



Corporate Property Strategy
and
Asset Register
2013 - 2018

FOREWORD

The District of Harborough is changing and it is important that the Council reshapes its services to meet the expectations of our citizens and customers. Property forms a vital part of supporting service delivery, and after our people, it is the largest cost to the Council. As such, it is essential that we optimise the use of property assets (particularly office accommodation) by having an integrated approach to property management that fully explores the interaction between people, property and technology. This involves improving the use of buildings in order to reduce the amount of accommodation the Council occupies and working with partner organisations in seeking efficiencies, the new Symington Building is a major project in helping to achieve this goal. By doing this, we will be able to provide the right property in the right place to meet the challenges facing our services. In order to achieve this aim, property must be planned over the long term against clear corporate and service strategies. In this way its contribution to service delivery can be defined, opportunities for capital funding pursued, and property managed effectively.



This strategy is the fruition of collaborative effort across the Council's departments, providing a vision and direction for the Council in improving its use of property and helping to reshape the way in which we deliver services. The Council's ambition is for the District of Harborough to develop places in which to live and be happy, to encourage a vibrant and sustainable business community, intent on wealth creation and to support the vulnerable in our society at the heart of communities where they live.

We welcome the aim of matching that ambition with the provision of good quality properties to support the delivery of services to help individuals and communities achieve their full potential.

Councillor Dr Paul Bremner
Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets, Harborough District Council

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INTRODUCTION

This Corporate Property Strategy incorporates the Council's Asset Register and provides a plan of actions to be taken with regards to the effective management of the authority's property portfolio over the short and medium term.

The Council's property portfolio is valuable, the replacement insurance value is estimated to be in the order of £24m. The estate needs to be effectively managed. Property is expensive to own, run and manage, every square metre of surplus space incurs heating, lighting and running costs.

Harborough's Transformation Programme supported by this Corporate Property Strategy will act as a driver for change within the Council.

VISION

"To enhance Harborough's public service through effective property management"

The long-term vision for the property estate is to provide land and property to enable the Council to deliver its priorities, which are:

- To develop places in which to live and be happy.
- To provide the right public services to the right standard and at the right price.
- To encourage a vibrant and sustainable business community, intent on wealth creation.
- To support the vulnerable in our society at the heart of communities where they live.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES & MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The management objectives define the direction of the strategy:

- The Council will make effective and efficient use of property holdings in line with the Council's key objectives and targets.
- Construction and maintenance expenditure will be optimised having regard to whole life costings, which may justify additional capital spending to secure sustainable features and lower running costs.
- Property running costs are to be minimised and subject to regular benchmarking reviews.
- The business case for the retention of non-operational assets will be kept under review.
- The Council will work with public and private partners to secure optimum property use and is committed to maximising opportunities for the shared use of property assets to secure excellent space utilisation and to reduce running costs.

The management principles set out what is desirable to deliver the strategy:

- All property is to be held as a corporate resource.
- Property will only be held where there is an explicit benefit to service outcomes
- Capital receipts from land and property sales will be allocated to fund priorities identified in the Council's corporate capital programme.
- Property will only be held to support service delivery – exceptions may include:
 - Property held to generate income, subject to the business case for retention being demonstrated.
 - Property required to achieve a regeneration objective.
 - Property required for future service provision.
- Non-operational property will be subject to annual review.
- The Council will maintain capital and revenue investment into its property portfolio subject to available resources. Action to be taken to develop a programme to recover the current maintenance backlog, over time.
- Investment planning will take into account life cycle costs.
- New buildings will be sustainable based on life cycle costs and not initial capital outlay.
- All new buildings will have a BREEAM environmental assessment rating of not less than good.
- Property occupation and utilisation costs will be monitored and benchmarked.
- Property users have an obligation to reduce running costs.

DISPOSAL OF COMMUNITY ASSET – LOCALISM ACT

From 12 October 2012, parish councils, local voluntary and community organisations will be able to nominate local land or buildings to be included in lists of community assets maintained by local authorities. These new provisions may have an impact on any proposed disposal of council land and property.

