

South Norfolk Council

Strategic Asset Management Framework

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

South Norfolk Council like most Local Authorities holds a diverse portfolio of property assets. As a key resource, there is significant value held in Property Assets, but they also cost money to use and maintain.

This document provides an Asset Management Framework under which the Council will manage its property assets and has been compiled with regard to the latest guidance on strategic asset management issued by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

The Asset Management Framework comprises of three elements:

- An Asset Management Policy
- A Strategic Asset Management Strategy
- An Asset Management Working Action Plan

The framework provides the link between the Council's property portfolio and the delivery of its corporate objectives. It outlines why we hold property assets, how they align to the Council's vision and objectives and what actions need to be taken to ensure those property assets are performing effectively and efficiently.

2 Asset Management Policy

2.1 Asset Management Policy

The Asset Management Policy establishes some clear principles, as outlined below, by which South Norfolk Council will manage its land and properties.



Our Vision is:

To undertake a more entrepreneurial use of property to encourage community vibrancy; support service delivery and to respond to budget pressures (through cost reduction and income generation).

Policy Objectives and Actions and Behaviours

To achieve the principles above we have listed below six objectives together with the actions and behaviours required to accomplish these.

1. To undertake a corporate approach to property assets.
 - Capital Projects are managed efficiently and effectively and prioritised to support the Council's Strategic Plan.
 - We will have clear corporate decision making and challenge on all property matters.
 - Property budgets managed corporately to prioritise key investment needs.
 - Achieving an effective balance between corporate and service priorities.
 - Ensuring that property information is accurate, current and comprehensive.

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- To coordinate planning for property need in the future.
2. Ensure our operational property services the needs of users now and also in the future.
 - Ensuring property is suitable and sufficient for service delivery.
 - Ensuring property is flexible and is planned to respond to future need.
 - Ensuring property is secure, safe to use and fulfilling statutory requirements.
 - Making our property accessible to all our customers.
 - Working with services to understand their longer-term requirements in order to plan for the future.
 - Working with communities and partners to optimise the use of assets where beneficial.
 - Adopting an area-based approach to planning our service delivery and community shaping.
 3. Provide sustainable properties that are managed effectively and efficiently.
 - Improve the Council's property assets to become more sustainable, in line with the council's ambition to achieve net-zero carbon emission by 2030, through exploring viable options to reduce energy consumption.
 - Using renewable energy where appropriate.
 - Using whole life consideration in our business case developments for construction projects reducing energy and water consumption and CO2 omissions. Also taking into consideration the environmental impact of transportation for users.
 - Minimising waste.
 - Ensuring property is suitably managed and maintained within budget constraints.
 - Ensuring reporting is in place to monitor statutory compliance requirements with regards to managing property assets.
 - Seek to maximise income and minimise the cost of our property assets while ensuring our corporate priorities are achieved.
 - Having flexibility in our buildings to facilitate change of working practices in the future.
 - Seeking efficiencies in occupancy and utilisation and introducing new ways of working.
 - Challenging the cost of property activities to drive performance improvement.
 - Challenging the use of assets including disposal where appropriate.
 - Understanding our asset portfolio so we can be agile in responding to funding and government grants.
 - To assemble land and properties consistent with the delivery of the Council's economic and social agenda which may include the Council using its powers to compulsory purchase (CPO).

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4. Optimise the financial return and commercial opportunities of the Council's land and property portfolio, particularly in relation to the Council's investment properties to provide an income to support the Council's revenue budgets. This is within the context that the primary reason for holding Commercial property is for economic growth and development.
 - Review the investment properties portfolio to ensure assets are still achieving the right level of return.
 - Strategically manage a balanced portfolio of investment properties.
 - Dispose of under-performing and surplus property assets where use of these assets for income generation is not viable for the Council.
 - Seek opportunities to increase the value of assets through change of use.

