

Appendix 3

Policy Framework for Strategic Themes

Strategic Hold

Introduction: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and criteria for the retention of Council-owned buildings. The policy emphasises the importance of preserving and maximising the value of our assets to support community development, economic growth, and social value creation. By adopting a strategic approach to retention, we aim to safeguard valuable resources and promote long-term sustainability.

Policy statement: The Council shall adhere to the following principles and procedures for the retention of buildings:

1. Strategic alignment: Retention decisions shall be guided by the Council's strategic objectives in the Borough Plan. Buildings shall be retained when they align with the Council's vision, mission, and values and contribute positively to economic development, prosperity, and stability.
2. Community benefit: Retention decisions shall prioritise the public interest and welfare, considering the needs and preferences of the VCS, residents, businesses, and stakeholders affected by the retention of buildings. Buildings shall be retained when they provide essential goods or services to the community, support local businesses, e.g. meanwhile uses, or enhance the quality of life for residents.
3. Economic viability: Retained buildings must be financially sustainable and contribute to the economic vitality and resilience of the Council's budget. Buildings shall be retained when they generate revenue for the Council, are cost-effective to maintain, create jobs, stimulate economic activity, or attract investment.
4. Environmental sustainability: Retention decisions shall consider the environmental impact of buildings, including their energy efficiency, ecological footprint, and potential for adaptive reuse or sustainable redevelopment. Buildings shall be retained when they incorporate sustainable practices and contribute to environmental stewardship and climate resilience.

5. Social value: Retention decisions shall promote social value and inclusivity, ensuring that buildings serve our communities' diverse needs and interests. Buildings shall be retained when they provide accessible, affordable, culturally relevant goods or services to underserved populations or marginalised groups.
6. Meanwhile uses can help revitalise vacant properties, support temporary community initiatives, and foster innovation and creativity by entrepreneurs and start-ups. They can also be invaluable in supporting Council initiatives, such as the Black Community Action Plan. The criteria for meanwhile use will include factors like vacancy duration and redevelopment timescales, ownership status, location and potential community impact. A transparent and accessible application process for individuals or organisations interested in utilising meanwhile-use properties will be used, along with standard licence agreements that clarify the terms and conditions of meanwhile-use, including duration, responsibilities, insurance, and any fees or rent. If managed and monitored effectively, meanwhile use can facilitate the temporary activation of vacant spaces, promote community engagement and empowerment, and contribute to the revitalisation and vibrancy of town centres.

Actively Manage

Introduction: This policy aims to ensure that the management and operation of the Council's buildings fulfil the legislation requirements and represent responsible use of scarce resources.

Policy statement: The Council's buildings shall be managed and operated in a manner that aligns with the following objectives and priorities:

1. Financial viability: Optimise the financial performance of buildings through effective leasing and pricing strategies, rent collection, tenancy management and cost management. Seek opportunities for revenue generation through innovative leasing models or partnerships with the public sector, which can provide multiple benefits. Regularly review and assess the financial performance of buildings and tenancies to identify areas for improvement, investment, or divestment. Rental discounts are to be determined on a case-by-case basis, and a strong correlation is expected between the level of rent discount given and the social value created.
2. Community benefit: Prioritise leasing or utilising building spaces to businesses or VCS organisations that provide goods or services that meet the local community's needs and gaps in the market. Support

initiatives that promote social inclusion, diversity, and accessibility within buildings. Consider implementing social impact agreements and lease clauses once the Council's social value review has been completed.

3. Economic benefit: Foster economic growth and job creation by providing opportunities for meanwhile uses of vacant buildings awaiting redevelopment to attract businesses and provide employment opportunities.
4. Environmental sustainability: Implement energy-efficient practices and technologies, where the energy efficiency measures meet the financial payback test, to reduce the ecological footprint of buildings. Encourage tenants and businesses to adopt sustainable practices by raising awareness and enforcing compliance.

Invest and/or Repurpose

This policy provides guidelines and procedures for repurposing Council-owned land and buildings. The policy emphasises the importance of adaptive reuse, revitalisation, and innovation to maximise the value and use of these assets. By adopting a strategic approach to investment and redevelopment, we can aim to unlock the potential of underutilised or vacant buildings, promote creative solutions to emerging challenges, and advance our broader objectives and priorities.

