

# WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN – 2003

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**1.1** Wealden District Council has a small portfolio of property assets and has consistent and regular review arrangements.

**1.2** The Council has no assets held for investment purposes and only a few assets held for strategic purposes.

**1.3** The Corporate Property Officer (CPO) is the Council's Head of Property Services, reporting directly to the Cabinet. An Asset Management Group of Officers (AMG) meets formally to manage property issues corporately and comprises Heads of Service and Principal Officers representing all the Council's Directorates.

**1.4** The Council has an Estate Terrier holding Core, Intermediate and subsidiary data on all the Council's assets and incorporating a unique property reference number.

**1.5** The Council has calculated property Performance Indicators 1 to 5 inclusive and has in place local performance indicators.

**1.6** The Council has a generally well-maintained property portfolio and the maintenance backlog of the General Fund assets is therefore low.

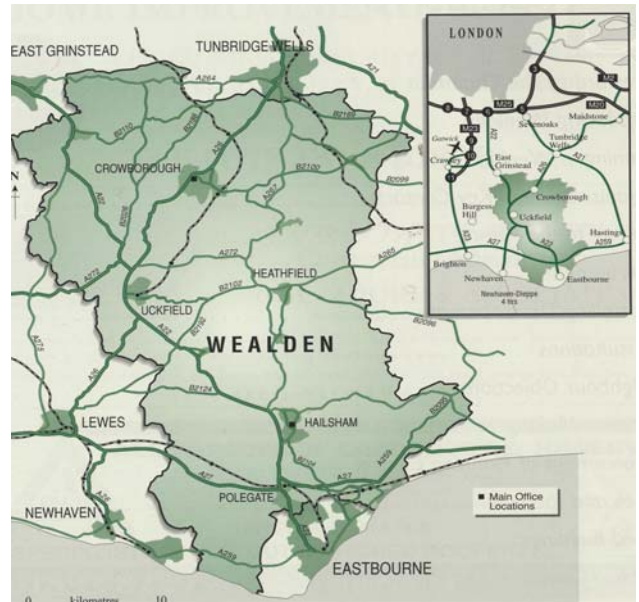
**1.7** The AMG has reviewed a considerable number of asset options using the Council's internally developed Options Appraisal Toolkit (which has been distributed to partner authorities).

**1.8** The Council has a current strategy of reviewing its property holdings and disposing of redundant properties and adequately maintaining its ongoing portfolio. Acquisitions are few in number and only implemented after careful consideration.

**1.9** Review of the property portfolio is ongoing and the AMG has the remit to recommend improvements to the management of the Council's property assets.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

**2.1.** Wealden District Council administers a large rural area extending over 83,635 Hectares of the county of East Sussex. Stretching from the outskirts of Tunbridge Wells and East Grinstead in the north to Eastbourne and the English Channel in the south. The District includes two areas of outstanding natural beauty, the High Weald & South Downs. The population exceeds 143,000 of which about half live in the small towns of Crowborough, Uckfield, Heathfield, Hailsham



and Polegate. The Council has a small property asset portfolio which has been, and continues to be, the subject of regular review.

**2.2** The Council achieved Beacon Council status for Sustainable Waste and retained Investor in People award in 2000. The Council has generally a well-maintained stock of property and funds have been identified to target those properties requiring additional resources. The Council made a Corporate Commitment to Energy Efficiency in 1993 and has been proactive in its energy management and environmental commitments for many years.

**2.3** The Council's Asset Management Plan (AMP) is intended to incorporate into a single document, the objectives, consultation processes, target setting, funding, monitoring and reporting of the Council's land and property portfolio. Where other key documents already exist, the AMP does not seek to duplicate information, but cross-refers to those documents as necessary. Of particular relevance in this regard are the Property Terrier, which sets out the detailed schedule of property holdings, and the Housing Service Business Plan. It should be noted that this AMP only considers the land and property portfolio, not vehicles, IT or other equipment as these are dealt with elsewhere.

**2.4** The AMP draws together and supplements the raft of existing asset management arrangements in a form intended to meet the requirements for all local authorities to develop and maintain the Corporate Asset Management Process. The Plan follows the guidance for smaller authorities where property assets are relatively few in number.

**2.5** Excluding the Council's Housing portfolio, the Council owns (or has an interest in) 6 Leisure properties - with a value of £5.19m and gross internal floor area (GIA) of 10,660 m<sup>2</sup> and 124 General Rate Fund and other properties – with a value of £15.64m and a GIA of 13901m<sup>2</sup>. This compact portfolio of properties is the result of regular and strict review over many years where surplus properties have been disposed of and newly arising requirements have been met by appropriate investment in either its own portfolio or well-considered new acquisitions. It should also be noted that the Council's Leisure Department has been outsourced and the leisure properties have been leased/sub-leased to the newly created Wealden Leisure Limited. In addition, the Council owned Argos Hill Windmill (with the major element of the Council's identified backlog of works) is the subject of considerable attention at Cabinet level.