In the event of a proposed sale, a process will be triggered that allows a community interest group – to express an interest in bidding to purchase the property. However, an important point to note is that sales may be at 'less than best consideration', ie below market/commercial prices.

The process, already outlined in the Act, has been fleshed out by draft regulations, introduced in late June 2012. The Executive approved the policies and procedures for promoting assets of community value on 25 March 2013.

The processes that flow from this will be incorporated within the delivery of this strategy and a Community Asset Transfer Protocol will be established.

MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

The Chief Executive is the Council's Corporate Property Officer and the terms of reference of the Corporate Property Officer are:

- To be the Chair of the Land and Asset Management Group,
- To be responsible for strategic asset management within the Authority,
- To report to the Executive as necessary but no less than once a year on corporate property issues,
- To act as the consultation and contact point for the advancement of improved asset management in the Authority,

The CEO has currently delegated the chair of The Land and Asset Management Group to the Head of Finance & Assets A review of the group's terms of reference will be undertaken.

FINANCE AND ASSET PLANNING

An anticipated reduction in revenue over the next three years coupled with a reduction in capital over the same period requires radical changes to secure financial savings of c. £385,000 (revenue) over the period 2014/15 – 2015/16. The response to this pressure on the Council's revenue budget as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is in two broad directions. Externally, the Council is seeking to collaborate with neighbouring councils or partner organisations to secure economies of scale. Internally, the Council is seeking to streamline internal processes through the application of systems thinking and workforce planning. There is a likelihood that in the future the Council will need to be leaner, is likely to have less staff, will have less service delivery points and consequently need less property and less space. The *Transformation Programme* including *the Headquarters redevelopment, Phase 2 of the Transformation Programme* and *new HR strategy* are reflective of this.

There is a clear need to optimise the property portfolio to contribute savings and mitigate against the budget pressures. The development of a longer term capital programme is a priority for the Council to ensure that there is an effective and efficient use of limited resources and will aim to address the council's priorities.

The Council owns a total of approximately 440 assets.

The total net book value of the operational/non operational portfolio (excluding vehicles plant and equipment, community assets, infrastructure, assets held for sale and assets under construction) as at 31 March 2012 is £23,098,000.

The generation of capital receipts has become a higher priority and funds generated in this way will enable the Council to finance capital projects. Despite this being a higher priority, there are practical difficulties linked to the disposal process, which can take the form of community expectations or opposition to any sale and legal restrictions or requirements, as well as the difficult property market currently being experienced as a result of the economic downturn. The Council may consider (subject to approved Council policies and procedures) negotiating disposals (or disposal at less than market value) with parties on an exclusive basis where this

would further other council objectives such as affordable housing targets or where the market for the property is very limited.

Data collated from returns linked to the Property Review process will also be relevant in determining whether property is surplus to requirements.

Linkages will be made with the Council's Capital Strategy and a 3-year disposal/acquisition programme will be established. Capital receipts will be treated as a corporate resource.

ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan looks over a 5/6 year period and provide a dynamic plan that is subject to annual review. The assets that will be subject to review are attached at Appendix 1. It will also assist the Council to plan its investment priorities in respect of the property estate, while identifying areas where the estate can be rationalised to reduce running costs and to generate capital receipts. Each Action includes a table with more detailed action points and will be used for the basis of reporting progress on the Plan to Members on an annual basis, these actions can then be reviewed and updated as progress is achieved.

Action 1

The main asset register provided by officers to enable this Strategy to be prepared, lists 23 categories of property holdings. There is a requirement to review and improve the register and to consolidate the information held to provide a definitive Asset Register. Improvements to be undertaken include condition survey information, information on use, suitability and sustainability assessments. Action is needed to develop a consolidated Asset Register and consider making the information available through the Council's intranet and externally via the internet for non-commercial elements of the property records. There are a number of suitable property records management systems available from the open market and these should be considered as a matter of urgency.

