

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Report Title	Asset Transformation Strategy 2025-2030	
Meeting / Date	3 rd June 2025	
Cabinet portfolio	Councillor Ahsan Khan, Deputy Leader (Housing and Regeneration)	
Report author/ Contact details	Craig Egglestone, Director of Capital Strategy and Portfolio Management Place craig.egglestone@walthamforest.gov.uk	
Wards affected	All	
Public access	OPEN except for Appendix 2 which is EXEMPT in accordance with Section 100(A-H) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Schedule 12A as amended, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1, paragraph 3, as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information) and disclosure would not be in the public interest.	
Appendices	Appendix 1: Asset Transformation Strategy 2025-2030 Appendix 2: Church Lane Tender Report (EXEMPT) Appendix 3: Church Lane Car Park Site Plan Appendix 4: Equalities Screening (Asset Transformation Strategy) Appendix 5: Equalities Screening (Church Lane Car Park	

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Asset Transformation Strategy is an important statement of the council's vision and approach to maximise the potential of its land and property over the next 5 years.
- 1.2 Building on the council's recent successes in using its land and buildings to drive local economic growth and deliver much-needed new homes, the Strategy outlines our vision for how our buildings and land will support the delivery of Mission Waltham Forest. It also establishes a

series of high-level principles and objectives to guide future decisions about our estate.

- 1.3 The Strategy sets the strategic direction for the Asset Transformation Programme, including establishing the principles to enable the delivery of its Asset Transformation Delivery Plan.
- 1.4 Phase one of the Asset Transformation Delivery Plan brings forward the release of surplus buildings and sites identified for growth in the Local Plan for regeneration. These sites are intended to contribute capital receipts, in the first phase, towards the conversion of four of our vacant buildings into temporary accommodation for residents in housing need. This programme will be subject to due diligence and key proposals will be subject to the necessary statutory consultation.
- 1.5 The first site within the programme, Church Lane Car Park, has been marketed successfully and in principle Cabinet approval is sought to sell this site, subject to the necessary Traffic Management Order consultation. This site will deliver a receipt for the Asset Transformation Programme alongside delivering 134 new homes for discounted market rent for the borough.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Cabinet is recommended to:
 - 2.1.1. Agree the Asset Transformation Strategy 2025-2030, attached as Appendix 1.
 - 2.1.2. Agree to establish the first phase of the Asset Transformation Programme. The programme will commence due diligence to bring forwards the release of surplus buildings and council-owned sites (identified for growth in the Local Plan) for regeneration, along with the conversion of four vacant buildings into temporary accommodation for residents in housing need.
 - 2.1.3. Agree to commence consultation under the Traffic Management Order procedure on the closure of Church Lane Car Park and that the final decision to close Church Lane Car Park be delegated to the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment.
 - 2.1.4. Subject to the closure of the car park, agree in principle the sale of Church Lane Car Park to the preferred bidder, Pocket Living Limited, for the estimated capital receipt set out in exempt Appendix 2 (EXEMPT), subject to planning consent being granted.
 - 2.1.5. Note that the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and playground will be temporarily closed during the re-development of Church Lane Car Park but will ultimately be re-provided to a higher quality as part of the longer-term development of the site.

- 2.1.6. Agree that the final decision and negotiation of final terms to sell Church Lane Car Park, subject to a decision to close the car park, are delegated to the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Governance and Law.

3. Proposals

Background

- 3.1. In December 2018, the council adopted its first Property Transformation Strategy, which set out a vision for how we would use our buildings and land creatively to drive change and help unlock the borough's potential. This strategy focused on driving economic growth and prosperity and housing delivery via the creative use of the council's land, buildings and partnerships.
- 3.2. In July 2019, the accompanying Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) was adopted and demonstrated how the council's assets would be used to support and contribute to business and strategic outcomes. The SAMP seeks to balance commercialisation, core operational needs and wider socio-economic return on investment.
- 3.3. Since then, the council has transformed its land and buildings through significant investment in direct delivery schemes, development agreements, strategic acquisitions and innovative partnerships. This has delivered over 1,595 homes since 2021, as well as over 9,000m² of new community and cultural space and over 2,000m² of new commercial space. By 2030, the council will have provided almost 32,000m² of new community, cultural and commercial floor space and a total of 3,149 new homes (61% affordable).
- 3.4. Since the last Property Transformation Strategy (2018), the national and local context has changed significantly. Housing need is an even greater challenge, with an acute housing shortage and increasing numbers of residents housed in temporary accommodation (TA).
- 3.5. In addition, demographic changes in our borough have led to falling school rolls, increased demand for children's and adult's social care and SEND (special educational needs and disability) provision; increasing costs and requiring innovative solutions to meet service users' needs and reduce financial pressures on the council.
- 3.6. The council's new corporate plan, Mission Waltham Forest, supports a preventative approach and introduces new models of flexible and adaptive service delivery. This includes exploring co-location opportunities with public and voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners to drive prevention in neighbourhood locations. This context sets the principles behind some of the objectives in the Asset Transformation Strategy, requiring properties to adapt to support new service delivery models and create a more inclusive local area for our residents.

