Street, Newcastle	6.4	2.59	The Borough Council have entered into a Joint Venture Agreement with Staffordshire County Council and purchased the former Sainsbury's supermarket, in order to assemble a site for a comprehensive retail led scheme of development. Specialist retail consultants, Cushman & Wakefield have been appointed to find a development partner	
	High Street Knutton, (Recreation Centre site)	5.31	2.15	The disposal of this site has been approved. Site specific constraints to be overcome prior to formal marketing	

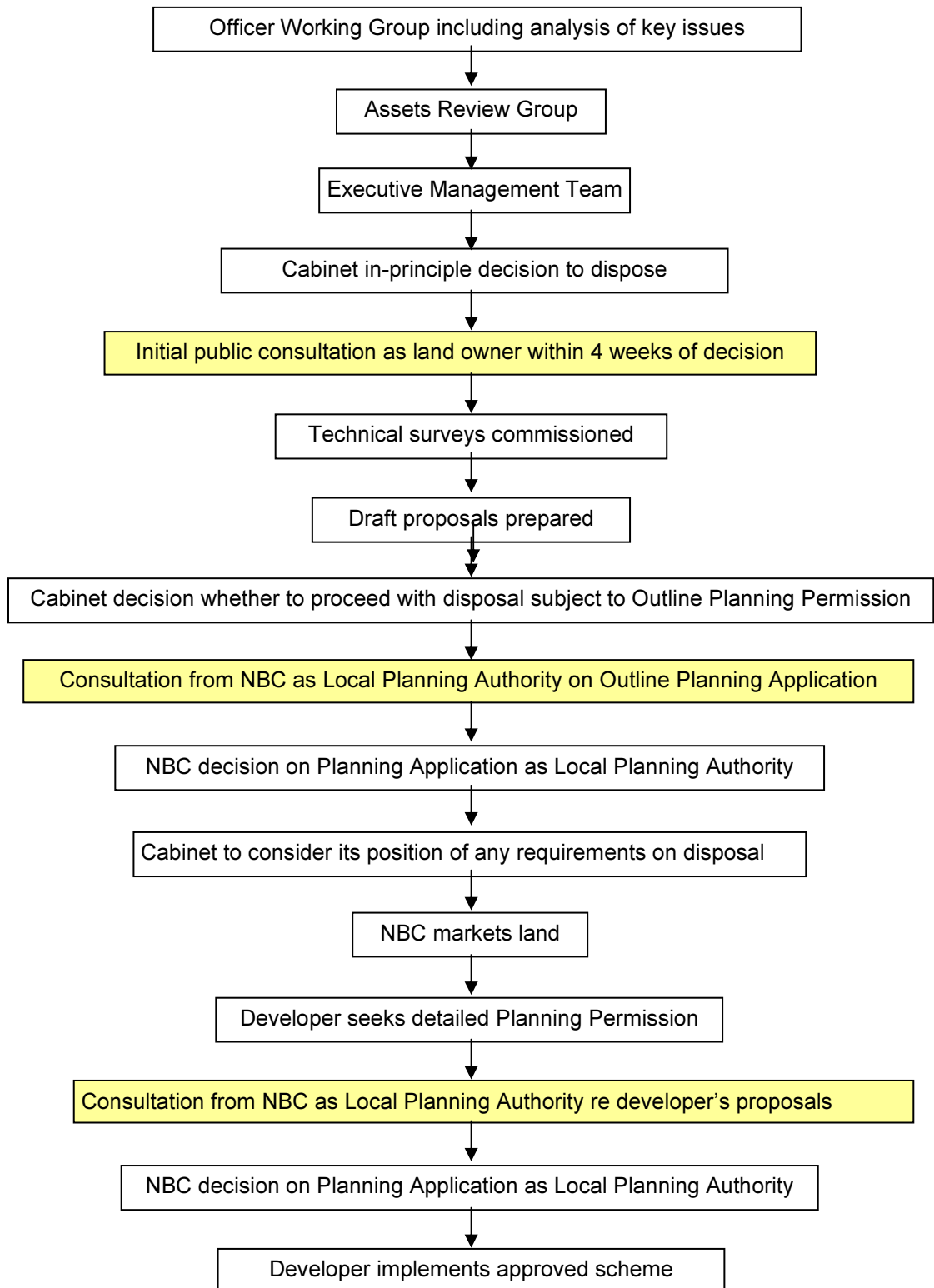
Land and Property Disposals - Under investigation and subject to approval					
2014/2015 - Anticipated Disposal Date					
All the sites listed below are to be considered for residential development					
SHLAA No 2012/13	Address	Site Area acres	Site Area (Ha)	Current Situation/Position	Site to Market
116D	Riley's Way Bignall End	0.38	0.15	grassed area within village envelope not in Green Space Strategy. Footpath to be retained	2014/15
	Gloucester Road, Kidsgrove	0.41	0.17	disused garage site within urban area, not in Green Space Strategy	2014/15
128	Bower End Lane, Madeley	0.94	0.38	Former depot site outside but attached to village envelope. Although in Green Space Strategy its disposal could be supported if a contribution was secured towards an alternative site for a park/garden in the settlement.	2014/15
131	Hillport Ave, Porthill	0.67	0.27	grassed area within urban area. Although in Green Space Strategy it is only a very small part of Bradwell Recreation ground and it is separated from the Recreation Ground by a watercourse.	2014/15
2015/2017 - Anticipated Disposal Date					
413	St Edmunds Ave, Porthill	0.59	0.24	Abandoned playground within the urban area and not in the Green Space strategy	2014/15