5. Use the Council's property assets to stimulate development and tourism together with supporting local community needs, addressing health inequalities and encouraging new business to the area.
 - Use our assets to stimulate and support regeneration and inward investment and, where appropriate tourism recognising the unique characteristics and heritage of place.
 - Use investment in the Council's investment properties portfolio for income generation and to create local employment and training opportunities.
 - Use the Council's assets to address health inequalities as identified in the Council's health and Wellbeing Strategy.
 - Use the Council's capital investments in its property assets to stimulate economic growth.
 - Identifying potential sites which could be brought forward for housing and/or employment development.

6. Work with Partners where it will benefit service users and/or secure efficiencies.
 - Where appropriate work with other agencies and partners to promote co-location and joint service delivery, using public sector property assets as a catalyst to transform public services.
 - Support the one public estate programme to seek to drive efficiencies in operation and management of our property assets as well as those of our partners.
 - Support growth and regeneration by releasing redundant public sector land and buildings, generating capital receipts for reinvestment in services.
 - We will also work with partners and enable communities where they are better placed to manage property and deliver services.

This policy and associated strategy and action plans have a medium-term (3-5 years) planning horizon and will be updated periodically. It is restricted to consideration of the property assets that the council owns or uses.

3 Strategic Asset Management Strategy

3.1 Purpose & Scope of the Strategic Asset Management Plan

This Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) identifies the key strategic policy and resource influences affecting South Norfolk Council and in response to these sets a broad direction for asset management, enabling its property portfolio to be optimised to meet identified needs.

It is intended as a practical tool which helps to define, implement and measure how the council: -

- Makes its property investment decisions.
- Maintains and improves its property assets.
- Increases the cost effectiveness of its property portfolio.
- Ensures the property portfolio is ‘fit for purpose’.
- Promotes innovation and development in property asset management.
- Listens and responds to property users.

This is an overarching strategic asset management framework which includes operational and community property assets, but under which sits a specific asset management strategy for Commercial Property Assets.

The plan has a medium-term (3-5 years) planning horizon and will be updated periodically. It is restricted to consideration of the property assets that the council owns or uses.

3.2 Overview of the Portfolio

The council has a small but diverse property portfolio. It contains a mix of asset types which have been acquired and are held for a variety of purposes. The portfolio can be categorised into three broad asset classes – each of which have their own management objectives. These are summarised in simple terms in the table below.

| Asset Class | Management Objectives | | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Operational Assets – held primarily to support (directly or | Functional Suitability | Running Cost | Condition | Carbon Efficiency |

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| | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| indirectly) the delivery of council services | | | | |
| Investment (Commercial) Assets – held primarily to contribute to economic growth but also for the purposes of generating rental income and / or for capital growth | Rate of return | Value | Occupancy Rates | Carbon Efficiency |
| Community Assets – held by the council in perpetuity to support recreational, cultural & social well-being of the area. | Ease of Access | Costs of maintaining | Opportunity Cost | Carbon Efficiency |

The number of assets in each asset class and their asset value is given in the table below.

| Asset Class, Type & Use | | | Number | Asset Value ¹ £000s |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Operational Assets | Administrative | Offices | 2 | 3,876 |
| | Service | Depots | 1 | 467 |
| | | Car parks | 18 | 2,336 |
| | | Temporary Accommodation | 2 | 862 |
| | | Leisure Centres* | 3 | 18,547 |
| | | Gipsy & Travellers Sites | 1 | 55 |
| | | Public Conveniences** | 2 | 113 |
| | | Sewerage Plant | 1 | 3 |
| | | Surplus Assets | Land awaiting development | 9 |
| Investment Assets | Commercial | Industrial | 21 | 4,141 |
| | | Offices*** | 7 | 7,090 |
| | | Retail | 2 | 532 |
| | | Garages | 7 | 240 |
| | | Caravan Site | 1 | 291 |
| | | Land awaiting development | 4 | 1,310 |
| | | Land for rent | 7 | 3,534 |
| Community Assets | | Commons & Parish Land | Inc. | N/A |
| | | Countryside Sites | Inc. | N/A |
| | | Amenity Land | 135 | N/A |
| | | Cemeteries | 1 | N/A |
| | Assets held for Sale | | 1 | 3,296 |
| | | | Total | £48,262 |

