

Minute 18 from Corporate Issues Scrutiny meeting. 18 August 2008

1. CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT – THREE YEAR CAPITALISED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which set out details of the forward plan of capitalised expenditure on Maintenance of built assets to align with Departments Service Asset Strategies (property and land) and building condition duties.

By way of background information, the report explained that the annual "Corporate Asset Management Plan" (AMP) had reported the requirements for investment to address "backlog maintenance" identified by the process of condition surveys of properties. This was identified at £68.72m in the 2007 Corporate Asset Management plan.

Emphasis was made in the 2007 AMP to address key elements of the performance of property in relation to overall Corporate Asset Objectives and these had similarly been the key elements of the work carried out within Corporate Resources, viz:-

- staff satisfaction and the standard of operational property accommodation;
- Survey programmes and the management of established procedures to assure compliance with Health and Safety legislation;
- Validation of condition surveys and data to a common base level to inform property performance reviews, the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Primary Capital Programme (PCP) process, Services Asset Strategy preparation;
- Progression of Asset Valuations;
- Property performance benchmarking, access to buildings, office accommodation rationalisation; and
- Achievement of targets for realising capital income.

Members were advised that an annual Capital allocation had been made to address Health and Safety and Condition issues highlighted by the survey process and these had been commissioned on an annual basis.

This report went on to summarise the proposed three year plan to address these issues for 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 based on the known information in the condition database and on the information provided by Departments as part of their Departmental Services Asset Strategy documents. Members in their deliberations discussed the following issues:-

- The backlog of spend in relation to commercial properties and whether those buildings should all remain in the Corporate Portfolio.
- Future report should include priority expenditure totals.
- The vast amount of spending identified for civic buildings.
- For libraries, only a quarter of earmarked spending identified.
- The eventual move of items from the essential to urgent categories and the further pressure of work.
- The amount of £20,000 earmarked for Mere Hall.
- It was indicated that this was for the external part of the building only. The Council were not responsible for the interior.
- Why there were no programmed amounts for Community Education.
- It was indicated that Maintenance was funded by other bodies in these areas.

The Committee was further advised that the forthcoming Property Performance Report and Asset Management Plan would enable a more strategic approach to Property Maintenance.

In terms of the Town Hall, it was reported that a survey had been commissioned to look at each elevation in order to assess holistically the work to be undertaken. Furthermore, absailers would also shortly undertake a close inspection of the condition of the clock tower.

Resolved – (i) that the report be noted.

(ii) That an item be included on the agenda for the next meeting giving consideration to the possible establishment of a Scrutiny Panel on the issue of Property Maintenance.

2. KEY FACTORS IN ESTABLISHING THE RELEVANCE OF A REVIEW.

Relevance		
	Is the issue of Property Maintenance relevant to review by a Scrutiny panel	An over view of the existing framework and how Corporate Property Management (CPM) of budgets will affect this.
	Will the scrutiny have an impact on improving services	CPM ought to better address issues corporately, linked to service planning and required use of built assets.
	Is the issue subject to scrutiny elsewhere	Annual Capital programme submissions/use of resources

Public Interest		
	Is there evidence of significant Bolton wide public interest	Comments on the condition of buildings and assets.
	Is it a high profile topic for Bolton wide communities or interest groups	Those using particular facilities will wish them to be to a suitable and appropriate standard
	Will the review give the public opportunity for comment	no

Impact		
	Will the review have a significant impact on the well-being of the public	Health & Safety (H&S) issues excepted (these are already high priority issues which have had significant investment and are managed on an ongoing basis to maintain standards)
	Will the issue have implications for diversity, equality and social inclusion	Access to buildings and services being addressed by

		Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) surveys and funding for adaptations
	Could this make a big difference in the way services are delivered	In conjunction with Accommodation strategy and Access points programme
	Could this make a big difference in the way resources are used	Should help target expenditure in a planned rather than reactive manner. Specific schemes are aimed at the Council's Environmental Strategy targets.

Performance		
	Is Performance particularly bad	Achieved backlog maintenance reduction 06-07, £1.004m, reduction 07-08 £6.663m by a process of investment and disposal of surplus assets.

Appropriateness.

Relevance		
	Would a review be replicated by any other internal or external review process	Yes, use of resources requires demonstration to the Audit Commission that we make the best use of our assets and financial resources.
	Is the service or issue a national government priority	Use of resources, increasing expectation of proper asset management processes linked to service requirements
	Have there been any national changes to policy	See above
	Is the issue of significant interest to the Bolton wide public	No
	Would there be a significant impact on a particular community	No
	Have there been local changes to policy	No
	Is it an area of poor performance	No
	Is there a pattern of budgetary overspend in service area	No
	Has there been a change to the remit of our arms length bodies	No, shared use is part of service delivery reviews

Potential impact		
	Is it possible for scrutiny to make a valuable contribution	Can bring local issues to bear
	Are there sufficient resources both in terms of finance and officer availability to have a tangible impact	Process is cyclical and ongoing and if a detailed review was to be undertaken would involve significant officer time leading potentially to local priorities skewing the policy away from a more strategic approach.

As part of the considerations in planning and managing the Committee workload should:

- The topic be programmed as a topic for agenda at the full Committee meeting?
- A panel be established for in-depth topic review? This will require the planning of a project, review of the activity, report preparation and recommendations and follow on monitoring of the outcomes?

Or would the Committee consider:

- Quarterly reports on progress to be presented to Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee to allow progress to be monitored?