Appendix 4 to this document sets out the current Council's Asset Register.

| Action | Success Criteria & Outcomes | Priority | Progress 2013/14 |
|--|--|----------|------------------|
| Consolidate Asset Register | Asset register completed. | M | |
| Procure and populate new property management record system | System populated and in use | M | |
| Establish Community Asset Transfer Protocol | Community Asset Transfer Protocol adopted. | M | |

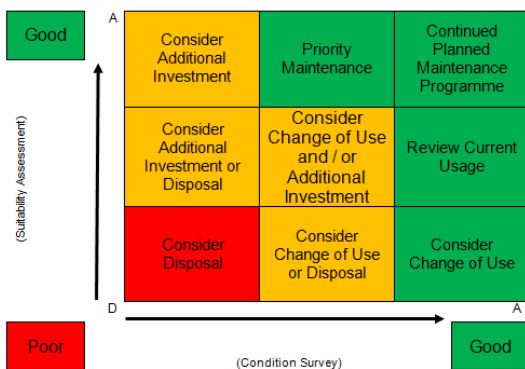
Action 2

Land and property held for service delivery should be subject to regular review at 5 yearly intervals. Special attention should be paid to non-operational land and property – refer Action 5 below

| Action | Success Criteria & Outcomes | Priority | Progress 2013/14 |
|-----------------------------|---|----------|------------------|
| Operational Property Review | Review undertaken and opportunities for improved efficiency/effectiveness of use identified | M | |

Action 3

Whilst the Council may hold property for historic reasons, it should regularly check whether the holding is suitable for service delivery purposes. Good practice suggests that comparing suitability alongside condition and investment requirements will give a good indication whether property should be held or subject to disposal. For example premises that are no longer suitable (or fit for purpose) and have a high maintenance backlog should be considered for disposal, a decision matrix is included below. Suitability assessments should be carried out at 3 yearly intervals.



The other factors which may influence the categorisation of red, amber or green are shown below:

| | |
|-------|---|
| Green | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low priority for immediate action • May have scope for increased utilisation which could be achieved with minimum investment |
| Amber | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May require adaptation works to achieve better utilisation |
| Red | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community building with the potential for community asset transfer • No longer required due to changes in service strategy |

| Action | Success Criteria & Outcomes | Priority | Progress 2013/14 |
|--|--|----------|------------------|
| To undertake condition surveys across the operational portfolio on a rolling programme, highlighting any areas of concern. | Completion of Condition Surveys | M | |
| To undertake a Property Area Review of all operational buildings including an assessment of suitability and sufficiency. | Completion of Area Reviews and Analysis of results. Completion of Decision Matrix on those properties where condition surveys have been undertaken | M | |

Action 4

Action is being taken to reduce the amount of office accommodation held to provide services by refurbishing the Headquarters Building in Adam and Eve Street and sub-letting office accommodation, ideally, to other public sector agencies including the County Council and Registrar's Office. The ground floor retail accommodation will be let for commercial use to generate income. New ways of working will be introduced and includes developing new working protocols, re-engineering support functions, adopting a corporate approach to records management and reviewing storage arrangements. Offices should, generally, have an open plan configurations to optimise space utilisation.

| Action | Success Criteria & Outcomes | Priority | Progress 2013/14 |
|---|--|----------|------------------|
| Completion of HQ re-development construction works | Work completed on or before schedule | H | |
| Re-occupation of HQ building | HDC and other occupiers successfully in occupation | H | |
| Letting of available office and retail space within HQ building | All office and retail space let in accordance with Lettings Strategy | H | |
| Review other office space, and identify disposal opportunities | Review undertaken, opportunities identified and disposals achieved for any properties declared surplus | M | |
| To promote new working practices and standards, such as remote working, hot-desking, etc. to meet changing service needs. | New working practices adopted and office environment works effectively and efficiently | H | |

