

Item 31 – Scrutiny Panel Annual Work Programme, Appendix 1

Additional Suggestion for Scrutiny

14. Council buildings

The issue

The Council has a large property and land portfolio valued at £1.73 billion (2008 figures). The operational portfolio contains in excess of 500 non-housing properties including civic buildings, libraries and central management buildings. There are also significantly more other public buildings in the city and this scrutiny could consider the following issues:

- Co-location of overlapping services across partnership organisations
- Are we making best use of our portfolio? Getting the best income?
- Future building/services needs
- Encouraging homeworking/using ICT to enable more flexible working
- Smart space – is it working?

However there is already a significant amount of strategic work in this area. The key strategic document produced by the Council in this area is the Corporate Property Strategy & Asset Management Plan for 2008-11. An update has been produced for 2009-10 which evidences outcomes and focuses on the large accommodation transformation project under the Council's VFM2 programme called Workstyles (the first phase concentrates on the exit from Priory House and the re-location of these services and also promotes flexible working)

Other relevant strategic work includes:

- Work done by LSP
- City Health Estates Strategy – PCT

A number of joint and partnership initiatives are already taking place.

Examples include:

- Children's centres: 14 of these and 3 outreach centres have been rolled out across the city which promote joint working with a range of services including social care, relevant health care, Jobcentre Plus and information services
- 3 Palace Place which a council owned office which is being refurbished with DCLG funding to provide a multi-functional Support & Skills Centre
- Working since 2006 on a City Wide Estates strategy for Health and Social care with a wide range of partners including the PCT
- Working with government on any sharing opportunities within the city

A Property and Asset Management Plan Review has just been completed. This is expected to lead to far more feasibility work in conjunction with out public sector and other partners about the opportunities to co-operate and collaborate.

The Council's Property & Design team are currently bringing together a city wide group to bring together public sector organisations to look at opportunities for joint property rationalisations and co-locations and the development of a Joint Utilisation Strategy.