¹ Asset value is for capital accounting purposes and is not necessarily related to market value as at 31/03/2023
 *Includes Ketts Park Tennis Pavilion
 **Includes Diss, which is leased to the Town Council
 ***Providing 59 leases (inc 2 retail units at Loddon)

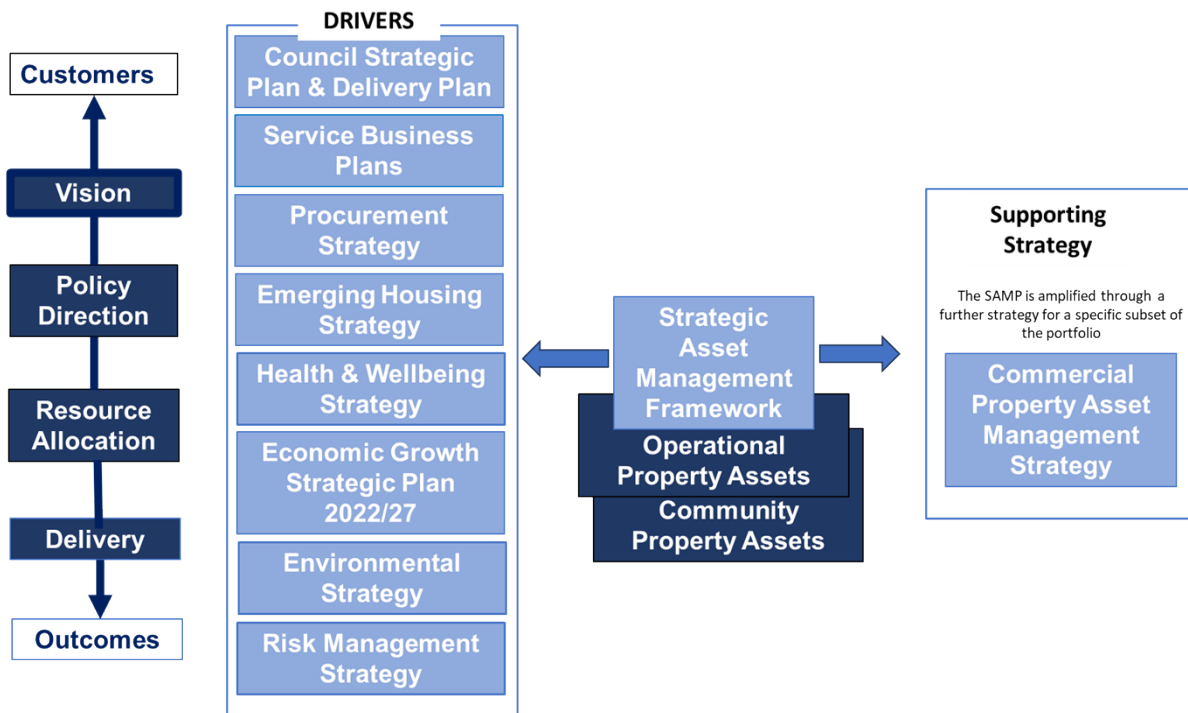
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The figures above do not include the property assets that are held by the Big Sky Group, a set of companies wholly owned by South Norfolk Council. Within the Big Sky Group, Big Sky Property Management Ltd has a housing portfolio which at the 31st March 2023 was valued at £7.4 million. These property assets are owned and managed by the company and as such are not covered by this Strategic Asset Management Framework.

3.3 Links to Other Plans and Strategies

The SAMP does not exist in isolation but is set against wider corporate and service strategies. The SAMP itself is amplified through a range of supporting strategies and policies. The positioning and linkage of the SAMP to these is illustrated in Diagram 1 below. The SAMP focuses principally on the Council's operational property assets with other parts of the portfolio having complimentary but discrete strategies.