- 3.7. In addition, there is opportunity to strengthen our VCS by ensuring buildings are fit-for-purpose to enable VCS groups to operate effectively within the community and deliver on the goals of Mission Waltham Forest and strengthen our communities. This includes the opportunity to take lessons learned from the tenant pilot of the VCS Leasing Policy and apply these lessons to future property and policy considerations.
- 3.8. The significant investment in the council's estate as outlined in paragraph 3.3, shows a growth of our overall operational estate by c.11,000 sqm. This growth alongside the ageing of the existing, older estate and rising inflation has seen operating costs increase over the past five years.
- 3.9. The council has committed as part of Mission Waltham Forest to lead the way to a net-zero borough. Alongside this, we are implementing our Climate Action Plan, which includes decarbonising our estate and fulfilling our commitment to reduce the number of council car parks by 2030. These actions are part of the council's broader strategy to combat climate change and promote sustainability.
- 3.10. The Asset Transformation Programme will play an important role in supporting the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The repurposing of vacant sites, for uses including as TA, offers the opportunity to reduce service operating costs via increasing our in-house provision of services which are otherwise expensive to acquire on the market.
- 3.11. Longer-term plans will consider opportunities to increase in-borough SEND, adult social care and consolidation opportunities to enable the delivery of Stronger Communities prevention services in core locations in the borough. Proposals are being developed to deliver the Stronger Communities programme.
- 3.12. The overall programme aims to be self-financing, with capital receipts from sites released for regeneration used to repurpose buildings to meet the requirements of services and the communities they serve.

Overview of Asset Transformation Strategy

- 3.13. The Asset Transformation Strategy (Appendix 1) was developed to set out the vision and principles for the Asset Transformation Programme and for forthcoming property decisions over the next 5 years. The Strategy recognises that reviewing our estate will entail some difficult decisions, in light of the current challenging fiscal and demographic context.
- 3.14. Its purpose is to set out how the council intends to build on recent successes in using its land and buildings (excluding the HRA and schools estate) to enable transformational change, and how we want to ensure our property portfolio acts as an enabler for our missions-based approach to tackling some of the fundamental challenges facing our residents and the council.

- 3.15. The Strategy provides an overview of the council's existing General Fund portfolio, and sets out the vision, strategic context, and key principles/objectives of Asset Transformation, alongside the outcomes we want to achieve from it, in support of Mission Waltham Forest.
- 3.16. The overarching vision for the Asset Transformation Strategy is: *“Making the most effective use of council land and buildings to support and strengthen our communities, build more affordable homes and create and deliver inclusive economic growth.”* The key principles and objectives of the Asset Transformation Strategy are to:
- Make the most effective use of the council's land and buildings by providing flexible spaces to enable the delivery of preventative services locally.
 - Identify opportunities for the delivery of new affordable homes.
 - Ensure a manageable, compliant, and financially and environmentally sustainable estate.
 - Identify opportunities for acquisitions and land release that enables regeneration and takes into consideration local community benefits.
 - Protect the council finances to ensure long-term financial resilience.
- 3.17. The Strategy outlines the necessary steps we will take to implement our ambitions. This will be led via a series of Asset Reviews aimed at identifying opportunities to optimise and adapt, or where appropriate, release and redevelop land and buildings owned by the council that no longer meet the objectives established in Mission Waltham Forest.
- 3.18. These reviews will be driven by service needs, recognising that a phased approach is required to take account of services being at different stages in the development of their operating models and requirements. The Asset Reviews will also consider the condition, running costs and environmental performance, as well as wider considerations such as Local Plan Part 2 (Site Allocations).
- 3.19. Finally, the Strategy sets out the governance and performance monitoring arrangements for the Asset Transformation Programme.