### **3. CORPORATE ISSUES**

**3.1. Mission, Corporate Objectives and Values** - the AMP has been developed to support the Council's Mission Statement and Corporate Objectives as set out in the 2003/04 Performance Plan (PP). Our Mission is "Working together to improve the quality of life in Wealden". The Corporate Objectives are:

1. Protect and enhance a sustainable environment;
2. Promote a healthier and safer community;
3. Develop a more prosperous and sustainable local economy.

Our Values are that the Council will:

1. Provide services which give value for money;
2. Conduct its business in the public interest with integrity and will be even-handed, open and accountable;
3. Require and promote the highest ethical standards of conduct from Members and officers;
4. Strive to ensure its services are accessible to all.

**3.2. Corporate Links-** the AMP is not only informed by the Corporate Objectives of the Council but coheres with other key strategies. In this regard there is a relationship between the AMP and the Capital Strategy, the Community Plan, the Wealden Local Plan, the Corporate Procurement Strategy, the Performance Plan, the Housing Strategy, the Housing Business Plan, the Contaminated Land Strategy, The Economic Development Strategy and relevant Directorate Service Plans. In particular, the sustainability aspect of these strategies is reflected in the AMP. These links are made in key documents, implemented by relevant sections and fostered through cross-departmental representation on the Asset Management Group.

**3.2.1.** Asset Management and Strategic Procurement are two of the key functions which are particularly relevant to helping the achievement of the Council's Corporate Objectives and supporting continuous improvement. The 2002/03 PP (at page 60) also set out the Council's objective for Asset Management and establishes four key tasks for the year as follows:

*Objective - to manage assets efficiently and effectively in particular ensuring each and every asset is required for an identified and approved function of the Council and is suitable for that function in terms of location, size, nature and condition.*

2002/03 key tasks- to:

- \* determine what services or parts of services are suitable for sharing facilities;
- \* further research the development of a definition for spatial standards for office accommodation and to agree definitions with interested parties;
- \* fully apply the Option Appraisal Toolkit in a programme of asset reviews;
- \* update the AMP in the light of GOSE feedback and new guidance.

**3.2.2.** The essential links between the PP, the Housing Strategy and the AMP are clearly made within those three documents. Thus each of the Corporate Objectives has Housing service aims and specific tasks identified for 2002/03 by which those service objectives will be met (see pages 18, 19, 29-35, 43, 44-47 of the PP). In particular the development of an Enabling Manual, linked to the AMP, will improve the procedures for processing new sites.

**3.2.3.** Other links to strategy documents are shown in relevant sections of the PP (for example page 30 for the Housing Enabling function, page 40 for the promotion of small business units) and are summarised by the framework shown on page 11 of the PP. Asset Management is also separately identified as a function within the Departmental Service Plan (DSP) of the Works and Services Department. The DSP entry shows onward links to

Economic Development and Housing, sets out key actions and a programme of work for the year 2002/03 and identifies eight specific local asset management performance targets. Other relevant sections of the DSP cover Strategic Procurement, Property Maintenance, Car Park Management and Offices (each with their own local performance targets). The DSP is used as a reference document at all employee annual performance appraisals for the department.

#### **4. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT**

**4.1** The Council has a Leader and Executive model of political management. The Lead Member for property issues is the portfolio holder responsible for Assets and Finance.

**4.1.1** The Council deploys relevant professionals across its property base to optimise cohesion across service delivery. For example, a property surveying team is located in the Hailsham office to ensure cohesion with relevant Housing and Environmental Health Services. A property surveying team is also located in the Crowborough office to ensure cohesion with Estates Management, Engineering Services and Planning Services.

**4.2** Corporate Property Officer (CPO) is the Head of Property Services, and is a member of the Directorate Management Team. The CPO reports to the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet as necessary.

**4.2.1** It is the responsibility of the CPO to:

- a) ensure proper stakeholder consultation and review takes place regarding assets and that findings are fed into the decision making process;
- b) develop the AMP for consideration and approval by the Council;
- c) ensure adherence to Corporate Objectives;
- d) respond to the findings of BVRs and other performance management and audit information as well as the requirements stemming from service plans and the like;
- e) ensure the management of assets coheres with the Council's budgetary planning;
- f) implement the AMP including meeting agreed objectives and adhering to agreed programmes;
- g) ensure new proposals regarding use of the Council's land, which proposals may be outside of the agreed programme of work, are addressed in an integrated way which serves the broad interests of the Council;
- h) liaise with the Director of Corporate Resources on the preparation of a Capital Strategy that fully coheres with the Corporate Objectives and the AMP.
- i) ensure all asset management issues are properly considered by the Council's Corporate Management Team.

