

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
CORPORATE PROPERTY DIVISION**

PROPERTY STRATEGY 2006/2010

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PROPERTY STRATEGY

This strategy overview document is the first of three elements which form the Council's property strategy, the other documents included in the appendices are:

*The Corporate Asset Management Plan
The Corporate Property Plan*

This document is a broad introduction to the strategy; defining the direction of the Council's property management policy, setting high level goals for the property strategy and explaining the context within which these goals have been developed.

This document is intended to look forward over a 10-15 year time span but there will be interim reviews in line with the Council's Strategic Plan process.

Intended Audience:

Members, Chief Officers and Nottinghamshire Residents

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1 **FOREWORD**

Nottinghamshire County Council's property assets have always made a solid contribution to the way in which services are delivered to the people of the County. A number of innovative ideas have been developed over the last few years which have enabled the Council to improve these facilities and the development of this strategy builds upon this history to provide a foundation on which we can make further progress.

We want the users of our building and all stakeholders to find accommodation which meets their needs, gives a sense of pride in the delivery of high quality services, is convenient for use and provided in the most cost effective manner. We want our motivated and dedicated staff to feel that the working environment provided for them enables them to provide their services in the best way, providing good accommodation in which they can feel a sense of pride in belonging to the County Council. We need to ensure that the real costs of owning and operating the property resource are recognised at all levels of the organisation. We want to see innovation and imagination applied to the management of these resources, which I believe, will lead to their more effective use and the opportunity to maximise the opportunities for the benefit of the whole community.

This first corporate property strategy and its supporting framework of annual Asset and Corporate Management Plans, is the start of what I see as an exciting time in ensuring that this vision is delivered. We have already seen how much a business like approach to the corporate management of property can achieve remarkable improvements in the way in which our services are delivered. Examples of which we are proud include the development of our new residential care homes for the elderly, improvements to our stock of area office accommodation and major schools reorganisation. The disciplines of a strategic approach can only lead to an increasing improvement of quality and cost effectiveness which will make a significant contribution to the County Council's objectives to be one of the leading local authorities in the country.

Cllr C Baron
Chairman of Finance and Property

Arthur Deakin
Director of Resources

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Our Property

- ❖ The County Council owns over 9000 buildings which are used to deliver a very wide range of different services
- ❖ Approximately 95% of the Council's services rely on one or more of these properties to be effective
- ❖ The portfolio costs about £75M a year to run, which is about £206,000 for every day of the year or can be expressed as 12p for every £1 spent by the Authority
- ❖ The value of the property we use in terms of its contribution to the business is around £950M

Statistical information as at March 2006

2.2 Our strategy: an outline and how it fits together

This is one of three documents which together form the Council's Property Strategy, the others are highlighted in 2.5. The relationship of the Strategy and its constituent parts to other key Council strategies is explained below.

The County Council is rated as a "Four Star" Authority and intends to become one of the top performing Authorities within the UK. Achievement of this will have positive impacts upon the services we provide to the people of Nottinghamshire and drive a radical review of the way in which we operate and use our valuable resources.

Property occupation is not the first priority of the Council but we recognise that the provision of high quality facilities affects our services. This document sets out the vision and our goals to ensure that those facilities make a positive contribution to our service delivery rather than become a liability which could potentially harm them.

Each year the Council will set targets for managing its property assets. These targets are described in the Council's Asset Management Plan, reviewed annually to reflect targets and service priorities. The Council occupies a large property portfolio which is subject to continual review to ensure it meets service needs. Because property cannot be modified or traded instantaneously, this process of improvement requires long term planning and co-ordination to reduce the risk of service performance being harmed.

The Corporate Property Plan will detail specific actions we will be taking during the year to achieve our targets and move us towards our goals.

Contact

Any enquiries about this document and its relationships to other key Council Strategies can be made to the Corporate Property Division of the Resources Department.

2.3 The Strategic Framework

The County Council intends:

“To ensure that the Authority’s capital assets make the most effective contribution to the provision of high quality, value for money accommodation to facilitate the delivery of effective, responsive and improving public services to the people of Nottinghamshire”

The strategy works towards achieving this vision by:

- ◆ Recognising that the Council’s property is one of the key corporately owned resources which need to make the optimal contribution to the aims and objectives, policies and programmes of the Authority
- ◆ Undertaking continuous review and rationalisation of these resources to ensure that they are appropriate, efficient and fit for the purpose required.
- ◆ Ensuring that our facilities comply with relevant legislative requirements
- ◆ Developing clear criteria for the use and management of operational property in respect of disposal, acquisition and investment
- ◆ Disposing of property where it is no longer required or is not cost effective to retain
- ◆ Ensuring a management framework, which encourages local managers to make the best use of properties
- ◆ Developing partnerships with other stakeholders to promote joined up service provision and better use of resources.