Diagram 1 – The Links between the SAMP and other Strategies



3.4 Strategic Context and Direction

Influences for Change

There are a range of influences that are driving change in the area and to which the council must respond through its portfolio management. These can be recognised at a national and regional level and locally through the council's policies and initiatives.

National and Local Context

Nationally, local government and the public sector as a whole are looking to transform the way they work in order to provide a better service to residents, gain greater influence and resilience and address key national challenges. Trends over the last decade or so have shown significant cuts in funding for councils from central government and general lower spend across public services.

Financing and resources

Local government and the public sector as a whole is facing unprecedented challenges, not only in terms of financial pressures, but also in terms of demographic changes. At a national level, there is a shifting policy picture, with implications for the Council's duties and expectations of different ways of working across a range of activities, and for how we are funded. Nationally, [DCN research](#) in October 2023 revealed expectations of a funding shortfall of £1.1bn in funding over 2023-24 and 2024-25. Reduced funding means we need to be creative with how we deliver our services, constantly reviewing opportunities for new funding opportunities and transforming how we do things.

Devolution

Devolution is the transference of power and funding from national to local government, with the aim of de-centralising decision making and giving local areas more flexibilities and freedoms. Government released in 2022, their Levelling Up White Paper, followed by the royal assent of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. In Norfolk, the County Council were invited to submit a County Deal which is due to be formally decided upon in the coming months (the deal has been agreed 'in principle'). This will have implications and potential opportunities for the Councils in Norfolk in the future.

Rising costs and housing affordability

Affordability of housing and costs of general living remains a persistent challenge. We are witnessing an increasing number of families struggling to secure stable and affordable housing and a growing burden of utility costs and

rising prices for essential goods and services including food and energy. This is causing a significant increase in demand for temporary accommodation.

Ageing populations and health

We have a growing and ageing population. General health in South Norfolk is better than the Norfolk average, however, there remains challenges we need to face around health inequalities, mental health and access to services.

The Natural Environment

Climate change, including increased flooding incidents, and the effects on people and communities at both a local and national level is one of the biggest challenges of our times. South Norfolk has some of the best opportunities in the UK to transform our economy, allowing us to live better lives whilst minimising our environmental impact. This is more than just a commitment to net zero, important though it is, this is about using our location, unique natural spaces, local engineering and innovative skills to redefine the post-carbon economy.

3.5 Council Initiatives

The Council recognises that in meeting its aspirations for the community it serves it too has to change. These changes need to improve value for money in services and support prosperity of the area. There are a range of corporate initiatives to which the management of the property portfolio must respond. These are articulated through South Norfolk Council's Our Strategic Plan for 2024-2028. The overall vision is ***'Build a future where our community thrives, individuals are inspired, and the quality of life is continuously enhanced.'*** To achieve this the Council intends to focus resources and efforts in four areas. These are: -

- **Enhancing our environment**
 - Provide environmental leadership to build a cleaner and more sustainable future.
 - We commit to conserving and enhancing biodiversity through best practice management and implementation of our Environmental Strategy and Delivery Plan.
 - Protecting and improving our natural and built environment, whilst also maximising quality of life for our local communities.
 - Our vision includes clean and green spaces, smart planning, and renewable energy initiatives that reduce our carbon footprint and improve air and water quality.

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- **Growing a prosperous economy**
 - Give businesses across South Norfolk the confidence to invest and grow, creating opportunities for our residents and improving their quality of life in an already outstanding environment.
 - We envision a dynamic local economy that attracts investment, fosters innovation, and creates jobs.
 - We support and nurture businesses, from small startups to established enterprises, ensuring long-term prosperity for our community.

- **Enriching our communities**
 - Build strong communities who have the resources and open spaces they need to thrive.
 - Ensuring that community spaces and facilities are inclusive and can be accessed and used by everyone.
 - We are committed to promoting physical and mental health, providing access to healthcare services, and creating a community that values and supports the well-being of all residents.

