

# Lewes District Council

## STRATEGIC PROPERTY BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

STRONGER together



Lewes District Council



Working in partnership with Eastbourne Homes

## INTRODUCTION

Strategic Property Board (SPB) is the main Board advising property activities for non-housing property within the Council.

The future continues to look very challenging for local authorities as Government grant continues to be reduced. Lewes District Council is faced with the need to reduce its annual budget by 2020 in response to continuing reductions in government funding. In order to build resilience, Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils have taken the decision to share services, whilst ensuring that each retains its own sovereignty over its area and functions.

Both Councils want to accomplish similar achievements from their property portfolios, and have a shared goal of realising a sustainable asset base by 2021. In order to achieve this a joint Corporate Asset Management Plan will be considered for adoption by the respective Cabinets (see Appendix 1 for main aims and objectives).

The Plan is supported by a suite of policies and procedures. It includes a number of objectives to be achieved and progressed against deadlines which will be reported through the respective Strategic Property Boards. The objectives will be subject to annual refresh to reflect changing priorities or legislative demands.

The Asset Challenge process will be a key element in achieving the over-arching aim of a sustainable asset base. The Councils must test why they hold the assets they do, along with the true costs of those assets, and how they benefit our customers. Difficult decisions will need to be taken by both Councils. Key to the process will be ensuring that all assets that are retained have strong social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits to the areas served by each Council and clearly contribute to increasing social value.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1.0 Membership

#### 1.1 Councillors

Normally consists of two Members from the administration and one from the opposition.

#### 1.2 Officers

Nazeya Hussain – Director of Regeneration and Planning

Alan Osborne – Deputy Chief Executive

Bee Lewis – Head of Property and Facilities Shared Service

Mark Langridge-Kemp – Senior Manager, Asset Development

1.2 SPB is normally chaired by a Member from the administration.

1.2.1 Decisions on issues being brought before the group will be by consensus.

1.2.2 There may be occasion when additional officers attend SPB to present information on aspects of strategic asset management and/or specific issues for discussion.

1.2.3 At least two Members and one officer should be present to form the quorum and recommendations at each meeting.

### 2.0 Responsibilities

2.1 SPB will act in an advisory capacity to the Director in the discharge of his/her delegated powers and be responsible for:

- Ensuring decisions and recommendations around property matters are taken in line with corporate aims and objectives;
- Considering progress against the Asset Management Plan (AMP) implementation objectives as set out within the AMP;
- Considering progress of strategic asset management projects and making recommendations where appropriate;
- Making recommendations to Cabinet that come forward from the Asset Challenge process in line with the Councils' decision making processes;
- Receiving information regarding investment opportunities;
- Considering estate management issues such as debtors, lease/licence and other related matters where there are strategic issues to clarify (non-compliance with lease terms etc.) and providing a recommended course of action;
- Considering progress of implementation of the corporate landlord model and providing recommendations.

### **3.0 Frequency of Meetings**

- 3.1 Meetings will be scheduled bi-monthly, but can be cancelled if there are insufficient agenda items to warrant a meeting.
- 3.2 The Director of Regeneration and Planning may call an additional extraordinary SPB or agree to seek a consensus virtually if, in their view, a matter needs to be considered urgently.

### **4.0 Confidentiality**

- 5.1 SPB may be presented with information that is deemed to be confidential, often for reasons of commercial sensitivity. Release of the information could have a detrimental impact on the Councils' commercial activities, or of third parties. Board members must undertake to respect the confidential nature of such information at all times.

## CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The AMP focuses on 4 key areas:

1. Improving yield from the investment portfolio.
2. Reducing maintenance costs and liabilities.
3. Delivering efficiencies through smarter procurement.
4. Increasing the capital value of each Council's asset base.

The AMP will:

- Provide the strategy framework for LDC and EBC to manage and maximise the potential of their property portfolios and meet the Asset Challenge;
- Ensure that the respective property portfolios are managed and operated in accordance with the Councils' Corporate and Council plans and priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategies;
- Ensure that the Property and Facilities Shared Service (PFSS) efficiently delivers benefits to each Council from the respective property portfolios;
- Unlock the potential of land and buildings across Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough, working with external partners where appropriate.

The AMP objectives are underpinned by six asset management strategy themes outlining the iterative work that will be undertaken across the Councils.:

- **Theme 1: Establish** a clear vision regarding how LDC and EBC will achieve a sustainable asset base by 2021: delivered through the Corporate Landlord model and Property and Facilities Shared Service planning;
- **Theme 2: Challenge** the reasons for retaining assets and ensure that retained assets contribute towards a sustainable asset base: this comprises a critical part of Phase 1 of Asset Challenge;
- **Theme 3: Identify** the benefits and make best use of each asset to stimulate regeneration including the provision of affordable housing: Phase 2 of Asset Challenge;
- **Theme 4: Seek** opportunities where key strategic assets could realise significant capital and/or revenue returns in order to reinvest in the retained operational portfolio: the key element of Phase 2 of Asset Challenge as the portfolios move towards achieving a sustainable asset base;
- **Theme 5: Reduce** on-going property maintenance and financial liabilities for LDC and EBC: supports theme 4 in achieving the sustainable asset base objective;
- **Theme 6: Ensure** that retained assets combine social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits: guarantees that the Councils are only holding properties that meet corporate aims and objectives.