Overview of Asset Transformation Programme – Phase 1

- 3.20. The first phase of the Asset Transformation Programme has been designed following an area-based Asset Review. This looked at opportunities to optimise and adapt our surplus estate to tackle areas of significant financial challenge, in particular TA.
- 3.21. Importantly, it also looks at releasing surplus land and buildings owned by the council for regeneration thus generating capital receipts, which can be recycled to fund building conversions, thereby supporting the financial resilience of the council.
- 3.22. The first phase of the delivery programme includes the following proposals:

- TA conversions of four surplus buildings to address the acute housing shortage and increasing number of residents housed in temporary accommodation through the delivery of up to 90 new, high quality, temporary homes. The cost of a council-owned TA unit is estimated to be up to £720 less per week than an equivalent commercial hotel room. Council-owned TA enables the council to design and deliver high-quality, purpose-built accommodation that meets the specific needs of residents. These conversions are proposed at three currently vacant buildings: Rowan House, 130 Trumpington Road, 90 Crownfield Road alongside Cedar Wood House which is currently office accommodation but will be vacated as part of the Fellowship Square Programme in 2026.
 - Alongside this to undertake due diligence on surplus or vacant properties and sites which have been identified for redevelopment as part of the council's Local Plan Site Allocations Document. Subject to the outcome of the due diligence, capital receipts generated from these sites will be used to fund works to convert or adapt assets. Sites identified for land release for regeneration will be progressed via the governance processes established in the Asset Transformation Strategy and the Property Procedure Rules part 08-05 of the Council's Constitution.
- 3.23. Later planned phases will review opportunities for supporting front-line services in our communities with enhanced libraries and VCS spaces and developing property solutions to support and help alleviate pressures in SEND and adults services. The property solutions for this phase will be developed as requirements are bought forwards by services.
- 3.24. Cabinet is asked to approve in principle the phase 1 Asset Transformation Delivery Plan, which proposes several sites for land release for regeneration along with the conversions of council-owned buildings to support the council's financial position, subject to due diligence and satisfactory statutory consultation.

Church Lane Car Park Redevelopment

- 3.25. Church Lane Car Park is the first proposed redevelopment to forward fund the Asset Transformation Programme and is an early enabler of how the programme will ensure best use of its estate to deliver the vision and objectives set out in the Asset Transformation Strategy.
- 3.26. Church Lane Car Park is a public car park which provides 56 surface-level car parking spaces and a cycle store facility, situated immediately to the south of Leytonstone Station (see Site Plan in Appendix 3). The site also contains a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), a children's playground, and a pedestrian bridge which crosses the underground line and the A12 dual carriageway. The unencumbered freehold title of the land is vested in the council, as is the land around the overbridge access ramp. The MUGA and playground will need to be temporarily closed

during the re-development of Church Lane Car Park but will ultimately be re-provided to a higher quality as part of the longer-term development of the site.

- 3.27. The site has been identified as a potential site allocation in Local Plan Part 2 since the first 'Regulation 18' version of this document was published for public consultation in September 2020. This first consultation (which followed informal consultation events to shape the document over the preceding summer) ran from 24th September to 14th December 2020. Local Plan Part 2 was published for 'Regulation 19' consultation from 8th November 2021 to 31st January 2022.
- 3.28. To ensure full alignment with Local Plan Part 1, which was adopted in February 2024, a further 'Regulation 19' consultation was carried out from 6th August to 9th October 2024. Local Plan Part 2 was submitted for Examination in Public in December 2024 and all relevant information and evidence is published on the council's website, including the Leytonstone Town Centre Area Framework. Prior to this, the site was also identified as a 'Site Opportunity Location' in Local Plan Part 1, which was adopted in February 2024 following Examination in Public starting in 2021, and extensive public consultation preceding that.
- 3.29. The Leytonstone Town Centre Area Framework is intended to help realise and guide investment and improvements in Leytonstone over the next 15 years. It includes analysis of the opportunities and constraints presented by the Church Lane Car Park site and presents illustrative development proposals. It was first produced by the council in 2021, after which it was refined to incorporate local aspirations following public consultation. A second round of public engagement then took place in Spring 2023.
- 3.30. The Area Framework has informed the council's overarching Town Centre Framework, approved by Cabinet in March 2025. The Town Centre Framework sets out key actions and delivery plans for each of the borough's town centres, including through effective partnerships and use of public sector assets to realise the council's missions for delivering inclusive growth.
- 3.31. In line with the planning policy context set out above, the site is considered suitable for a residential-led redevelopment, subject to compliance with relevant planning policies, including the emerging site requirements on Local Plan Part 2.
- 3.32. Sixty Bricks Limited, the council's former housing company which Cabinet decided to place into dormancy, began working up a scheme for the site in 2022 and began undertaking public consultation in June 2023. This highlighted the site to the wider market, which led to the council receiving several unsolicited approaches from residential developers, expressing interest in purchasing or working in partnership with the council on developing the site.
- 3.33. Accordingly, it was decided in April 2024 to commence an open selection process led by the council's Property Team. Following consultation with