282	Sandy Lane/Brampton Road, May Bank	2.22	0.90	grassed area within Conservation area and urban area. The Green Space Strategy identifies this land as a site where its use / maintenance regime should be considered i.e site is considered to have a better alternative use.	2014/15
307	Church Lane, Knutton	1.63	0.66	grassed area within the urban area. The Green Space Strategy identifies this land as a site where its use / maintenance regime should be considered i.e site is considered to have a better alternative use	2014/15
	Wedgwood Ave Westlands (adj Community Centre)	0.27	0.11	Currently part of the car park of the Community Centre within urban area. Identified in Green Space Strategy as part of the Westlands tennis ground but this area is not currently utilised for sport. Any disposal would be subject to a car parking survey.	2015/16
97	Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads	11.50		grassed area adjacent to the village envelope and not in Green Space Strategy. Currently let on farm business tenancy.	2014/15
111	Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads	5.56		grassed area close to the village envelope and not in Green Space Strategy. Currently let on grazing licence.	2014/15
247	Gallowstree Lane, Westlands	0.71	0.29	grassed area with footpath in urban area. In Green Space Strategy but has little to contribute to the main parkway therefore disposal could be considered from green space perspective. Footpath to be retained.	2015/16
	Stafford Ave, Clayton	0.50	0.20	grassed area within the urban area. Although in Green Space Strategy area identified is only very small part of total therefore disposal could be considered from green space perspective if contribution was made to improve quality of other green space to mitigate loss.	2015/16

Sites to be offered to Registered Housing Providers					
	Kinnersley Street Kidsgrove	1.61	0.65	grassed area within urban area and not in Green Space Strategy	
308	Cotswold Ave, Knutton	0.67	0.27	grassed area within urban area. The Green Space Strategy identifies this land as a site where its use / maintenance regime should be considered i.e site considered to have a better alternative use	
	Heathcote Street Kidsgrove	0.73	0.30	Currently used for informal car parking within urban area and not in Green Space Strategy.	