**4.3.** The CPO reports as necessary but not less than quarterly to the Cabinet. Recent reports to Members have been as follows:

January 2002 ( Asset Management general plus options on specific sites)  
January 2002 (Adopted policy on the Strategic Management of Major Development Proposals)

April 2002 (Asset Management aspects of specific sites)  
July 2002 (AMP)  
December 2002 – Development Proposals  
February 2003 – Asset Management and Development Proposals  
July 2003 – Asset Management

In addition, the CPO meets with the relevant Lead Members of the Cabinet to consider specific opportunities and challenges for sites. In this regard, the CPO has met with the Lead Member for Assets and the Lead Member for Services, on a number of occasions. Those Members have given directions on certain sites such as the Council's Jarvis Brook landholdings.

**4.4.** The CPO is supported by a senior management forum known as The Asset Management Group (AMG). The AMG is responsible to the CPO for achieving the objective set out in the PP (see 2.2.1 above) and for assisting in the discharge of the responsibilities as set out at 3.2 above. Its Terms of Reference are:

*“To ensure a corporate approach to the management of the Council's assets in pursuing the programmes of work set out in the Asset Management Plan and Performance Plan. The Group will be guided by the Council's objectives and will set targets for property including fitness for purpose, opportunity for shared use and will assess performance targets as well as audit and inspection and stakeholder feedback. Targets will be regularly reviewed and reflected in revisions to the Asset Management Plan. The Group will meet not less than quarterly and will implement the annual programme; in particular, the application of the Options Appraisal Toolkit to identified sites in order to optimise the estate and its use. The Group will work to formal agendas and will produce formal minutes.”*

The Group comprises Heads of Service, other corporate officers, a senior finance officer and service representatives from each department. Service representatives generally have a dual role such as that of the Planning Department representative (the Policy and Development Manager) who has personal expertise in land use and forward planning. Full membership (with Department) is as follows:

- Corporate Director of Technical Services
- Head of Property Services(CPO)
- Head of Financial Services (Corporate Services)
- Head of Policy and Development (Environmental Services)
- Head of Regeneration and Community Development( Community Services)
- Policy and Performance manager (Housing)
- Head of Licensing and Pollution Control (Environmental Services)
- Assistant Works Manager ( Technical Services)
- Estates Management Officer (Technical Services)

Formal meetings of the Group now occur on a monthly basis to continue the Council's 5 year rolling programme of asset appraisals and on a quarterly basis to review direction and report on performance.

The Group regularly reviews the AMP to ensure it reflects necessary changes in conditions/objectives (see Appendix G, for typical AMG Agenda). In addition, the Group have had interim meetings, to look at particular sites and apply the Options Appraisal Toolkit (see Appendix J, for typical completed appraisal). Through these meetings, some

36 sites have been subject to appraisal between November 2001 and June 2002. A further 88 appraisals are planned in the next year of the Council's rolling programme and, where appropriate, reports have been made to Cabinet and action taken. Positive outcomes have been achieved with several sites now in the process of development. The AMG ensures that stakeholder views are an integral part of the decision-making process (see Appendix L, example Report DO0001.0201b part 6).

## **5. CONSULTATION**

**5.1 Housing Capital Projects-** the Housing Strategy and the HRA Business Plan set out the present and future requirements for Housing property and arrangements for the corporate planning and consultation elements of Housing Capital schemes and reference should be made to those documents. Each March next year's planned maintenance programme is presented to stakeholders and Members for approval. Stakeholder consultation is a particularly strong activity and has culminated in the release of certain undeveloped sites for affordable housing or other suitable purpose and this is the subject of ongoing review and consultation.

**5.2 Capital Project Management Teams-** the Council has an established procedure for capital projects whereby a team is formed to ensure proper input of client, property and corporate interests into the viability, development and management of capital projects. The CPO will ensure such schemes are in accordance with corporate objectives. Schemes are required to be reported to Committee in draft form for early consideration before detailed design can take place. The performance of schemes, once completed, is reported to Members on a quarterly basis. (See Section 8 for Programme Management).

**5.3 Long-term asset management-** the Council has adopted a strategy for developing and maintaining its major public buildings to acceptable standards and to meet its objectives. Each January, Members receive a rolling ten-year programme of maintenance and improvements considered necessary to keep offices and leisure centres in a condition where they will continue to contribute towards corporate objectives. This strategy for property aims and objectives is updated regularly, not least by use of the Options Appraisal Toolkit.