Action 5

The non-operational portfolio should be subject to annual review with formal reporting to Executive, following consultation with the relevant portfolio holder/s. Consideration to be given to dispose of non-operational property unless supported by a business case for retention. However, disposals/sales will have regard to prevailing market conditions. Also, the Council has committed redevelopment of the Market Hall to ensure a financially stable operating model and increased commercial return. In order to ensure a consistent approach in dealing with disposals of any

nature (freehold, leasehold, license, easement, etc.), the Council will develop a Disposals Policy.

| Action | Success Criteria & Outcomes | Priority | Progress 2013/14 |
|--|--|----------|------------------|
| Review non-operational portfolio | Non-operational portfolio reviewed and opportunities for disposal identified | M | |
| Re-develop Market Hall | Market Hall redevelopment complete | H | |
| New lettings for re-opening of Market Hall | Market re-opens with substantial increase in occupied stalls | H | |
| Develop Disposals Policy | Disposal Policy prepared and approved. | M | |

Action 6

Overtime the Council will put in place benchmarking reviews to assess performance of its property estate and to identify those premises that have higher running costs. A good start point would be to benchmark office running costs with the County and the other district Council's within the Leicestershire County area.

| Action | Success Criteria & Outcomes | Priority | Progress 2013/14 |
|--|---|----------|------------------|
| Develop performance indicators and benchmark with other authorities in the region. | Performance Indicators in place and data being collected and reviewed | L | |

Measurement will commence following re-occupation of the Council Headquarters

Action 7

The Council will need to consider the proposals set out in the Action Plan and determine priorities and the internal resources that can be allocated to undertake the various reviews. Key actions identified in priority order from the information held on the Register include:

- To take action to develop a consolidated Asset Register and to acquire a suitable internet enabled property records system.
- Rationalisation of Office Accommodation
- Market Hall refurbishment
- **Undertake a review of all garage sites**
- Undertake a review of all car park sites
- **Undertake a review of the Settling Rooms**
- Consider the disposal of the Lutterworth Service Shop and the offices on the Doddridge Road car park

The reviews detailed in bold are detailed within this report

| Action | Success Criteria & Outcomes | Priority | Progress 2013/14 |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------|------------------------------------|
| Prioritise and Resource Action Plan. | Resources identified and Action Plan prioritised | M | Corporate Asset Manager appointed. |

The above list is not exclusive and will also need in the medium term to review all asset categories

ACQUISTIONS

This Strategy document proposes that where property is not fit for purpose or does not support service delivery objectives consideration should be given to disposal. However, the Council also should have a strategic approach to acquire land and property that can support services or may have benefits in the longer term. Examples could include the acquisition of land or property adjacent to an existing property asset to consolidate and add value. These opportunities are by their nature commercial and therefore confidential. Any opportunities will be subject to discussion with the Portfolio Holder and subject to a full report.

Appendix 1: Technical Note

This technical notes identifies the areas that should be subject to early review. A 5 year review programme should be established to address the proposed approach.

Garage sites – An initial review has been undertaken, please refer to Appendix 2 of this report.

Car Parks (16) – All of these should be subject to review. Car parks in town centre locations have potential capital value albeit that they also generate revenue income. It is recommended that these car parks are subject to a one off review to determine short and longer term actions.

Commercial (6) sites are listed under this heading, which are:

- Adam and Eve Headquarters (Retail, Offices, Library & Museum)
- Market Hall
- Welland Park Café and Bandstand
- Welland Park Garage/Glasshouse and Messroom
- Harborough Innovation Centre
- Settling Rooms

Action is being taken with the first two commercial sites as part of the review of the Headquarters Accommodation Strategy and Transformation Programme.

The Council is reviewing the options, with the current tenant, Self Unlimited, of the Welland Park facilities.

An initial review of the Settling Rooms has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3 of this report.

