



Asset Framework 2020-2025

2024/25 Update

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Introduction

The Council has a diverse portfolio of land and property assets, including operational assets, have a value of £1,218M (including £480M for Council housing) as at 31 March 2022. A full list of the Council's assets is available on the Council's website.

With competing demands over public sector and local government finance, it is essential that the Council's land and property assets are suitable, sufficient, and sustainable whilst being as efficient as possible. Opportunities to align Council assets to deliver the needs of residents is paramount. To achieve this the asset portfolio will be subject to regular reviews aligning the Asset Strategy to the Council Plan objectives and ensuring that assets are fit for purpose.

The Council Plan includes the development of a corporate landlord model for managing assets as an enabler to the plan. How the Council utilises and develops assets plays a key role in achieving a number of outcomes including:

- Achieving the best outcomes for our residents;
- Ensuring that our local centres are places where businesses can thrive;
- Reducing the borough's CO2 emissions to net zero by 2041;
- Improving communities;
- Nurturing local businesses; and
- Creating opportunities to live, work and play locally.

There is a need to set out what we want to achieve, how we make decisions along the way and what actions we intend to complete. This is set out in the Asset Framework.

The Asset Framework consists of the following three documents:

- An Asset Strategy
- An Asset Policy
- Strategic Action Plan

The Asset Strategy and Asset Policy should remain constant over a period and as the Council's corporate landlord model matures, so will the governance and policies. There will be annual reviews to ensure the plans are still relevant and the guidance to make effective decisions is appropriate. A more detailed annual review of the Strategic Action Plan will be undertaken to ensure that it reflects the actions required over a 12-month period.

The timeline to update the framework will work alongside the annual review of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) process with a particular reference to the Capital Strategy, which outlines the Council's investment in assets. The intention is to have resources fully aligned to Council priorities and services assessing their future asset requirements.

ASSET STRATEGY

Solihull Council has made a commitment to embed a strategic asset management function by establishing a Corporate Landlord which operates on an open, fair and equitable process without discrimination. The Corporate Landlord will have a whole borough approach to asset management, ensuring assets are fit for purpose by matching assets to service needs and the Council's priorities over the period. The introduction of a Corporate Landlord is defined as

A centralisation of all land & buildings, ensuring consistent asset management to support the delivery of all council services.

The strategic objectives listed below will provide focus for the Corporate Landlord function and establish a clear direction to embed good service delivery. It will also improve asset management and support the Council's promise of a thriving borough. Key drivers for change are:

- (a) The requirements to ensure that assets are statutorily compliant;
- (b) Services being able to focus on service delivery; and
- (c) Asset management being delivered by asset experts through the Corporate Landlord functions.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The strategic objectives reflect that introduction of a corporate landlord model and that engagement and collaboration with services are seen as key to success. The journey to move to longer-term asset planning by developing an Asset Masterplan will lead to a better managed and responsive property portfolio. It will also incorporate improved links with the



financial resources available.

1. Corporate Landlord, The Enabler

Embedding the Corporate Landlord as an enabling service is a key aim of this strategy. The opportunity to work collaboratively with services to identify and respond to their needs will be supported by a Corporate Landlord that embraces a solution focused approach.

2. Enabling Our Assets – The Asset Masterplan

The alignment of operational assets, rationalised and optimised to meet service delivery needs by providing the right property, fit for purpose, in the right place.

3. Enabling The Road to Net Zero

Property will be rationalised and optimised to be efficient and sufficient, contributing also to the Council's net zero carbon objectives.

4. Enabling Our Communities

Supporting third-party providers where appropriate with accommodation to deliver diverse community needs and relieve pressures on direct Council provision.

5. Enabling Investment in Our Borough

Developing the Council's non-operational 'regeneration portfolio' estate at an appropriate scale to:

- a. contribute revenue and best value to support service delivery.
- b. provide appropriate accommodation to encourage economic development and local businesses to flourish.
- c. provide accelerated delivery of social and broader housing needs.
- d. deliver regeneration in key centres within the borough.

Corporate Landlord, the Enabler

The Corporate Landlord will provide oversight, leadership, advice, guidance and governance which is aligned with the Council priorities and service needs. Whilst the strategic objectives provide a clear direction of travel, the service will enable the Council to deliver its objectives by providing all property management services, strategic advice, consultation and decision making from a single centralised point.