**5.4 Accommodation Group-** the Council has in place an Accommodation Group of officers that meets regularly to consider accommodation issues within the two Council offices. All departments are represented on the Group. Through this vehicle, pressures and opportunities for change are identified and solutions proposed. Specific issues which have been discussed, approved and implemented include: CAT 5 wiring to all office areas; environmental improvements in the Housing and Environmental Health Departments (see Appendix N, Report to Cabinet EE0000.0203 page 14); archiving; interaction of accommodation with optical imaging and other ICT initiatives. Implementation of schemes routinely includes notification of staff through e-mail and notice boards. Future work will include the consideration of spatial standards, accommodation interaction with e-government and homeworking.

**5.5 Consultation Arrangements-** in addition to the arrangements mentioned above, a number of effective consultation measures are embodied in the Council's asset management regime. In respect of Leisure Centres (recently outsourced), the former 'client' department regularly consulted users on their needs and aspirations in terms of

facilities. Views were fed back into development plans. Consultation has taken place in relation to Disabled Adaptations and has assisted the realistic prioritisation of improvement schemes. Housing capital schemes such as major developments of sheltered schemes or planned maintenance on an estate is routinely and regularly the subject of consultation with tenants, through tenant focus groups. Standards for void maintenance and day to day repairs have been developed and refined following a series of tenant focus group consultation exercises. Tenants have also been consulted on the transition from a high to low cost maintenance regime in respect of external components such as doors and fascias. For day to day maintenance, all tenants seeking repairs are provided with a tenant satisfaction slip as part of the works notification. This facility traditionally has a response rate in the order of 21% per annum and shows a very high level of satisfaction (98%) with the service provided. A consultation exercise with tenants at the Leap Cross Enterprise Centre confirmed that higher rents would be tolerated to fund environmental improvements (see Appendix K). The East Sussex Group of Property Officers (ESGPO) has become a valuable format to enable consultation with neighbour and partner authorities and opportunities are being explored to expand this concept across other borders of the District. Public surveys are also conducted in respect of car parks and public conveniences. Through the Best Value Review process, all other aspects of asset provision and management will be subject to consultation to a prescribed programme. Other opportunities for meaningful consultation with any stakeholder groups not currently feeding views into decision-making processes will be sought.

**5.5.1 Employee Consultative Groups** - the Council's own employees sit on two key consultation groups. These groups have considered schemes and made recommendations in relation to office location, capacity and layout. Consideration has also been given to depot management and maintenance programmes including security and environmental matters.. These groups meet on a quarterly basis with Members and views have been fed through to Committee.

**5.6 Community support via the Council's assets** - it is estimated that some 92% of the Council's General Fund estate (measured as a percentage of the number of buildings as opposed to the estate value) directly supports community strategies. Examples of such assets include Leisure Centres, beaches and the Cuckoo Trail, (community health and well being, recreation) the Council's car parks and Leap Cross Enterprise Centre (regeneration and economic development). In addition, there are a number of properties leased or licensed for community purposes such as village halls, recreation fields and allotments. The whole of the housing stock directly supports a range of community objectives.

**5.7 Influencing the service provision** – this comprehensive consultation programme implemented by the Council (and described above) has influenced and changed the service provision of the property assets. Examples are given above but further examples are the provision of the Pevensey Bay toilets and Information Centre, the current proposal to lease Argos Hill Windmill to a Trust, the outsourcing of the leisure facilities, and the review of the of the Housing service provision.

**5.8 Feedback** – Information gained and actions taken following consultation is regularly reported back to the consultees through various formats, eg Parish Conference, staff newsletter, meetings and information exchange with ESGPO.

## **6. DATA MANAGEMENT**

**6.1.** It is an inherent part of this Council's Asset Management Plan that the Council undertakes a full and regular survey of the Authority's current and future data requirements and challenges the current systems' capability to hold the necessary information (as a minimum to hold all property core data), to perform to the requirements of the AMP, including the demonstration of performance through national and local pPI's. The CPO is responsible for ensuring the adequacy of all such systems and the accuracy and completeness of all data stored therein, established through validation procedures. Details of current systems and how they are used to further the aims of the AMP, are set out below.

**6.1.1.** The Council regularly assesses its requirements for property related data and regularly reviews arrangements for managing such data. The council has decided that it needs to store and interrogate data that will support the effective management of property, including need, fitness for purpose, condition, efficiency of use and flexibility. Information systems are in place to achieve this objective and are supported by a range of related information systems.

**6.2.** Key property data sources held by the Council are as follows:

- Estate Terrier (Greenly) para 6.3 below
- Property condition survey system (Codeman) para 6.4
- Contaminated Land Register para 6.5
- Listed Building Register para 6.6
- Asbestos Register para 6.7
- Repairs history files (Uniclass/Orchard) para 6.7
- Graphical Information System (GIS) para 6.7
- Financial Information System. Para 6.7
- Departmental address lists, now being overlaid with the NLPG corporate address list. Para 6.8

**6.2.1** The CPO ensures integration between relevant systems and with the Council's financial information systems through various means. For example, the Orchard Management System includes a repair module for housing and General Fund properties and links to the Financial Information System. The NLPG system is being developed in a way that will allow property and financial data to be integrated through the UPRN.

