

REVIEW OF DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL PROPERTIES

Report of the Chief Executive.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Members be invited to make comments on the continuing use or potentially different future for non-school properties within the County Committee areas.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In order to achieve a county wide review of property assets, the Business Transformation Unit (Chief Executive's Directorate) will attend County Committee meetings to consult members on the non-schools property estate.
- 1.2. Devon County Council's 'vision' for its property is to only use property that is fit for purpose, sustainable and efficient, to support the delivery of services. It is within this context that information from members on the Devon County Council owned and leased properties will be most useful to inform the decision making process.

2. Context

- 2.1. Devon County Council requires property to deliver its services to the people of Devon. In keeping with the Devon County Council strategic plan, the Authority needs a range of assets in order to deliver those services. What assets, where they are and how well they are managed has significant impact on the quality of the Council's service delivery.
- 2.2. Devon County Council's total portfolio comprises 1086 properties, both in the form of buildings and land. The value of these assets is approximately £1.3billion with an overall floor area of 223,000 square metres. Of these, the non-school estate consists of some 711 properties valued at £187 million and it is this part of the portfolio on which the review is focussed.
- 2.3. The schools and farms estate is excluded from this review process.

3. Why have an Asset Review?

- 3.1. Devon County Council has an aspiration to maximise efficiency in its property portfolio, and to reduce the annual revenue budget. The asset review will identify inefficient buildings which can be improved or replaced. The project will also reveal buildings which are performing poorly both in terms of suitability to provide services and the cost of running and maintaining the building - these buildings could be considered for disposal.
- 3.2. It is intended that in due course the review will give rise to work with partner agencies on joint projects for the benefit of service users.

4. The review process.

- 4.1. Highlighted within the list of properties at Appendix A are the factors that suggest whether or not a property is 'poorly performing' in terms of:
 - *Maintenance requirements* – Maintenance items deemed to be 'business critical' have been identified to provide a realistic expenditure requirement to ensure services can continue to be delivered. These requirements have also been measured by square metre to allow performance comparison.
 - *Running costs* – The annual cost of running a property. It includes (but is not limited to) energy (Gas and Electricity), Water, Rent, Rates, Ground Maintenance and Cleaning. This figure is divided by the floor area of the premises to obtain comparable information.
 - *Energy use* - The energy costs (electricity, gas, oil and water) are separately identified to assess the efficiency of each building. This figure is divided by the floor area of the premises to obtain comparable information.

- 4.2. It is important to note that information is not available for all properties and is incomplete on some cases.
- 4.3. The properties that comprise the poorest performing 25% on each of the factors are highlighted in grey.
- 4.4. As part of the review the views of local members and stakeholders are actively being sought. There may be a strong reason to retain a poorly performing property, and this is where local knowledge will be invaluable in applying a common sense view to set against the performance information.
- 4.5. Service Directorates are actively contributing to this process by identifying the properties which they consider most suitable for the delivery of services.

Phil Norrey

Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972

List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Richard Buzzacott

Room No: G85, County Hall, Exeter

Tel No: (01392) 382617

Appendix A – Attached.

.