The services include:

- Strategic Estate Planning.
- Capital Programme delivery- Client, Contract and Project Management.
- Asset Management – Condition, Suitability, Space Planning.
- Building Compliance - Statutory and Planned Preventative Maintenance.
- Building Repairs and Maintenance – Reactive and minor works.
- Energy/De-carbonisation strategies and management for Council assets.
- Facility Management.
- Data Management – Management of good quality asset data for decision making.
- Estates Management Service.
- Corporate Property Valuation.
- Management of the Council's Investment Property.
- Commercial Development for Regeneration and Growth.

Key to delivering the Corporate Landlord service is having effective teams that are motivated to adopt a corporate landlord model. Taking this opportunity to launch a new way of working, we will promote partnership working, forming collaborative relationships, and developing an enabling culture to deliver the strategic objectives alongside the Council priorities by:

1. Supporting Service Delivery Success

We aim to add value and work in collaboration with service colleagues to identify the right asset solutions.

2. Investing in Our People

What we are capable of as individuals is important. We will invest in employee's growth and development and grow to be a professional and diverse asset management service.

3. Enterprising & Commercial

We are well placed to enable enterprise, innovation and commercial activity that supports the generation of income and economic growth. We will lead and enable where required.

Enabling Our Assets – The Asset Masterplan

The right property, fit for purpose, in the right place

By understanding the condition of assets and what we need them to deliver provides a basis to build an Asset Masterplan. Producing an effective Asset Masterplan will require the harmonisation of various and sometimes competing requirements. Success will be to achieve the appropriate balance and an Asset Masterplan which works for the whole borough.

Co-ordinating the Council's capital funding for the Asset Masterplan will mean all planned works on assets will have an approved business case in advance of any work commencing. The business case approach forms part of the Corporate Landlord decision making process that will underpin the delivery of this Strategy and its objectives.

Asset Intelligence

Understanding how the asset portfolio is performing is important and requires high quality data for each asset, matched against expected performance criteria and an effective reporting methodology. Embedding this approach into the way we work and developing greater intelligence about the asset portfolio will be a key focus for the Corporate Landlord to ensure that the estate is sufficient.

The portfolio will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that the right assets are in place to deliver services. Establishing whether an asset is right for the borough's needs will not be limited to performance as there is a need to test the sufficiency from different aspects, which includes whether the asset fits in with outcomes for the borough.

Strategic Fit

Understanding the strategic context of the Council will identify asset requirements not only from a direct service delivery aspect but also other influences or cross-cutting themes. We intend to support the following cross cutting themes:

Transformation Programmes

Workplaces are changing and this is recognised in the Council Plan which references the Smarter Ways of Working Strategy, the Digital Programme and Employee Wellbeing Strategies that underpin a hybrid way of working. This will lead to organisational and individual needs being considered and ultimately support a more productive, empowered and happier workforce.

The focus on becoming a more digitally enabled agile organisation and workforce means there is a need to be data and intelligence driven to ensure decisions are evidence based. An environment that is encouraging and enables innovation requires flexible spaces for people to collaborate with other Council services and partners. The future office requirements are likely to require less formal office desk space and there is a need for informal meeting space. This will be factored into our future planning.

Priority Services

This strategy acknowledges that on some occasions, a change is required as a matter of urgency and the Corporate Landlord will need to respond quickly. The Corporate Landlord has a key role to identify suitable assets to support service delivery in all circumstances.

Digital Enablement for Our Residents

The Council's ambition to develop digital solutions will impact on the use and number of assets required to deliver services. We need to think carefully about when residents need to see someone in person and how this will impact on the assets required. We will ensure that where services are provided in person they are done so in the right environment.

One Public Estate Collaboration

The Corporate Landlord is committed to supporting the Council's engagement with our One Public Estate Partners to explore potential co-location options and optimisation of our joint assets to meet the needs of residents. Working collaboratively, we can explore the potential for creating efficiencies across organisational assets. This may include income generation, exploring alternative uses for sites and assets, and co-locating services that have synergies enabling closer working relationships to improve services for residents and customers.

Enabling the Road to Net Zero

The Government has committed the UK to a legally-binding 'net zero' emissions target by 2050. In July 2019, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) set an ambitious target of reaching net zero emissions no later than 2041. Interim targets of a 36% reduction in emissions by 2022 and a 69% reduction by 2027 have also been set to ensure constant progress.