**6.3. Estate Terrier-**The existing land terrier system has been in place since 1998 and was upgraded to include the GRF assets in 1999. The system is a stand alone "Greenly" software package which is linked to the Council's GIS mapping base to provide a visual aspect to staff of the Council's land holding. This software has been updated and modified annually to ensure the currency of the software and to ensure that it meets the Council's needs. A further update is imminent and a number of further modifications are being discussed to meet perceived future needs. The system's capabilities are extensive and allow for all the core data to be stored and significant 'intermediate' and subsidiary data. It allows interrogation of the Council's land holdings and has a reporting function which provides reports on a wide range of aspects of the portfolio either as a whole, with any desired grouping or individually.

**6.3.1.** The Terrier holds a range of 'intermediate' data such as basic condition and backlog information, rent review dates, fire insurance, user details, and has a large text capability for notes and other information. These features facilitate effective data management and succinct presentation in the AMP. On a daily basis the information stored in the Terrier is updated and this process incorporates validation by cross-referencing to other data sources. At this time it is considered that the data stored has a high degree of accuracy.

**6.3.2.** The software system has been populated with information received in 1999 when the District Valuer completed the last valuation of the Council's GRF assets. This valuation is carried out at 5 year intervals with the next valuation due in the 2004/5 financial year.

**6.3.3.** The Estate Terrier has currently access limited to a small number of personnel. However, the final stages of data recognition on the GIS mapping system are being undertaken and when this is complete it is intended to expand the system in view only mode to other Departments such as Finance and Housing as well as the Council's Surveying Staff.

**6.3.4.** The existing software provider upgraded the software in Feb 2003 and has evolved the product to meet all the needs of quality asset management as far as this can be foreseen. A programme of improvements is ongoing to suit corporate needs, as is the testing of alternative products currently on the market which may better suit the data requirements of the Council.

**6.3.5.** A recent internal audit has confirmed to the CPO, and the Corporate Management Team, that the Terrier system holds all the relevant core data along with relevant, current intermediate data. The validity and accuracy of the information stored was tested and where found wanting has, or is, being amended. (See Action Plan at Section 11).

**6.4 Property Condition** - Certain requirements of asset management planning and the information required for performance indicators, challenge the capacity of the Land Terrier system and the CPO has therefore required the "Codeman" property condition information system to be used to complement the data stored in respect of General Fund properties. The capacity of the two information systems is kept under review in order to ensure the Council's ongoing ability to comply with all aspects of effective property data management. Condition surveys are regularly implemented on the council's properties and the information stored for management, reporting and budget setting purposes.

**6.5 Contaminated Land Register** – contains information on the Council's own land and other land which will impact on the financial viability of using the land for other than its current use. This database is held within the Environmental Health Department.

**6.6 Listed Building Register** – contains information on buildings listed for their historic and architectural value to the heritage of the country. This database is held by the Planning Department.

**6.7 Other Data Systems** – The Asbestos Register, Repairs History files, Graphical Information System all hold information relevant to asset management and assist the AMG to understand the context of the asset and any limitations to its future use. Other systems are being explored on a regular basis and the capabilities of systems to hold sufficient information is reviewed on not less than on a biennial basis. The Council's Financial

Information System holds all data related to budgets and expenditure identified on the basis of a group of properties and where appropriate on an individual property basis.

**6.8 Property Reference Numbers** - All records are recorded in the various systems by means of Unique Property References Number (UPRN). The Council has joined the consortium to progress the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). The Council historically had a number of discrete property address databases, which it is currently streamlining into a single, definitive UPRN database. Two new posts have been created in the CPO's Department to achieve this task and to ensure long-term management of the database. All historic address databases are the subject of discussions with the relevant software supplier(s) to achieve the required level of support to the integration process. The existing UPRN's will be superseded in late 2003/4 by a new nationally agreed UPRN. The existing UPRN will remain for identification purposes as a secondary reference.

**6.8.1 Training Needs** - A data management skill/needs register has been developed through the Council's Training and Development procedures and through the staff annual performance appraisal process. This latter process identifies any training requirements as agreed between employees and their line managers and linked to corporate and individual objectives. Extensive training has been undertaken in the specific systems including Codeman and NLPG.