APPENDIX 2

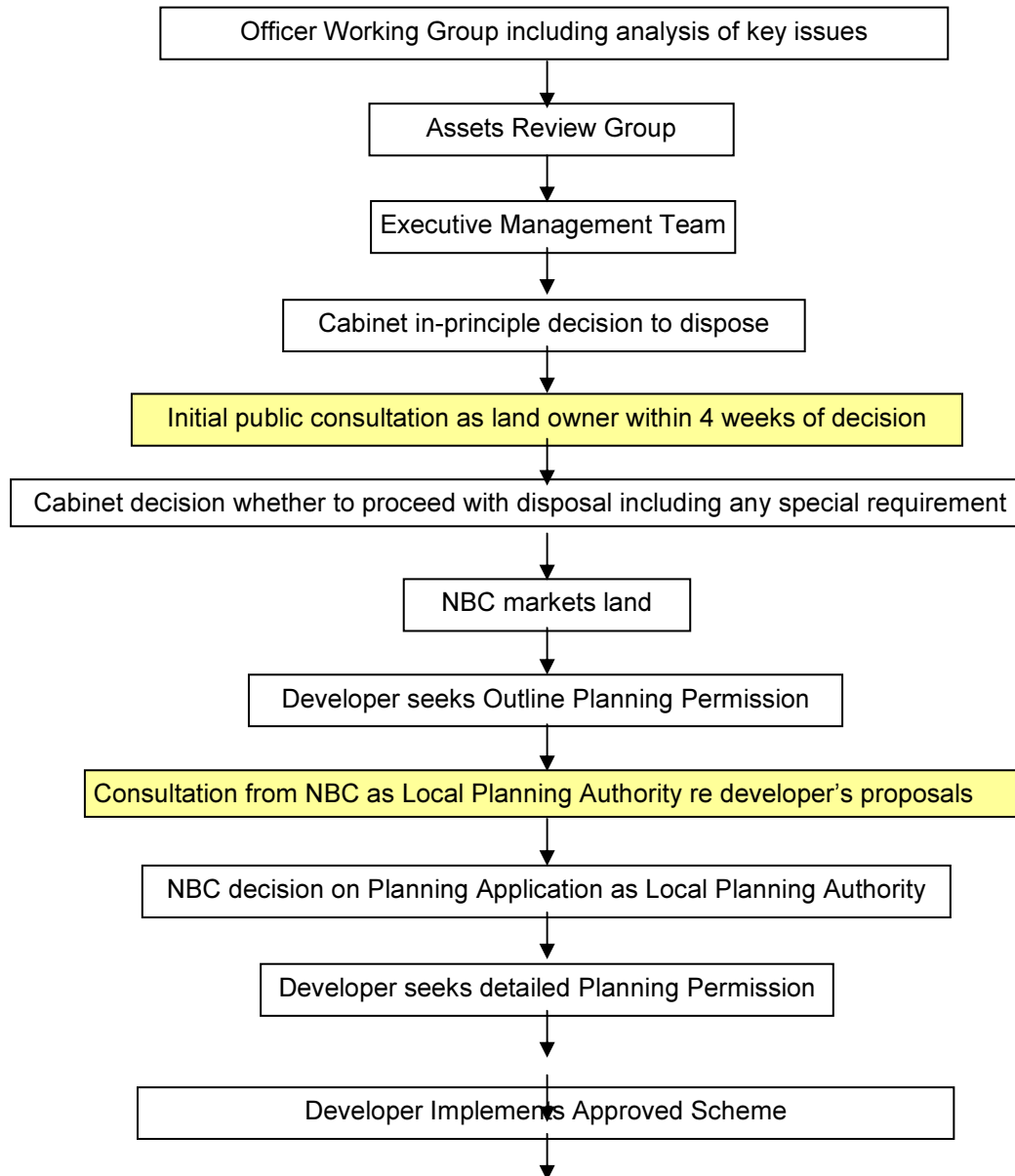
Typical consultation approach in cases where unclear planning policy and Newcastle Borough Council seeking Planning Permission prior to disposal



NB. Attention is drawn to the council's proposed approach to consultation as both land owner and as local planning authority.

APPENDIX 2

Typical consultation approach in cases where clear planning policy and Newcastle Borough Council NOT seeking Planning Permission prior to disposal of significant asset



NB. Attention is drawn to the council's proposed approach to consultation as both land owner and as local planning authority.