Solihull Council

In October 2019, the Council unanimously agreed a statement of intent, pledging their duty to respond to the urgent call for action. Ambitions to achieve net zero emissions for the assets owned by the Council by 2030 and for the Borough by 2041 have been set in-line with the WMCA. The Council has a Net Zero Action Plan that sets out how this will be achieved and the Asset Strategy will support the delivery of carbon reductions for Council owned assets.

Carbon Budgets are set for the Council's corporate operational assets. These follow science-based targets which align to the Paris Agreement. These targets should be achieved by developing a portfolio of low/zero carbon buildings, for instance by: -

- disposal of unsuitable buildings
- targeted investment to reduce carbon in retained buildings
- switching to zero carbon electricity
- switching to zero carbon gas
- changing behaviours and culture of asset occupiers

By having a strategic view of assets, the Corporate Landlord will develop standards to ensure that energy efficient stock is maintained. These standards will also be applied to new buildings and properties leased by the Council for service delivery.

Enabling Our Communities

The Third Sector

A strategic assessment has been commissioned by the Council to profile the voluntary sector, community sector and the social enterprise (VCSE) within the borough. The aim is to build on the support that neighbours and communities provided to each other during the COVID pandemic and to improve collaboration between the Council and the VCSE. Local groups are essential to the delivery of support programmes and ensuring there is help across the borough for different communities and needs. This includes for example, thinking particularly about different communication and accessibility needs that disabled people may have.

The Council is committed to providing strong leadership and support to the VCSE. The Corporate Landlord will explore the opportunities for the use of Council assets to help support areas of community need identified by service departments in line with the strategy. Consideration to complete Community Asset Transfers will be taken where it is deemed that the VCSE sectors are better placed to deliver greater outcomes and relieve pressure on Council services. During the life of this strategy, guidelines to establish when such transfers can be completed will be progressed.

Enabling Investment in Our Borough

Town Centre Development

The ambition is to have a Corporate Landlord that is enterprising and innovative by finding new ways to generate income, explore new ways of doing things, invest wisely on a

commercial basis, and taking advantage of commercial opportunities where appropriate.

The Corporate Landlord will play a role in driving economic growth to help secure the future funding of public services as an employer, a commissioner of services, and a provider of services.

Intervention through commercial development will play a greater role in the delivery of regeneration of urban centres in Solihull. This ability to support economic development and supplement wider service activity across the organisation should lead to an enhanced return from Council assets.

Property initiatives that align with the Town Centre Masterplan will be developed in order to:

- (a) offer accommodation to nurture, attract and retain business, driving footfall to the town centre;
- (b) develop homes appropriate to attract people to live and work in the town centre;
- (c) develop a new civic and cultural hub offering the opportunity for the co-location of service delivery partners;
- (d) respond to changes in retail, balancing the floor space to demand and encouraging independent and specialist businesses to settle in the town;
- (e) provide for the service needs of those living, working, and using the town centre for social and recreation purposes; and
- (f) develop appropriate parking provision to ensure easy access to the town centre, working to support sustainable transport solutions and allowing development to take place that is consistent with these objectives.

ASSET POLICY

To deliver the Asset Strategy in a consistent manner it is important to have established guidance on what principles are to be applied in making decisions and providing solutions to property requirements. These principles will support the Corporate Landlord to manage assets and may need to adapt in time as we learn more from the experience we gain in operating a centralised function.

Asset Principles

The broad conditions that apply to assets managed by the Corporate Landlord:

- Responsibilities for each operational asset are defined for the occupant and the Corporate Landlord.
- All assets are a corporate resource.
- All operational asset budgets are centralised.
- All operational assets will be compliant and reported via the Annual Assurance Statement.
- Decisions for any changes to operational assets are completed through the agreed central process.
- Longer-term planning is embedded.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Corporate Landlord's function is to support Council services by identifying accommodation that is fit for purpose, well maintained and managed.

Services will become corporate occupiers of the property or land required for delivering their core services. Each service directorate will need to set out its priorities for service delivery, which derive from the Council Plan. This will enable the Corporate Landlord to develop a live Asset Masterplan and engineer solutions with sufficient space to accommodate service delivery activities.

A Standard Offer for property management has been developed and will be applied to all operational assets by the Corporate Landlord. The Standard Offer is produced for each property or property type at the time of centralisation and will be updated if there is a material change.

Adopting a longer-term, co-ordinated planning approach offers the potential scope for efficiencies, income generation and the effective delivery of corporate outcomes including major redevelopment objectives.