- **Moving with the times**
 - Deliver services that residents, businesses and communities say are innovative, efficient, and easy to use.
 - We aspire to be an open and transparent Council that listens to its people.
 - We will adapt to changing needs and promote a culture of accountability, always seeking ways to improve our services and communication.

These priorities and activities all have an impact on how the Council manages its portfolio of property assets. The direction for asset management must be responsive to, and supportive of these priorities, and individual actions in managing the Council's properties must directly support these priorities. To do this the Council recognises that within the scope of asset management it will need to:- seek external resources to deliver required infrastructure; improve the range of housing to meet local needs and deliver more affordable and temporary housing; protect green and open spaces; support new local businesses through a supply of business premises; encourage market town vibrancy through promotion of local service hubs and work in partnership with other agencies to deliver services with the potential to share assets to reduce costs.

3.6 Resource Context

The Council is facing significant budget pressures over the medium term. The council is responding to these pressures through a combination of reducing expenditure and making efficiencies through a transformation approach. In addition, rather than reducing services the Council is committed to developing new income streams and using innovative and devolved funding schemes to support the revenue budget.

There is a budget shortfall of £0.8 million over the five years to 2028/29, the medium-term plan already includes a £1.7million reduction over this period in the cost of services, as a result of its transformation plans but will continue to look for further opportunities.

In the previous five years the Council's revenue budget has been supported through income derived from its investment properties and its investment in its wholly owned development and property management companies. There is an intention for this to continue. The Council has borrowed £20 million in 2023 to support the delivery of its ambitious capital programme for the next five years. The capital programme includes further investment in commercial property to earn a return. Such investments are subject to a robust business case on an asset-by-asset basis. Within the operational asset portfolio there will be a need to bear down on overall operating costs and generate additional income where possible through co-locating with partners and the leasing out of spare capacity.

3.7 Strategic Direction

The planning context outlined in sections 3.4 to 3.6 above implies a revised direction for asset management focussed on ***a more entrepreneurial use of property to encourage community vibrancy; support service delivery and to respond to budget pressures (through cost reduction and income generation)***. In the future asset management needs to: -

- Adopt a robust approach to allocation of capital with investment directed to supporting council's priorities and to assets with greatest need / likely benefit.
- Lower the operating costs of property.
- Support through One Public Estate the provision of seamless, integrated access to public services through joint working with partner agencies to create multi-agency service facilities – a 'locality-based model' for public service.

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- Prioritise those open spaces assets which add value to the local area by providing significant amenity and resource to the local community.
- Encourage partner organisations to retain and enhance their facilities to support locality working and to help sustain vibrancy in market towns and rural communities.
- Minimise costs to the council by reducing the maintenance liabilities of assets within the portfolio that do not significantly contribute to the Strategic Asset Management Plan's objectives as outlined in 3.5 of this document.
- Take a more commercial approach to the management of all property assets to optimise income generation.

Diagram 2 – The Relationship between the Corporate Plan and Asset Management



4 Strategic Asset Management Action Plan

4.1 A Framework for Action

Looking forward there are a number of actions required to respond to the challenges identified in the strategy above in section 3. An action plan is presented below. The actions are referenced to the Council's Strategic Plan 2024/28 priorities. The funding implications and timing of these actions are identified where these are known.