**6.9. Statistical Information on Condition and Backlog** – The Council has maintained a robust property management regime for many years. It has directly employed a team of well-qualified professionals (augmented, as required, by specialist advisors) to ensure effective and efficient property management. It has also made adequate resources available to achieve an overall high level of condition throughout the property portfolio and thus achieved minimal backlog levels. This low level of backlog is reflected in the Contextual Information (attached) and in pPI 1B (attached). See also paragraphs 5.3 and 7.1 for information on the maintenance regime and local performance indicators respectively.

**6.10. Satisfying e.gov Requirements** – The Council has a robust and pioneering attitude towards e.government, and it is possible to disseminate the Terrier database to other internal departments electronically. The AMG will debate and recommend to Members the wider issue of what, if any, of this sensitive information they would wish to be seen by the General Public on the Council's Official Web Site

## **7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND INFORMATION**

**7.1.** The Council has in place a system of Annual Performance Review. The format for the Review process was designed by Members and has been updated as circumstances have required, most recently to optimise the Council's preparedness for Comprehensive Performance Appraisal (CPA). In particular there is now to be formal reporting on a quarterly basis of key PI's. At the next annual review (October 2002), Members will receive a Performance Review report for each of the four Review Committees. The information pack will contain relevant Best Value Reviews for Year 3, Improvement Plans from earlier BVR's, each Departmental Service Plan and auxiliary information. In terms of property assets, relevant reports will be the Improvement Plan for the BVR of Corporate Assets (which included Asset Management, Offices and Depots), The Works and Services

Departmental Service Plan (including a range of local property PI's) and elements of other linked functions (e.g. Economic Development).

**7.2.** Current performance measurement methods allow performance of individual buildings and parts of individual buildings (as appropriate) to be assessed. Such assessment identifies how well corporate objectives are supported. For example, the local PI for occupancy levels at Leap Cross Enterprise Centre (see Appendix E, abstract of the Works and Services Departmental Service Plan page 16) is a key measure of the support offered to the Economic Development objective of maximising availability of business starter units.

**7.2.1** Costs are broken down, where appropriate, into costs per square metre in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Building Maintenance Information Service (BMIS) for analysis and estimate comparison. Examples include:

- Offices - Management/maintenance cost against BMIS; accommodation to occupant ratio.
- Repair Numbers; ratio of responsive to planned maintenance; percentage works completed to target; percentage of appointments for repairs made and kept.
- Grounds Maintenance - Grass cuts against target.
- Industrial Units - Maintenance/management costs against BMIS.
- Repairs and Improvements - Expenditure by property by works order;
- Comparative Energy Management - Costs/consumption against 'Rio' base year and previous year.

New targets included in this year's DSP are in respect of occupancy levels for industrial units and customer satisfaction levels, which will be matched against national and local data. By including performance PI's in the DSP as well as in the report on annual performance review, standards and targets for continuous improvement can be made.

**7.2.2** Other opportunities for comparing property performance include the exchange of data between members of the East Sussex Group of Property Officers, where information has been exchanged on land-holdings and performance in terms of costs, energy and occupancy.

**7.2.3** Stakeholder consultation is embedded in the in the Council's procedures (see Appendix E, Performance Target (c)). A specific example is the agreement to invest the proceeds of higher rents from occupants of Leap Cross Enterprise Centre into improved environmental site conditions.

**7.2.4** Property Performance Indicators in accordance with the requirements of Single Capital Pot Guidance – Part 1, issued by the DTLR on 3 April 2002, and SCP Guidance issued by ODPM 2003, are included at Section 9 of this Plan. Calculations and data referring to indicators 1A & B, 2A, B & C, 3, 4A, B, C & D, and 5A & B have been made in accordance with the format and guidance issued.

**7.3** In addition to the annual performance review process, reports are routinely made at relevant intermediate stages, particularly on options and on backlog. Reports have been made, for example, on the backlog maintenance for commercial retail units in Hailsham and on the Argos Hill Windmill (see Appendix O, extract from Leader's Report to Council dated 24.07.02). In addition, the Council considers annual and 10 year programme of

modernisation of Offices and Leisure Centres on a regular basis including the perceived needs of service representatives. Members also receive reports on a regular basis considering Leisure Centre performance and Housing Repair Programme interim statements. Regular inspections condition and of completed work are undertaken to ensure standards are maintained. (see Section 8 for reference to the corporate aspect of managing capital projects). See also section 4.3 for other types of report taken. In addition, Members receive Reports, not less than twice yearly, on the performance of the Capital Programme (most recently July 2002).

**7.4.** The regular option appraisals undertaken on all property, on a programmed basis, ensures fitness for purpose is thoroughly examined. This includes the requirement to review all leases that have a term greater than 21 years without a provision for rent reviews at regular intervals. See also section 4.4.