Offices (5) properties are listed, which are:

- Clover Court – understood not to be a council asset but transferred to Seven Locks for office space and was due to close in December 2012.
- Adam and Eve Street Offices – currently undergoing re-development as part of the Transformation Programme.
- Doddridge Road
- Hill Court Bushby is leased from East Midlands Housing Association but let on a licence to LCC. The Council should investigate options to terminate their interest whilst ensuring the County Council retain their interest if required.
- Lutterworth Service Shop

The Council are currently occupying offices at Millers House during the refurbishment of the headquarters building on Adam & Eve Street. There is potential to dispose of both the Lutterworth Service Shop and the Council Offices located on the Doddridge Road car park site. The Council will need to review and make a decision in respect of the future of these properties following the refurbishment of the Headquarters building. It is proposed that all the remaining offices be subject to a review to determine if required for operational purposes and if not, consider disposal of the interest.

In addition, the interest in the Property Shop, Market Harborough has now been relinquished.

Homeless and temporary accommodation

The Council retain just one property for this purpose albeit that Seven Locks are the housing provider for the area. Consideration could be given to dispose of this property to Seven Locks.

Allotment sites – the Council own (7) sites.

Walton Allotment is described as in poor condition. Checks to be undertaken to determine occupation levels and if the site should continue to be retained for this purpose. A key decision could be to review all the allotment sites to determine whether the existing sites are properly located or whether the sites have significant capital value that could be released subject to suitable alternative allotment sites being provided.

Amenity Space – (133) locations.

The majority of sites are classified as good but 11 sites are categorised as average to poor. Starting with the average to poor sites, overtime, the Council should review these Amenity Spaces to ensure that they are valued community resources and that there is no latent value in the sites. Running and maintenance costs should also be reviewed to ensure that these are minimised. It is suggested that Amenity Spaces could be reviewed over a 5 year period, undertaking c. 20% each year with reporting to appropriate committees.

Annual licences – the records show that (11) licences are issued and these should be subject to a one off review to ensure that the Council continues to receive full value for the licences issues with reporting to an appropriate committee.

Burial Grounds (8) & Closed Churchyards (20)

The closed churchyards are not owned by HDC but the Council has obligations to maintain if requested by the Parochial Church Council - this needs to be reviewed. The Council is understood to be undertaking a review of the facilities and need to look at ways to reduce running and maintenance costs, if possible.

Public Toilets

The Council will undertake a review of all public toilets within its ownership.

Appendix 2: Review of Garage Sites

The Council currently has the following residual garage sites, following previous transfers to Seven Locks;

- Main Street, Fleckney
- Ashby Rise, Great Glen
- St Cuthbert's Avenue, Great Glen
- Newcombe Street, Market Harborough (disused)
- Paget Road, Lubenham
- Home Close, Kibworth

Background

This Corporate Property Strategy (CPS) and Asset Register identifies the following management objectives that define the direction of the strategy:

- The Council will make effective and efficient use of property holdings in line with the Council's key objectives and targets.
- The business case for the retention of non-operational assets will be kept under review.

The CPS identifies the following management principles that set out what is desirable to deliver the strategy:

- Property will only be held where there is an explicit benefit to service outcomes
- Capital receipts from land and property sales will be allocated to fund priorities identified in the Council's corporate capital programme.
- Property will only be held to support service delivery – exceptions may include:
 - Property held to generate income, subject to the business case for retention being demonstrated.
 - Property required to secure a regeneration objective.
 - Property required for future service provision.
- Non-operational property will be subject to annual review.

The CPS includes the following;

- Action 5 - The non-operational portfolio should be subject to annual review with formal reporting to Executive. Consideration to be given to dispose of non-operational property unless supported by a business case for retention. However, disposals/sales will have regard to prevailing market conditions.
- Action 7 identifies a review of the Garage Sites as a priority.

Service Issues

Discussions with Officers confirm that there are no specific service benefits from operating the garage sites and the Council is not under a statutory duty to provide garages. There are no requirements for future service provision.

