EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

A meeting of the Executive Member for Finance and Governance was held on Thursday 6 October 2022.

PRESENT: Councillor S Walker

PRESENT BY INVITATION:

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor B Hubbard

OFFICERS: S Blood, L Grabham and D Velemir

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

22/2   **ESTATES STRATEGY - LETTINGS POLICY**

The Director of Finance submitted a report that sought approve for further enhancement of the Council's Estates Strategy that clarify the processes for letting land and premises owned or managed by the Council.

The report outlined that the Lettings Policy Framework sets out a comprehensive framework and governance structure for the letting and management of the Council's land & property assets. Operation of the policy ensures that all lettings have clear objectives, decisions are made based on full information and there is a full audit trail leading to the grant of legal interests in the Council's Estate Portfolio.

The Council's Estate Strategy was approved by Executive in September 2020 and sets out the strategic basis and high level purpose for holding and managing the Council's Estate Portfolio.

Following on from a review of the Council's Non-Operational Commercial Estate Portfolio in March 2020, this policy seeks to adopt a framework of transparent, consistent and impartial processes that are to be used during the letting of any land or premises owned or managed by the Council. Adoption of the policy would ensure that the Council complies with standing legislative requirements.

The report advised that because land and premises held by the Council represents a valuable public asset, it is essential that the Authority seeks to maximise the return on the investment it makes in any land or property assets held for commercial purposes.

Implementation of the policy would ensure that the Council is also able to maximise the social, environmental and economic benefits of holding the same by driving revenue, maximising utilisation and minimising costs. It was intended that the policy would provide a framework for the letting and leasing of all land and premises across the Authority, regardless of the Directorate managing or holding the asset – by using principles authorised at Corporate Level.

These principles will guide Heads of Service, existing and prospective tenants, helping to inform decision making and improving community awareness of the Council's policy for the leasing of its land and premises.

The Chair advised that he had been in dialogue with voluntary and community groups and going forward this also should be the case.

OPTIONS
Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

Do nothing – although the Council's processes might continue to have a positive financial impact, by not adopting principles adopted and authorised at Corporate Level, decision making would in the main remain isolated and uninformed, with the strategic impact across both services and local communities being reduced due to a lack of awareness.

ORDERED

That the further enhancements to the Estates Strategy be approved in order to:

- a) **Clarify the processes that are to be used during the letting of land and premises owned or managed by the Council;**
- b) **Adopt a framework of transparent, consistent and impartial processes for the letting of land and premises owned or managed by the Council; and**
- c) **Ensure that the Council's standing Community Asset Transfer Policy is revised and brought up to date.**

REASON

The decision was supported by the following reason:

To ensure that the Council introduces a policy governing the letting of land and premises which is responsive, fit for purpose and allows the Council to clearly demonstrate Value for Money in relation to the management and letting of council owned assets, whilst also being supportive of local communities and reflective of their requirements.

The decision(s) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) was published unless the decision becomes subject to the call in procedures.