

LAND AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

10 October 2024

Present:-

Councillors R Chesterton (Chair), R Scott (Vice-Chair), A Dewhirst and C Slade

Councillors F Biederman and L Hellyer (remote)

Apologies:-

Councillors M Asvachin

* **1** **Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members they should declare any interests they may have in any item to be considered, prior to any discussion taking place on that item.

* **2** **Minutes**

As this was the inaugural meeting of this Committee, there were no Minutes to review.

* **3** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* **4** **Introduction and Overview**

The Assistant Director of Transformation and Business Services gave a [Presentation](#) to the Committee, which provided an overview of Devon County Council Estates, including capital receipts, community investments, and future property needs, illustrating that the Estates team had generated £80 million in capital receipts over the last 10 years and its forecast for the same in the next decade.

The Assistant Director discussed the property strategy focusing on reducing, retaining, and repurposing assets. The strategy included internal governance and collaboration with children's and adult services to optimise asset use.

The presentation also highlighted the reduction of office floor space due to hybrid working and co-location with district partners, together with the carbon footprint reduction.

A detailed report was requested for the next meeting on the strategy for SEND repurposing and adult services, including space identification and timelines.

* **5** **Protocol for Site Visits**

The Committee considered the Protocol for Site Visits, which set out the practices and procedures that should be followed by Members and Officers of the Land and Property Committee, including clear terms of reference for how the site visits should be conducted; attendance; dealing with lobbying; avoidance of predetermination and maintaining impartiality.

The Assistant Director of Democratic Services clarified the voting rights of Local Members on the Committee and it was agreed to amend the wording of the Protocol by adding the words, 'unless predetermined or a disclosable pecuniary interest', under the relevant section.

The Director also clarified that the Farms Estate Committee retained authority over Farm Estate issues, with the Land and Property Committee cross-referencing with that Committee as and when necessary.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Slade, **SECONDED** by Councillor Dewhirst and

RESOLVED that the amended Protocol be endorsed, noting that the Procedures Committee will be required to review and recommend its adoption to the Council.

* **6** **Property Change Programme**

(Councillor Dewhirst declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being a Trustee of the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education.)

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Transformation and Business Services (TBS/24/10) on the Property Change Programme.

The report stated that the Property Strategy focussed on four key principles: Reduce, Dispose, Retain, and Repurpose, and aimed at transforming the Council's corporate estate and would form the methodology for reviewing the future use of its assets. The Property Strategy was set out in the Phase 1 Property Report that was presented to Cabinet in October 2023.

The report sought approval for the disposal of three sites and provided further details on their current status, and included updates on previously agreed disposals and ongoing projects.

In response to questions from Members, Officers reported as follows:

- Matford Lane development – that discussions were ongoing with Exeter City Council regarding its inclusion in the Local Plan.

- Ivy Bank planning – the submission of planning applications was expected by December or early next year.
- Rosalind House Gardens - this site was being repurposed as a children's home, with work expected to be completed this calendar year, providing a home for five children.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Scott, **SECONDED** by Councillor Slade and

RESOLVED that the following sites be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and disposals progressed:

- (a) Gas lane, Torrington
- (b) Long Stone Cross, Ashburton
- (c) Fremington Quay Store, Barnstaple.

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 2.51 pm