| Actions | Enhancing our Environment | Growing a prosperous economy | Enriching our communities | Moving with the times | Indicative Timing (completed by) |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake condition surveys on all buildings within the next four years, looking ahead 25 years to inform individual reviews and capital programme | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | 27/28 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Commercial Property Assets to maximise return of the Portfolio | | | | ■ | 26/27 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake options assessment for expansion or re-provision of Ketteringham Depot | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | Q4 25/26 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authority Housing Fund. Purchase of Temporary Accommodation and Resettlement Homes Phase 1. | | ■ | ■ | ■ | Q1 24/25 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary Accommodation. Transfer the property management to Big Sky, including provision of proactive management plan | | ■ | ■ | ■ | Q3 24/25 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wymondham Station Approach, progress the planning permission and compulsory purchase order | ■ | | ■ | ■ | Q4 25/26 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gypsy and Travelers Site. Progress the options review and lease negotiations with current holder | | ■ | ■ | ■ | Q1 24/25 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of the refurbishment of Diss Swim Centre | | ■ | ■ | ■ | Q3 24/25 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of a new dry side leisure facility in Diss | | ■ | ■ | ■ | 2026 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of Diss Surgery | | ■ | ■ | ■ | 26/27 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of Hethersett Surgery | | ■ | ■ | ■ | 26/27 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queens Hills Country Park | ■ | ■ | ■ | | 25/26 |

4.2 Service Strategies & Implications for the Operational Portfolio

There are a number of service strategies to which the management of the operational portfolio needs to respond. The major operational asset holdings are summarised below with a concise summary of future direction and required actions with any implications identified.

- **Offices** -The Council jointly owns its main headquarters, the Horizon Centre, with Broadland District Council. This flagship building is the focal point for delivering the majority of the Council activities. The building is highly sustainable with over 2,500 photovoltaic on site and in Q4 23/24 has removed the gas boilers with the installation of air source heat pumps. The previous home of the Council, South Norfolk House, in Long Stratton, is in the process of being sold. To service the most southerly area of the district, services are also offered from the Council owned Octagon Hub in Diss to the town and the surrounding villages.
- **Leisure Centres** – The council owns three leisure-based facilities: with centres at Wymondham (Both dry and wet side facilities), Long Stratton (Dry side facilities), Diss (Wet side facilities). It also leases two other sites that provide dry side leisure facilities at Ketts Park in Wymondham and Framingham Earl. There are further aspirations to deliver within the period a dry leisure facility in Diss to complement and enhance the existing swim provision.
- **Ketteringham Depot** – The Council owns the freehold of Ketteringham Depot from which it provides its waste services. This is an old and 'traditional' depot, which whilst currently supporting waste services effectively is working at capacity and is not 'fit for the future'. There continues to be growth in the demand for waste services and the regulations for its treatment, including recent legislation which will lead to the introduction of food waste collection. Therefore, options of how to accommodate the need for increased capacity for the service are being considered and will need to be delivered with the life of this strategy.
- **Temporary Accommodation** - Provision of temporary accommodation is a statutory responsibility and the council will need to provide in the future according to demand. The Council adopts a risk-based approach according to client needs and will use the private sector if its own accommodation is full or where some client support may be needed. The Council is moving to a model where the Big Sky Group of companies manage the portfolio of accommodations, providing a suitable service to ensure the safety of the occupants and the timely resolution of property related issues. A strategic management plan will be put into place to

effectively manage the maintenance and upkeep based upon conditions surveys and an approved maintenance regime.

- Local Authority Housing Fund – The Council has successfully secured funds to purchase at least 11 homes to serve as a mix of Temporary Accommodation and resettlement. There are further opportunities to secure more funding which the Council is applying for to secure additional homes. It is seeking to transfer the resettlement properties to the Big Sky Group and is developing a model for Big Sky to manage this portfolio in line with the Temporary Accommodation.
- Wymondham Sales Yard – The Council has an aspiration to acquire and improve the public realm and access to the area around the Wymondham train station, a feasibility study has been completed.
- Gypsy & Traveller Sites – The Council owns the freehold of a Gypsy & Travellers site which was granted on a long lease to Norfolk County Council who manage and operate the site with no SNDC involvement. This lease is due to expire shortly, and the Council are in discussions on the ongoing provision and management. The Council also owns a transit site for short-term placement of travellers.
- Green spaces and natural areas – The Council owns and manages a variety of open spaces across the district. Some are large and are managed as important natural areas (common land, woodlands, and Queen's Hills Country Park for example). These spaces offer vital outdoor access and recreational space for local communities, but are also places in which biodiversity thrives. There are also many smaller, more formal amenity spaces that the Council manages. These may have play areas within them, tree planting and are often managed in a more formal way to the larger green spaces. The Council also manages several graveyards.
- Community Infrastructure – The Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of community infrastructure such as car parks with Electric Vehicle Charging Point provision, a small number of streetlights, bridges and culverts. These provide a service to local communities, and in the case of car parks generate an income to the Council whilst supporting a vibrant market town economy.