## **8. PROGRAMME AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**8.1** The Council holds many programmes for maintaining its property stock to meet its current and proposed needs. The various service strategy documents and the Housing Revenue Business Plan primarily identify these. The AMG uses these documents to match the Council's properties and land holdings to its current and future need. This enables timely disposal of surplus property and the possibility of a programme of acquisition, although, at this time, the Council does not foresee the need to acquire more property other than the proposed Rotherfield car park. The Council thus has no meaningful shortfall between resources and need. When sporadic shortfalls do occur they are dealt with as in 8.1.2, below.

**8.1.1** The AMG also keeps under review under-performing and investment property to ensure that the assets are maximised.

**8.1.2** Any discrepancy between need and available resources is identified through a developmental process. Shortfalls are identified initially through the resource demands of schemes seeking approval through the Corporate Management Team or Cabinet, as appropriate. If funded, such schemes are included in Departmental Service Plans and actioned. For example, the increase in Planning workload led to Members agreeing that additional office space be sought, including by leasing back part of the Beaconwood offices. Options were investigated and the problem was finally addressed at the time of the externalisation of the Council's Leisure Service. (For Disposals, see 8.6, below).

**8.2 Option Appraisal Toolkit-** the Council continues to develop its Option Appraisal Toolkit for informing its Capital Programme (Document AMP 4, attached as Appendix J) and reviewing systematically its property holdings. The toolkit sets a series of sequential tests against which the need, suitability and alternative uses of each asset is measured. The toolkit is available to every department through Chief Officers and members of the AMG. The toolkit has become an essential part of its strategic planning and maximisation of assets and enables prioritisation between various options and projects. It also facilitates novel and innovative approaches and options to the use of assets and is not fettered by Departmental, or functional, boundaries. Thus land at Jarvis Brook Depot has recently been considered for social housing and/or economic starter unit purposes. Following requests the 'toolkit' has been made available to members of the East Sussex Property Officers Group.

**8.3 Option Appraisal/Capital Programme** - the option appraisal toolkit allows data to be fed into the Capital Programme. The greatest areas of mismatch are given earliest priority. The Council reviews the Capital Programme quarterly and revises it annually to ensure coherence with the budget setting process. However, the Council continues building on these robust mechanisms for option appraisal. These include formal annual bidding arrangements for projects which need to demonstrate revenue as well as capital costs and, where appropriate, pay-back profiles. The Capital Programme as reported to Members on 15 July 2002 (see Appendix F) is summarised in the AMP Contextual Information attached at the front of this information package.

**8.4 Programmes and Priorities** - for maintaining the Council's general fund works, 10 year programmes for major buildings (showing essential and desired works) are re-evaluated each year and are the subject of appraisal and approval by Members, as appropriate (see Appendix M, 10 year maintenance programme for offices). Programmes for housing work have also been agreed by committee each year after a thorough prioritisation process by officers, based on condition and sensitivity to tenants needs. Such programmes are incorporated into relevant Service Plans in order to achieve a clear, open and auditable approach to performance management (see Appendix C, for example extract from the Works and Services Department Service Plan)

**8.5 Usage** - The Estate Terrier records and identifies all rented properties and when the lease or rents are due for review. Those properties not reaching their full potential are individually reported to Members for their consideration and are reported annually at Performance Review. In addition, the Option Appraisal toolkit and Capital programme mechanism, allows underused property to be quickly identified and evaluated.

**8.6 Disposal** - The Council regularly disposes of property it considers to be surplus to its requirements. The Council, for example, has been in discussion for some months with private and public sector partners regarding the disposal of the Ashdown Business Park land, land at North Street, Hailsham, land at Pine Grove, Crowborough and land at Luxford Field, Uckfield (these last three to facilitate mixed town centre developments). Discussions have also taken place with EDEAL about their involvement in the development and management of the Farningham Road, Crowborough industrial plot.

**8.7 Shared Use** – The Council has a number of properties, which are shared facilities with other organisations. These include the use of part of the Council's Pine Grove office for County Library Services; the use of part of a number of the Council's sheltered dwellings for the provision of kitchen facilities for the WRVS. In addition, the Council operates surgery arrangements by the deployment of officers of the Revenue and Benefits section and Planning Department in the Polegate Town Council offices. Discussions are proceeding with East Sussex County Council and other partner organisations to explore other opportunities for shared facilities and joint working.

**8.8 Acquisitions** – The Council is seeking to acquire a suitable site in Rotherfield for a car park, which would be developed together with funding from a range of partners including the Countryside Agency, East Sussex County Council, and Rotherfield Parish Council Leader+ funding is also being sought. The project is costed overall at some £0.5 million. The Council has no current plans for acquiring any other new property assets.

**8.9 Capital Programme** - the Council's adopted mechanism for developing the Capital programme is based upon asset management options and forward budgetary planning. Parts of the Capital Programme reflect initiatives which were already being developed and have not formally been assessed against this mechanism. However, the Capital programme has been reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect the findings of the AM option appraisals. Formerly the responsibility for capital monitoring has been achieved within service areas and regularly reported to Members, however the AMG now accommodates all capital programme development and monitoring.