The current running costs for 2012/13 and budget for 2013/14 for the garage sites is identified below:

| Description | Budget £ 2012/13 | Outturn £ | Budget £ 2013/14 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Building Repairs & Maintenance | 1,000 | 1,540 | 2,000 |
| Total Expenditure | 1,000 | 1,540 | 2,000 |
| Garages - Other Tenants | (18,300) | (17,796) | (18,100) |
| Total Income | (18,300) | (17,796) | (18,100) |
| Sub Total | (17,300) | (16,256) | (16,100) |
| Central Charges | 4,800 | 4,800 | 4,800 |
| Capital Financing | 8,700 | 8,700 | 8,700 |
| NET TOTAL | (3,800) | (2,756) | (2,600) |

The condition of the garages is deteriorating and some may require investment over the forthcoming years. The continued retention of these buildings may result in ongoing operational and financial implications in terms of continuing maintenance and security.

As outlined previously, the management principles state that property will only be held to support service delivery – exceptions may include property held to generate income, subject to the business case for retention being demonstrated. The table above demonstrates that the income from operating the garage sites is limited and does not support continued retention on this basis alone.

Discussions with local agents suggest that there is currently increased activity in smaller residential development sites from Housing Associations and small builder/developers. Blaby District Council are currently coming to the end of a disposal process for their garage sites albeit for a substantially larger number of sites, and there has been strong interest and they have achieved good results.

A number of the sites have potential for development and these should be marketed appropriately. Many of the sites afford development opportunity and the current

recommendations would be to agree sales subject to planning consent being granted which would enhance value as the planning risk for developers would be removed.

It is recommended that the sites are fully exposed to the market and offers invited, however, consideration should be given to the need to meet the affordable homes target, and this should be a factor when assessing bids.

Conclusion

The garage sites are not currently contributing to service provision and the income levels from operating the garage sites is minimal. The sites afford good potential for redevelopment and, in general, would be attractive to residential developers, particularly the affordable housing sector, but also the private sector.

Options

- Do Nothing – not recommended due to the poor financial returns and opportunity costs for redevelopment/sale.
- Direct development by Council or in Partnership with a Housing provider – we have considered this option but feel that there are currently insufficient resources available within the Council to deliver a project such as this and the risks associated with doing so outweigh the likely additional benefits.
- Sale of Garage Sites – This is the preferred option, and we would recommend a sale as individual lots fully exposed to the market, and accept offers conditional on planning consent being granted, as this will remove the planning risk from bidders and should result in increased offers.

Comment [SR1]: Mark, check with Verina whether she would be happy with conditional offers rather than unconditional offers

Recommendations:

(a) That the following garage sites, and the land on which they are located, be declared surplus to the Councils requirements.

- Main Street, Fleckney
- Ashby Rise, Great Glen
- St Cuthbert's Avenue, Great Glen
- Newcombe Street, Market Harborough (disused)
- Paget Road, Lubenham
- Home Close, Kibworth

(b) that the Council approve in principle the disposal of the remaining garage site subject to appropriate consultation.

Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

- To satisfy draft Corporate Delivery Plan 2013/14 Objective CA9 "Ensure financial and other assets are maximised and managed efficiently" and to further good asset/property management of the Councils assets.
- To realise the maximum benefits from the disposal of the assets.

Appendix 3: Review of The Settling Rooms

Background

This Corporate Property Strategy (CPS) and Asset Register identifies the following management objectives that define the direction of the strategy:

- The Council will make effective and efficient use of property holdings in line with the Council's key objectives and targets.
- The business case for the retention of non-operational assets will be kept under review.

The CPS identifies the following management principles that set out what is desirable to deliver the strategy:

- Property will only be held where there is an explicit benefit to service outcomes
- Capital receipts from land and property sales will be allocated to fund priorities identified in the Council's corporate capital programme.
- Property will only be held to support service delivery – exceptions may include:
 - Property held to generate income, subject to the business case for retention being demonstrated.
 - Property required to secure a regeneration objective.
 - Property required for future service provision.
- Non-operational property will be subject to annual review.