4.3 The Commercial Portfolio

As identified in 3.2 the assets held as part of the commercial portfolio are to contribute to economic growth but also for the purposes of supporting the revenue and capital budgets through generating a medium-term revenue stream or long-term capital appreciation. It comprises industrial, office, research and retail investment class assets. Increasingly emphasis is being placed on

proactive management of the commercial portfolio as part of the Council's wider financial management strategy and there is an aspiration to review the commercial portfolio over the medium term. This therefore has a separate strategy document which amplifies the operating context, strategic direction and actions for this portfolio. This is an accompanying document to this SAMP.

4.4 The Community Assets Portfolio

This Strategic Asset Management Framework provides an overarching framework which defines how the Council will actively manage these assets to the maximum benefit of the council and the wider community for the mid to long term. Community assets are defined to include: Common Land – Registered commons subject to Schemes of Regulation; 'Commons' – Non registered 'Public Open Space'; parks, countryside areas and public open space; trees and planting; easements and rights (such as grazing rights, agricultural tenancies) and infrastructure Assets (pathways, car park areas, playgrounds and play equipment etc.). As such the strategy encompasses buildings, land, rights and equipment.

These may be held or "managed" by the council on behalf of the community in a number of different ways including freehold ownership; ownership by third parties; held by the Council under Lease/license/agreement for community benefit or as assets held by others into which the Council has an input via various mechanisms, management, financial, advisory.

4.5 Key Achievements in 2018-24

The Council has demonstrated its commitment to asset management through a range of initiatives. Whilst not an exhaustive list some of the more significant achievements include: -

- In September 2022 the Council jointly purchased with Broadland Council the Horizon Centre as its flagship headquarters. The building is 84% more environmental efficient than the Councils' previous two headquarters. Not only is its environmental credentials significantly better, contributing to both Councils' ambitions to be net- carbon zero by 2030 it is also substantially cheaper to run. In addition there is also the opportunity to generate income from the lease of the Annex, an ancillary building and the mezzanine floor of the main building. This is supplementary to the income generated from hosting partners and renting out the Conference Centre. In Q1 23/24 the environmental credentials of the office building were further improved with the cessation

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of the use of gas with the introduction of air-source heat pumps as a consequence of being awarded funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

- Long Stratton leisure centre has undergone a major re-development to include pool refurbishment work, new change facilities, new spa, café, reception, gym studio, main hall refurbishment and associated upgrades. Centre re-opened in March 2019.
- Diss Swim and Fitness Centre is undergoing a renovation and improvement programme in 2024. This includes investment in the fabric of the building with installation of insulation, solar and air-source heat pumps funded through the PSDS. A reduction in the depth of the pool and retiling and a complete refurbishment of the waiting, refreshment and changing areas. This will remove the current small gym provision from the site, with plans to facilitate that in a separate dry side facility next door to the mere.
- Ketts Park has seen the development of a 3G pitch and a tennis pavilion in recent years.
- Three Business Centres have been constructed in Poringland and Long Stratton, providing 20,000 sq. ft of flexible office accommodation for economic development purposes.
- A modern building called Ella May Barnes was construction in 2020/21 on the Norwich Research Park, providing 16,000 sq. ft of laboratories and administration space to assist in developing the Enterprise Zone.
- The Council owned car parks have seen an expansion of the provision of electric vehicle charging points, to enable its residents and visitors to the district make the transition to electric vehicles from diesel and petrol vehicles.
- Improvements to the temporary travellers' site at Bawburgh.
- The disposal of public toilets in Long Stratton to the local Town Council along with the transfer of the maintenance and management of the public toilets in Diss to the Town Council. In Harleston the public toilet provision was updated and transferred to the Town Council.
- An upgrade programme to more efficient and environmental street lighting provision in 2018/19, after which the management was then transferred to the local towns and parish councils.
- The Council created two limited companies from 2013, with the governance being reviewed and amended in 2021. Their purpose is to undertake property development, investment and management activities.