2.4 The Policy Context

- ◆ The Property strategy will support the delivery of the service and corporate goals and objectives specified by the County Council’s Strategic Plan “All Together Better.”
- ◆ The County Council has developed its Community Strategy
- ◆ A Procurement Strategy is being developed
- ◆ The property strategy will support the delivery of high quality, best value services and will contribute to an improving Comprehensive Performance Assessment
- ◆ The Council is using an effective Asset Management Planning process

2.5 Asset Management and Corporate Property Plans

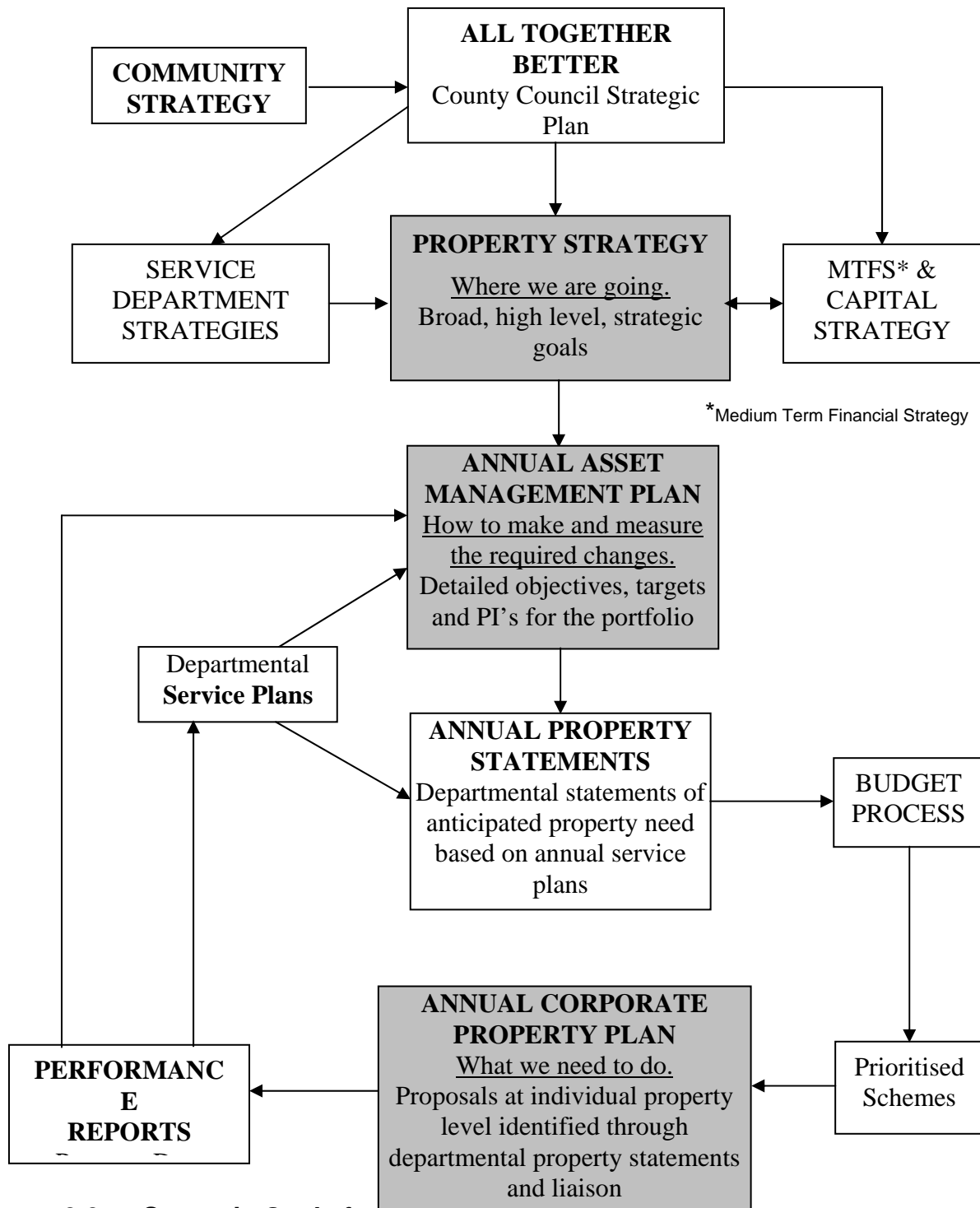
In addition to this strategy overview document, the strategy incorporates two further elements, as outlined below:

Corporate Asset Management Plan

Determines detailed policies, objectives and targets for property management

Corporate Property Plan

Details the activity required to deliver identified changes



3.0 Strategic Goals for Property:

These are summarised as follows:

- 3.1 Supporting Service Delivery
- 3.2 Modernising Procurement, Ownership, Management and Disposal
- 3.3 Challenging Occupation and Accountability
- 3.4 Managing Investment, Maintenance and Improvements
- 3.5 Enhancing Sustainability and the Environment
- 3.6 Improving Property Performance

3.1 SUPPORTING PROPERTY'S CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE DELIVERY

GOALS:

We will ensure that the property resource needed to achieve our objectives are of high quality and are cost effective and efficient

We will ensure that all annual business plans fully recognise the costs of property occupancy and plan for necessary change

We will take every opportunity to rationalise the property portfolio by challenging working practices and establishing better ways of delivering services

We will continue to develop our well established framework of service planning to ensure that the property resources needed to achieve our objectives meet needs and are cost effective and efficient

We will ensure that accommodation requirements take account of present and future changes in working practices and service delivery, which are being driven by developments in the internet and ICT

The annual Corporate Property Plan will identify all action to be taken to ensure that the resources needed to deliver services are provided in accordance with the relevant programmes

METHODOLOGY:

Regular dialogue will take place between the corporate landlord and Service Departments to develop a clear understanding of service needs in order to:

- Challenge the way in which property is used and consider more effective ways of ensuring service and business needs are met through more effective resources management
- Ensure departmental business plans identify the property required to deliver services and enable annual property plans to be improved
- Ensure joined-up thinking and potential partnership opportunities and co-ordinate property issues into service planning and departmental strategies
- Be proactive in investigating alternative ways of working and the use of technology
- We will introduce annual property statements to be produced by service departments, setting out the needs identified in service plans and reflecting funding and market realities
- We will ensure that appropriate training is provided to inform and assist managers to make the most appropriate use of the property resources and the management tools established by this strategy

LINKS TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN; All Together Better:

Being Responsive

- By planning the provision of property which is well located and accessible, in line with service need, we are **ensuring that we can be contacted** easily and quickly

Designing The Future

- The property portfolio is being planned, managed and improved to support changes to the way we organise ourselves to **integrate services** for children, adults and communities and become more responsive to the needs of Nottinghamshire people

Working Efficiently

- We are striving to achieve **good value for money** and to maximise Council resources. We are planning ahead through the property strategy to ensure that we direct resources to meet the priorities for the portfolio, driven by service need
- The policy of flexible working for office premises supports the strategic objective of **modernising work practices** by making effective use of technology, working in partnership and simplifying business processes

Safer and Stronger

- The ongoing capital investment programme in property is managed carefully to **improve community facilities and resources**

Learning and Earning

- The Council's corporate asset management planning process is working to ensure that **schools are at the centre of our local communities**
- The best value review of the property strategy recommended a project to improve fifteen libraries which will **support learning and cultural enrichment**

Transport and Access

- Flexible working and rationalisation of the property portfolio will support the effort to **tackle congestion and its associated pollution**

3.2 MODERNISING PROCUREMENT, OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL

GOALS:

We will keep under review the way in which we manage our property resources

Our property procurement strategy will ensure that all available options are considered

Option appraisals will recognise the cost and value of property over its physical and functional life

New and Refurbished properties will be well Designed to enhance Service Delivery

METHODOLGY:

- The existing policy framework of Corporate ownership of all properties will continue to be a foundation of our resource management strategy and ensure a comprehensive overview of property use
- In securing facilities which are required, we will consider a mixed economy of potential partnerships, procurement methods and ways in which we take an interest in property which will most appropriately deliver our service objectives. We will critically review these to ensure continuous improvement
- The “whole life costs” associated with the use of property will be calculated and considered in the procurement and management options, and the Council’s financial strategy
- Property assets should only continue to be held if in the long term they meet the current business needs of the County Council in the most cost effective way. Property which is no longer required will be disposed of in a way which maximises the returns to the County Council

LINKS TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN; All Together Better:

Designing the Future

- The strategic objective for option appraisal of property investment includes detailed consideration of service outcomes which benefit from and support the developing **competences and flexibility** of the Council's employees by prioritising flexible working opportunities