The Corporate Landlord will provide a consistent approach in the following way and in line with a 'Standard Offer':

- Establish the Asset Framework.
- Deliver the Asset Strategy Action Plan.
- Develop and Maintain the Asset Masterplan.
- Provide ownership of the Corporate Asset Management System, GIS and Asset

Databases.

- Prioritise, plan, and manage all service requests for changes to buildings based on agreed service requirements and service business plans.
- Establish a Corporate Landlord Decision Making Process through which service requests will be prioritised, planned, and managed.
- Be Responsible for all acquisitions and disposals.
- Be Responsible for all Repairs and Maintenance.
- Be Responsible for all Statutory/Legislative Servicing.
- Be Responsible for Fire Risk Assessments.
- Be Responsible for Security, caretaking, and cleaning.
- Regular (at least annually) inspections will be undertaken to review utilisation of the building and make recommendations to improve utilisation.
- Manage all office moves and co-location requests.
- Oversee space management, standards, and usage.

Service departments will be responsible for:

- Adopting and supporting the Principles of Smarter Ways of Working.
- Occupying the premises in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures including Asbestos, Legionella, Fire Safety, Health & Safety.
- Embracing behaviours when in occupied assets which support the ambition of delivering the 'Road to Net Zero'.
- Developing sound business/service plans to outline and inform their asset requirements.
- Applying the Corporate Landlord Decision Making Process for all asset related decision requirements.
- Working in a collaborative manner with the Corporate Landlord to ensure that strategic property requirements are met and aligned to the service and Council's priorities.
- Seeking advice for future property requirements from the Corporate Landlord in order to ensure that property implications are thoroughly understood and maximise any efficiencies.
- Ensuring a nominated person is appointed to act as the building management co-ordinator for all building related issues.
- Reporting building maintenance issues in a timely manner in accordance with the procedure.
- Notifying and work with the Corporate Landlord of any capital grant applications affecting assets.

Principles for Occupation

To ensure consistent and fair decision making on the occupation of assets, it is important that there are clear principles to inform requests and competing demands for assets. The following guiding principles have been identified to inform the estate response to the future occupation of the Council's main sites that are ideally located for residents to access services.

- Services should be front facing delivering accessible citizen services in the catchment area of need.
- There is consideration of services where residents need to access in person.
- Spaces are appropriate for the business function and service delivery needs.

- There is consideration for back-office space required that need to interact with the front facing service delivery to residents.
- Services are relevant to resident and corporate needs.
- Integration is based on resident need.
- Services are appropriate to be delivered in the asset considering other functions and services that are co-located in the same space.
- Adoption of Smarter Ways of Working principles to maximise use of the spaces.

Centralised Budgets

Property budgets held by service departments will become the responsibility of the Corporate Landlord. Budgets that are centralised have cost drivers which arise directly due to having the assets. Budgets which are specifically established for delivering services are not centralised.

Asset Assurance Statement

Each year the Council publishes an Annual Governance Statement self-assessment. The Corporate Landlord's Asset Management system is a recognised corporate system and as such the management, oversight and governance of assets is reviewed annually through this assurance process.

The Decision-Making Process

All changes to assets go through the Corporate Landlord Decision Making Process. An initial assessment of each request will be completed to determine its nature and complexity. Those requests which are less complex or deemed as business as usual will have a decision made at this first stage or identify where more information may be required to inform the decision-making process. Requests which are more complex in nature will progress to a further review process where all decisions are based on the business case. Relevant specialisms will be involved as required in producing an options appraisal of the potential solutions. Approval will be based on the existing officer and Member delegations with the Corporate Landlord phased in for new approvals in partnership with services developing a decision-making process.

Asset Masterplan

The Asset Masterplan records the intention for Council assets over a medium to long-term. This is the Corporate Landlord response to service changes that are required and ensure assets are suitable, sufficient, and sustainable.

Asset reviews and requirements from the Corporate Landlord Decision Making Process will inform the Asset Masterplan. The development of the first Asset Masterplan will include projects that are currently in progress. Consultation will be undertaken with the Council's Wider Corporate Leadership Team and approval sought from Members if falling outside the revenue and capital budget setting processes. Governance for the review and scrutiny of the Asset Masterplan has been approved and shown in diagram 1 below.