Also, the CPS includes;

- Action 5 - The non-operational portfolio should be subject to annual review with formal reporting to Executive. Consideration to be given to dispose of non-operational property unless supported by a business case for retention. However, disposals/sales will have regard to prevailing market conditions.
- Action 7 identifies a review of the Settling Rooms as a priority.

Legal

The Council currently owns the freehold interest of the Settling Rooms (a Grade 2 listed building), which is utilised for community purposes.

There is an existing restrictive covenant in the title deeds which restricts the use of the building for community purposes including but not limited to uses within Class D1 specified in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and not permit the building to be used for carrying on of any business or commercial enterprise. Class D1 includes clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court, non residential education and training centres. Any proposed changes in class would require a separate legal opinion.

Service Issues

There are no specific service benefits from the Council operating the property and the Council is not under a statutory duty to provide such. The current running costs for 2012/13 and budget for 2013/14 for the Settling Rooms is identified below:

| Item | 2012/13 Budget | 2013/14 Budget |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| A - Employees | | |
| Agency Staff | 0 | 1,000 |
| B - Premises | | |
| Building Repairs & Maintenance | 500 | 800 |
| Electricity | 900 | 500 |
| Gas | 2,500 | 1,100 |
| Business Rates | 2,000 | 2,100 |
| Water Charges | 700 | 700 |
| Fixed Plant - Repairs & Maintenance | 3,800 | 3,800 |
| D - Supplies & Services | | |
| Operational Equipment | 0 | |
| Operational Materials | 0 | 200 |
| Telephones - Direct | 200 | 300 |
| Refuse Collection Charges | 300 | |
| Insurances | 0 | |
| G - Central Charges | | |
| Accountancy Services | 300 | 300 |
| Exchequer Services | 200 | 200 |
| Insurance Recharge | 700 | 700 |
| H - Capital Financing | | |
| Depreciation | 6,300 | 6,300 |
| J - Income | | |
| Rent | -200 | -1,000 |
| Leases | -7,600 | -7,500 |
| Total | 10,600 | 9,500 |

This shows that the property is currently operating at a deficit, and with no substantial allowance for future maintenance/replacement of major components this deficit could be exacerbated in the future.

Marketability & Value

In the event that the property were formally marketed, there would be limited interest in the freehold interest due to the restrictive covenant on the use of the premises

The Council has received an expression of interest in acquiring the settling rooms. The interested party has indicated that they would continue to operate the property in accordance with the restrictions on use, and would also help protect an important historic building in the town. In the event that a disposal is pursued, we would recommend including an overage provision, which in the event that the restrictive

covenant is removed and the property is subsequently disposed of, an additional sum (formula to be determined) would be due to the Council.

Conclusion

The Settling Rooms is not currently contributing to service provision and the property is currently operating at a deficit. The site has a limited market for the freehold interest, however, the Council has received an expression of interest from an interested party, who would continue to operate the property in accordance with the restrictions on use. The Council could without prejudice enter into discussions with the interested party with any future disposal/sale being made in accordance with Council's policies and procedures.

Options

- Do Nothing – not recommended due to the poor financial returns and opportunity cost for sale.
- Sale of The Settling Rooms,
- Full exposure to the market, however, due to the restricted use of the property, it is felt that this will not create additional interest, Explore a Sale to the interested party, this is the preferred option.

Recommendation:

- (a) That the Settling rooms, and the land on which it is located, be declared surplus to the Councils requirements.
- (b) That the Council enter into discussions with the current Interested party.

Summary of Reasons for the Recommendation

- To satisfy draft Corporate Delivery Plan 2013/14 Objective CA9 "Ensure financial and other assets are maximised and managed efficiently" and to further good asset/property management of the Councils assets.