Working Efficiently

- Whole life costing of property management and investment seeks to achieve **good value for money** and to reduce costs of service delivery
- The strategy fully supports **modernising work practices** by making effective use of technology, seeking to work in partnership and simplifying business processes

Cleaner and Greener

- The Council is seeking to offer joined-up service provision from innovatively designed buildings in partnership with other organisations from conveniently and well located buildings throughout Nottinghamshire. This aspiration, which is reflected in the capital programme, will **improve the physical environment** in local communities by reducing travel and optimising the need for new construction

Transport and Access

- Developments in flexible working for office staff work to **tackle congestion and its associated pollution**

3.3 CHALLENGING OCCUPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

GOALS:

We will seek to manage property to ensure that its total contribution is greater than the sum of the individual properties

We will encourage all occupiers to regularly review their needs from the property resource

We will ensure that occupiers recognise the costs and opportunities of occupancy and develop strategies to ensure these are protected for the corporate good

METHODOLOGY:

- A system of internal tenancies for non school properties will be developed which will define responsibilities for property management and occupation
- The existing Policy to introduce economic charges for the use of property will be developed in all non school properties based on a financially sustainable model
- Service managers will be encouraged to use these disciplines within their business planning to maximise their effective use of property

LINKS TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN; All Together Better:

Cleaner and Greener

- Explicitly accounting for all property operational costs through real charging, a reduction in energy consumption by the portfolio will contribute towards **reducing CO2 emissions**

Working Efficiently

- Objectives to minimise the total floor area of the portfolio contribute to achieving **good value for money** and to reduce costs.

3.4 MANAGING INVESTMENT, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

GOALS:

We will seek to improve property maintenance and target investment more effectively

We will keep under review the physical and functional condition of our property to ensure we maintain an efficient and healthy environment for all users

METHODOLOGY:

- Annual planned maintenance programmes covering the essential building elements will be established by analysis of the physical and functional condition
- In addition to essential items of repair, a high degree of priority will be given in our planned programmes to improve the quality of the accommodation and ensure that it is matched to service needs
- Where the County Council has devolved property maintenance budgets to service departments this money should be spent on the property and will be audited through the use of financial returns and a property inspection programme completed every eighteen months

LINKS TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN; All Together Better:

Working Efficiently

- Effective management and prioritisation of the planned maintenance budget achieves **good value for money** and a reduction of costs incurred by emergency works

Learning and Earning

- Ensuring that school buildings are maintained effectively and are available for operational use at all times contributes to the objective to secure a **significant improvement in GCSE results** across Nottinghamshire

3.5 ENHANCING SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

GOALS:

We are committed to minimising any negative impact which the construction and use of property has on the environment

We will promote high quality and sustainable design and maintenance strategies for all property

METHODOLOGY:

- The County Council's energy strategy for buildings sets out its vision to become a carbon neutral authority.
- The Authority is committed to cutting environmental damage by minimising its water consumption in line with local and national targets
- All property and its associated services infrastructure will use materials and equipment that comply with the Council's energy, environmental and sustainability strategies

LINKS TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN; All Together Better:

Cleaner and Greener

- Rationalise the size of the portfolio and using effective design and construction materials to reduce CO2 emissions

Healthier

- Investment in protection against legionella risk, asbestos risk and improving fire safety protects the health of Council staff and the general public

3.6 IMPROVING PROPERTY PERFORMANCE

GOALS:

We will seek to ensure that property makes the most effective contribution to service delivery

We will demonstrate the Authority's performance measured against Best Value principles

METHODOLOGY:

- Links between property performance and service outputs will be established to identify and improve on the value added to service delivery by challenging existing property resource management
- Sufficient data will be held in a universally accessible system to assist corporate managers and users of property to determine how this can make the most effective contribution to service delivery through comparison with other providers
- Corporate planning for property will reflect consultation with users of our facilities
- National best value performance indicators (KPI's) will guide investment and management strategies and appropriate local indicators will be developed to assist in best value analysis and delivering continuous improvement

LINKS TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN; All Together Better:

Designing the Future

- The ongoing monitoring of property performance contributes to building a culture of **continuous improvement** and ability to change

Working Efficiently

- We are striving to achieve **good value for money** and to maximise Council resources. We are planning ahead through our corporate asset management plan to ensure that we direct our resources to meet our priorities
- Linking service outcomes to property investment helps to identify opportunities for **modernising work practices, making effective use of technology and simplifying business processes**