Structure Inventory	
SITE	FEATURE
Audley F.C.	Wall around tennis courts
Audley Walkway	Bridges (I understand they are not highways) - retaining walls (various)
Basford Allotments	Toilets - Association shed
Bateswood	Bridge off Red Hall Lane - mining memorials - retaining walls
Bathpool Park	Retaining wall at bottom of ski slope - Pump house and covered reservoir - overflow chamber - bridges over railway (?)
Bear Pit	Retaining walls - Wall under railing
Birchenwood	Pavilion - external wall facing Kidsgrove Bank - wall by car park outside pavilion & bowling greens
Birchenwood	Retaining wall facing Ravenscliffe Road
Bradwell Crem	Machinery shed (leased to Glendale?) - Walls around the Shed yard - other buildings such as Chapel etc
Bradwell Park	Bowls pavilion - Old Toilet Building - Retaining Walls round Tennis Court - Retaining Walls at boundary of Park and top of Porthill Bank -
	Retaining Walls and bed structures at Car Park entrance and exit

Brampton Park	Aviary - stone wall - railway building - bandstand - rear wall (Granville Ave entrance)
Chesterton Cemetery	Small mess room / toilet
Chesterton Park	Pavilion (s) - Garage - Icehouse - retaining wall to Castle street retaining walls inside site
Church Lane Knutton	Retaining wall at bottom of bank
Clayton Road	Retaining wall (below Three Parks path)
Clough Hall Park	Pavilions - retaining wall by path between Pavilions - bridge over streamway - walls around bowling greens - wall by car park edging streamway - brick gates supports by castle street - Miners memorial
First Avenue	Retaining wall in wooded area opp Boathorse Road
Guernsey Drive (open space)	Bridge - Culvert
Holy Trinity Churchyard	Retaining wall facing Church Walk
Kids Wood	Retaining wall facing The Avenue
Kidsgrove Loop Line	Railway tunnel - retaining walls along loop line - bridge
Lyme Valley	Bridges (x2) - Entrance pillars (Buckmaster Ave)
Lymewood Grove	Retaining wall by woodland
Madeley Heath	War memorial
Nelson Place	Fountains
Newcastle Cemetery	Office - Toilets - Chapel - War Memorial - Mess/Store rooms - Entrance wall

Nelson Place	Fountains
Newcastle Cemetery	Office - Toilets - Chapel - War Memorial - Mess/Store rooms - Entrance wall
Pool Dam Marshes	Bridges (x3)
Priory Road	Retaining walls
Queen Elizabeth Park	Pavilion
Queens Gardens	Statue - Bandstand - Fence Pillars
Roe Lane	Changing rooms - garage / mess room - CRS garage
Silverdale Cemetery	Toilets Block
Silverdale Mill Street	Mining Memorial statue
Silverdale Park	Main pavilion - Old Garage building
St Georges Church	Retaining walls
St Giles Church	Retaining walls
St James Churchyard, Audley	External wall to front - Walls to rear
St Mary's Church	Retaining walls
St Thomas's Churchyard, Kidsgrove	Wall by Woodside Avenue - walls inside & external to site
St Thomas's Churchyard, Mow Cop	Retaining walls

Station Walks	Retaining wall - Entrance wall - tunnel
Stubbs Walks	Retaining wall(playground)
Tadgedale / Chestnut Rd o.s. (Loggerheads)	Bridges(x2) - Culvert
The Avenue	Wall on perimeter
Thisleberry Parkway	Bridges (x2) - Culvert - wall (adj Keele road)
Three Parks	Wall-(near Cemetery entrance)
Town Centre	Brick Planters(?) - War memorial - Market cross
Townfields Close	Retaining walls by entrance
Westbury Park o.s.	Bridges (x2)
Westcliffe Avenue	Culvert
Westlands Sports Ground	Main pavilion - bowls pavilion - retaining wall
Wolstanton Park	Bowls pavilion - Small bowls shed

**Newcastle-under-Lyme Council's
Asset Management Plan Reporting Structure**

Appendix 4