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- Big Sy Developments Ltd was established in 2013 and seeks to develop land for mixed use schemes to generate income and to support the local economy, infrastructure and jobs. To date the company has delivered 323 homes in Poringland, Long Stratton and Cringleford. The company currently has land to deliver a further 148 homes and is in discussions to acquire land to secure a delivery of up to 100 homes for the next 5 years.
- Big Sky Property Management Ltd was established 2014 to invest and manage property to generate revenue income to support council services. The company currently manages 27 homes for private rent and is working with the Council to secure further 6 properties to provide resettlement homes. The company also manages the Council Commercial portfolio of offices/business centres, retail and industrial units. This company is also seeking to provide a wider property management and advice service to the Council, supporting the management of the temporary accommodation dwellings and other similar property related matters.
- Big Sky Developments Ltd has also acted on behalf of the Council in providing commercial properties to increase its commercial investment portfolio to generate revenue income and support economic growth. To date the company has delivered 4 properties in Poringland, Long Stratton and on the Norwich Research Park. The commercial property portfolio has seen an increase in the return it is generating which is now at 6.63%.

4.6 Problems & Pressures in the Portfolio

A number of issues have been identified which may inhibit the effective management of the Council's property assets or which represent an incipient risk to the Council. These are not considered significant at this stage but are referenced in order to raise awareness so that appropriate corrective action can be taken in a timely manner as appropriate.

- **Consistency with 'Best Practice'** – The Council is managing its property portfolio in an effective way with its procedures consistent with the relatively small size of portfolio. Officers have set up a Capital Programme Board to have an oversight of the property and infrastructure elements of the capital programme as the delivery involves multiple teams. Through this mechanism Officers monitor the delivery of the individual projects. Any material issues are raised up through Corporate Management Team and then onto Cabinet, who also receive monitoring information on the capital projects as part of the quarterly performance,

finance and risk management reports. There are, however, some areas where current practice is not fully consistent with recommended 'best practice' in asset management. These include the lack of current condition surveys for the majority of property assets and poorly developed asset review processes. This will be addressed in the Asset Management Plan going forwards.

- **Maintenance & Statutory Compliance** – Whilst the Council has good informal knowledge of the condition of its building stock there is a lack of a systematic approach to undertaking conditions surveys. Processes however are now in place to ensure compliance with regulations, with suitable periodic checks and servicing being carried out. These processes need to be reviewed and applied to all of the Council property-based assets.
- **Capacity & Expertise** – The Council's management company, Big Sky Property Management is consistent with managing the Council's investment property assets at its current size. However, the Council has aspirations to further review existing properties to ensure the maximum return and benefit towards achieving the council's priorities.

4.7 Ownership/monitoring of Actions

It is essential that both the overarching Action Plan and the individual Action Plans for each specific class of property are monitored and reported on. Currently the management of individual property assets are devolved to the service areas with no overall individual or team taking strategic responsibility. This approach will be reviewed with Cabinet.

The Council's constitution delegates authority for property assets to the Finance and Resources portfolio with responsibility to the Director Resources. It also details at Part 4 – Rules for Financial Governance Section 13, the recording of land and property owned by the Council and the delegations and processes relating to property acquisitions, and disposals as well as leases.

The Action Plans will be delivered through a combination of in-house teams such as the facilities team, through the Council's Big Sky Group of Companies as well as third party suppliers and contractors.