Policy statement: The Council shall adhere to the following principles and procedures for investing in and repurposing buildings:

1. Strategic alignment: Land and buildings shall be redeveloped when their existing use is no longer viable or aligned with our goals and where alternative forms of spaces and uses offer more excellent value or benefit to the community.
2. Adaptive reuse: Investment and repurposing decisions shall prioritise adaptive reuse strategies that retain and enhance buildings' historic, architectural, and cultural significance. Preference shall be given to repurposing solutions that respect the integrity and character of buildings while adapting them to meet evolving needs and demands.
3. Economic viability: Investment and repurposing decisions shall consider the potential for generating revenue, improving building condition or use, creating jobs, stimulating economic activity, and attracting investment to the area through innovative uses and partnerships.

4. Environmental sustainability: Investment and repurposing decisions shall promote ecological sustainability and resilience, incorporating green building practices and energy efficiency measures.
5. Socio-economic benefit: Investment and repurposing decisions shall prioritise uses and activities that provide tangible social benefits to the community, including affordable housing, community services, cultural amenities, and public spaces. Repurposed buildings shall enhance social value, inclusivity, and accessibility, addressing residents' and stakeholders' diverse needs and interests.
6. There will be a requirement to conduct comprehensive assessments of buildings identified for repurposing, including market analysis, feasibility studies, planning advice, community needs assessments, and environmental impact assessments, to inform decision-making and identify opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

Dispose

This policy aims to provide guidelines and procedures for disposing of surplus Council-owned buildings to maximise the value of assets on sale.

Policy statement: The Council shall adhere to the following principles and procedures for the disposal of buildings:

1. Strategic alignment: Disposal decisions shall be guided by legislation and the Council's strategic objectives, priorities, and long-term plans for capital or revenue generation and the need for reinvestment in the retained assets. Consideration shall be given to the potential impact of disposal on the surrounding community, local economy, and environment, including any loss of social, economic, or environmental benefits associated with the transaction.
2. Financial viability: Disposal transactions shall be conducted to maximise the financial return to the Council. Before disposal, buildings shall be assessed for their current condition, market value, potential for redevelopment, and any outstanding liabilities or obligations that may affect their value or suitability for sale.
3. Public interest: Local community needs, and the needs and preferences of residents, businesses, and stakeholders affected by the transaction will be identified via equality impact assessments. Transparency and accountability shall be maintained throughout the disposal process, with opportunities for public input, consultation, and feedback to inform decision-making where appropriate.

4. **Fairness and Equity:** Disposal opportunities shall be open and accessible to all qualified buyers, developers, and stakeholders without discrimination or favouritism. Disposal processes shall be conducted by applicable laws, regulations, and ethical standards, ensuring fairness, integrity, and impartiality in decision-making.

Prioritisation policy

This policy aims to establish guidelines for prioritising the above Themes. By implementing a systematic approach to utilisation, the Council can optimise the portfolio's social, economic, and environmental benefits while ensuring equitable access and efficient use of resources.

Officers will have regard for all relevant legislation when making decisions, such as s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Equality Act 2010.

Policy statement: To develop and regularly review structured asset-level plans that set out an evidenced-based rationale for the future ownership, use, management approach and investment and redevelopment (if retained), including expenditure on improving statutory compliance and decarbonisation. The Council shall prioritise the use or disposal of buildings based on the following criteria and hierarchy:

1. Incorporate equality and diversity considerations into decision-making processes, including procurement, leasing, and property management, to promote fair and equitable access to buildings and opportunities for all.
2. **Need:** Priority shall be given to activities that address pressing public needs, emergencies, or crises, including healthcare facilities, emergency shelters, and disaster response services. Consideration shall be given to activities that serve vulnerable residents, such as food banks and support services.
3. **Economic development:** Priority shall be given to activities that foster revenue generation for the Council, economic growth, job creation, and business development within the local economy. This activity has a high priority because of the importance and necessity of achieving financial sustainability and supporting prosperity and stability.
4. **Community benefit:** Preference shall be given to activities and initiatives that contribute to thriving communities, cultural enrichment, and civic engagement, such as community centres, arts and cultural organisations, and social service providers.

5. Environmental sustainability: Preference shall be given to properties and activities representing ecological sustainability and responsible resource management for a cleaner and greener future. Decisions will be informed by building conditions and an evaluation of the financial viability (payback test) of investing in energy efficiency measures or technologies to bring to compliance.