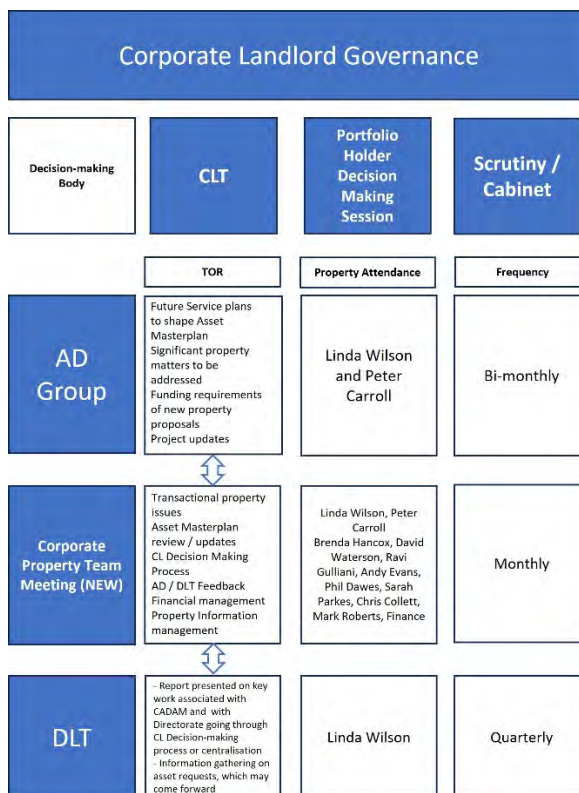


Diagram 1 – Corporate Landlord Governance

Funding Principles

Council funding available is limited and it will be important that spending choices are prioritised. Utilisation of revenue funding will be applied in line with financial regulations and revenue monitoring process whilst capital funding will be governed by the Capital Strategy and the capital monitoring process.

The Corporate Landlord will be responsible for putting in place a fully funded Asset Masterplan, Maintenance Programme, and work within available funds to undertake reactive works. The basis of priority for capital funding requirements is to be established. Repairs funding is pooled and used on a reactive basis. In the event services wish to undertake capital or revenue works that are not a priority for the Council and such works are considered as non-detrimental to the asset work may progress with the relevant approval and costs funded directly from services.

The Asset Masterplan and Maintenance Programme covers the same period as the Capital Strategy providing long-term planning for the Council's asset portfolio. Annual updates will be completed to both these plans in line with the annual Capital Strategy update.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

This document outlines the key strategic objectives for the borough's land and buildings over the next three years. Our Strategic Action Plan further describes the specific activities to achieve these objectives, categorised under three key thematic headings - Strategic, Operational and Service Improvement actions. The Asset Management Strategy will be reviewed as required, whilst the Strategic Action Plan will be managed, monitored, and updated continuously to report on progress and achievements.

Strategic Action Plan

		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Owner
STRATEGIC						
Strategic Aim 1	Corporate Landlord, The Enabler					
Action 01	Asset Framework Cabinet Portfolio Holder approval	X				Head of Strategic Land & Property, Head of Corporate Property Services
Action 02	Asset Framework communication and adoption	X				Head of Strategic Land & Property, Head of Corporate Property Services
Strategic Aim 2	Enabling Our Assets - The Asset Masterplan					
Action 03	Commence Asset Review	X	X	X		Corporate Landlord Programme Board
Action 04	Develop high quality database	X	X	X		Corporate Landlord Programme Board
Strategic Aim 3	Enabling the Road to Net Zero					
Action 05	Establish an Energy Strategy to support the journey to Net Zero for 2030 on targeted assets	X				Head of Corporate Property Services
Strategic Aim 4	Enabling Our Communities					
Action 06	Identify One Public Estate opportunities	X	X	X	X	Head of Strategic Land & Property
Action 07	Develop Community Asset Transfer principles		X			Corporate Landlord Programme Board
Strategic Aim 5	Enabling Our Borough					
Action 08	Develop and implement Town Centre Strategy	X	X	X	X	Head of Strategic Land & Property
Action 09	Develop and implement Regeneration Initiatives	X	X	X	X	Head of Strategic Land & Property
OPERATIONAL						
Action 11	Phased centralisation of all Operational Assets	X	X			Corporate Landlord Programme Board
Action 12	Phased agreement of the Standard Offer with Service Departments	X	X			Corporate Landlord Programme Board

Action 13	Phased implementation of the Landlord Decision Making Process	X	X			Corporate Landlord Programme Board
Action 14	Phased Governance arrangements agreed	X	X			Corporate Landlord Programme Board