**8.9.1.** The current Capital Programme is founded on the Council's 10 year programmes for major buildings together with ad hoc bids for other schemes which are fully considered each year as part of the budget preparation. 5 year financial forecasting and the findings from the Option Appraisal toolkit allows Members to make value judgements between competing schemes.

**8.9.2.** Output targets are reviewed each year by Members at the Annual Performance Review cycle and are incorporated into the Service Plans. Examples of targets include: increases in use-levels and income at the Utopia Leisure centre, as a result of increased Capital investment (see extract page 16 from the Wealden Leisure Limited Business Plan at Appendix D). See also Asset Management targets from the Works and Services Departmental Service Plan (page 16) at Appendix E.

## **8.10 Backlogs -**

**8.10.1** This has been the subject of annual reports relating to offices, leisure centres and other general fund properties and is referred to elsewhere in this document. The Council's principal offices are modern buildings and as such have not accumulated a backlog of works. Similarly, the leisure centres are reasonably modern and have been the subject of regular improvement to allow them to meet customer expectations and, again, have not accumulated a backlog. Indeed, the only council owned assets that have such a backlog are Argos Hill Windmill (backlog estimated between £224,000 and £267,000, depending upon the options available for improvement). This has been the subject of regular reports to Members and has recently been the subject of a successful supplementary estimate bid which also provides for lease negotiations with a charitable trust (see Appendix O). The other area of backlog are a number of sundry general fund properties for which the total accumulated backlog of works amounts to some £9,000. A programme of repair and improvement is addressing the backlog of these.

**8.10.2** The Council's housing stock has also been the subject of annual reports to Members and has also been the subject of HIP consideration. The current backlog of housing work is £9.62m and this is being addressed by following a measured programme of investment as set out in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. Activity in this area is primarily being directed to achieving the Council's Decent Homes Standard.

## **9. Performance Information**

The 5 national property Performance Indicators are attached at the end of this document.

## **10. Review Arrangement for AMP**

The AMP will be reviewed annually but will be based on a 3-5 year rolling programme.

As a key strategy document, the final responsibility for the AMP will rest with the Council. A copy of the AMP, as well as being available to Councillors and AMG members, is provided to every Chief Officer to ensure that all those who have a direct interest or responsibility for property matters are familiar with the Council's requirements.

#### **11. Strategic Action Plan 2003 - 2008**

See overleaf:

## Strategic Action Plan 2003 – 2008

### Strategic Issues

	Milestones	Resources	Timescale
Review/Revise AMP	Report to Cabinet	CPO, AMG	4 times p.a.
Review Best Value Action Plans	Report to Cabinet	CPO, SSM, WM	October 2003 and annually – Specific actions to offices, depots, as approved in Corporate assets BVR Action Plan.
Annual Performance Review	Report to Cabinet & Review Committees	CPO, Corporate Directors	Autumn 2003 and annually

### Asset Management

	Milestones	Resources	Timescale
Calculate Local and National PI's	Results	EMO	May 2003 and annually
Benchmark with members of ESGPO	Collation of Information	CPO, EMO	June 2003 and annually
Benchmark against National PI's	Collation of Information	CPO, EMO,	When available
Annual Performance Review	Report to Cabinet & Review Committees	CPO, Corporate Directors	Autumn 2003 and annually
Review Local PI's	Report to Cabinet	CPO, AMG	Winter 2003 and annually
Programme of Site Specific Asset Review	Completion of Option Appraisal Toolkit document	AMG	Quarterly, and as required
Review Reports for Asset Requirements	Cabinet Report	AMG, Office Accomodation Group	Quarterly, and as required
Annual Review of Corporate Asset Needs	Report to Corporate Management Team	CPO, AMG	Winter 2003
Review of manpower resources	Performance Review	CPO	Currently in progress

### Information Technology

	Milestones	Resources	Timescale
Review Training Needs	Annual Staff Performance Appraisal	CPO, Line Managers, Revenue Budget	July 2003 and annually
Upgrade Software	Report to AMG	EMO, Revenue Budget	Ongoing
Co-ordinate with NLPG, etc (eGov)	Cabinet Reports	CPO, EMO, NLPG Team	6 Monthly
Co-ordinate with WDC Website	Agree with eGov Officer	EMO,	Autumn 2003 and Ongoing Review

### Consultation

	Milestones	Resources	Timescale
Review List of Stakeholders	Report to AMG	CPO, EMO	Autumn 2003 and Ongoing review
Consult Stakeholders	Report Results to AMG, Inform Annual Review of Corporate Asset Needs	EMO	As required by Option Appraisal