

This report may be of interest to: All Members

BEST VALUE PILOT REVIEW - PROPERTY

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1. Purpose

1.1 To advise about the proposed approach to the Best Value Pilot Review of Property and work done so far.

2. Summary

2.1 A Review Outline has been drawn up, together with draft Terms of Reference.

2.2 A Project Plan has been prepared and tasks will be allocated to members of the review team at its next meeting.

2.3 A synopsis of Milton Keynes Council's ownership of property has been drawn up.

2.4 Further reports on progress will be brought to meetings of the Sub-Committee although it is anticipated that the Review will be completed by the end of December 1999.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the approach to the Review as set down in the Review Outline paper be noted

4. Background

- 4.1 The first meeting of an officer group was held in June 1999. The Group has now met on two further occasions and is due to meet again on 1 November 1999. The Review will be led by the Strategic Director (Resources) with input from Review team members. Support will be available from the Projects Team in Human Resources. A reference group will be set up in accordance with Best Value Review Guidelines.
- 4.2 The Terms of Reference for the pilot Review were approved by the meeting of the Best Value and CCT Sub Committee on 11 October 1999 (**Annex A**).
- 4.3 One of the terms of reference for the Property Sub-Committee set by Policy and Resources Committee on 13 July 1999 is to oversee the Best Value Pilot Review of the Council's property services. The Review will look at all property and the way in which it is managed. (The draft Review Terms of Reference define 'property' and 'property management'.)
- 4.4 The Council's wish to be a 'Beacon Council' means that it is necessary to review the way in which property is dealt with across the Directorates. The Asset Management Strategy will set down key objectives against which the efficiency of property and property management can be tested through the Best Value Pilot Review. (The Sub-Committee is receiving a report on the Asset Management Strategy at Item 11.)
- 4.5 A questionnaire about the current service provision has been drawn up by the Officer Group and has been sent out to all those who have dealings with property. Information provided by users will be helpful in identifying overlaps and gaps in current service provision. To avoid duplication of questionnaires the views of schools as users of property will be encompassed in the Support Services to Schools Review.
- 4.6 A synopsis of the Council's ownership of property has been drawn up is attached at **Annex B**.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The draft Terms of Reference indicate that the Review is likely to raise questions about the Council's current approach to property and its management. The Review will seek to provide choices about the future of property for the Council. Further work will be necessary to identify the benefits and disadvantages of various alternative approaches to property and its management.
- 5.2 A review outline paper is attached as **Annex C** and a Project Plan at **Annex D**.

6. Implications

6.1 Environmental

The Review will look at the costs of owning property. Energy costs form part of the direct costs of property ownership and will be considered as part of the Review.

6.2 Equalities

The views of the stakeholders and users of property will be sought as part of the Review. A Reference Group is to be set up to include as wide a representation of stakeholders as possible.

6.3 Financial

Analysis of the direct and indirect costs of property and its management will be a key part of the Review. The Review will seek to identify efficiency measures.

6.4 Legal

The Review will look at alternatives to the traditional methods of property ownership and management. Legal advice about the tenure of property will be sought.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

The Review will look at the processes and the people involved in property management. Staff across all Directorates are currently involved in property issues.

7. **Conclusions**

- 7.1 A significant amount of the Council's resources are involved in property and its management. The Best Value Pilot Review of Property provides an opportunity to examine the way the Council currently holds and manages property. The principles of the Asset Management Strategy will help to provide a framework for a structured review of property and property management.

Background Papers: None