senior officers and members, the site was openly marketed between 24th July and 16th August 2024 through the council's website, targeted to a retained list of active developers and all parties who had previously expressed interest in the site.

- 3.34. At the close of the open marketing campaign, a variety of different proposals were received. These have now been reviewed and analysed by officers and, where necessary, the respective leading bidders have been interviewed. Three firm proposals were received. Each of these proposals were reviewed by officers and the validity of each verified. This has resulted in a prospective preferred bidder being identified.
- 3.35. Pocket Living Ltd. is recommended as the most suitable bidder to proceed with on the basis they delivered the Most Economically Advantageous Tender. Consequently, it is proposed that they be nominated as preferred bidder, and that detailed finalisation of the terms of sale be delegated to the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Governance and Law. The full details of the tender are set out in Appendix 2 (EXEMPT).
- 3.36. The proposed redevelopment of Church Lane Car Park by Pocket Living Ltd. delivers on the objectives of the Asset Transformation Strategy by:
 - Delivering much needed, new affordable homes – the proposals would deliver 134 new affordable homes available for Discounted Market Rent, a high-demand product currently lacking in the borough.
 - Providing a future capital receipt for investment in the Asset Transformation Programme, with the opportunity for a further receipt subject to overage, thereby supporting the long-term financial resilience of the council.
 - Prioritising high-quality design, incorporating the provision of a new MUGA, playground and enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes. These elements will deliver high-quality community infrastructure that complements the housing growth.
 - Delivering an environmentally sustainable estate – a new carbon-neutral development, replacing a car park, which will reduce the number of car parks in line with the council's Climate Action Plan, and bring forwards a new sustainable development for the local area.
- 3.37. The closure of any public car park requires a Traffic Management Order to be made following the required statutory process for making such an order, including consultation for a minimum of 21 days and consideration of any objections. The decision on the proposed redevelopment of this site is therefore subject to this process. It is recommended that the final decision to close Church Lane Car Park is delegated to the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods.

4. Options & Alternatives Considered

Asset Transformation

- 4.1. The Asset Transformation Strategy sets out the vision and principles for the Asset Transformation Programme which reflects the current strategic context and aligns to Mission Waltham Forest. Without a robust Strategy, there would be no clear strategic outcomes or objectives against which to make property-related decisions, which could result in sub-optimal outcomes for the council and the borough. As such, no alternative option is to be considered.
- 4.2. The Delivery Plan for the Phase 1 Asset Transformation Programme will be subject to due diligence and the necessary statutory consultations. It will be a dynamic document regularly reviewed by senior officers and members to ensure the programme is responsive to engagement with key stakeholders during the process. Future phases are to consider wider strategic need as service needs are developed.

Church Lane Car Park

- 4.3. Do nothing – this option was considered but given the site’s strategic location and size, the site offers an excellent opportunity to release inherent strategic value, when local authority finances are generally under increasing pressure. In addition, this would be against the principles of the Council’s Climate Action Plan of re-purposing council car parks and the Local Plan Part 2 where the site is a Site Allocation. To do nothing and retain the site in its existing use would also forego the opportunity to deliver much-needed affordable housing within the borough and support council finances.
- 4.4. Self-develop the site – this option was considered but rejected based on the capital resources required to design, plan and construct a scheme of this size and nature. A sale takes the risk away from the council, especially in light of recent construction inflation, but provides a benefit in terms of overage, should this scenario apply.

5. Council Strategic Priorities (and other National or Local Policies or Strategies)

Asset Transformation Strategy

- 5.1. The primary purpose of the Asset Transformation Strategy is to demonstrate how the council’s Asset Transformation Programme will contribute to the delivery of the organisation’s strategic priorities established in Mission Waltham Forest.

Church Lane Car Park

- 5.2. The Local Plan establishes a strategic ambition to direct well-planned, inclusive growth to sites that currently generate high numbers of private car trips and have little biodiversity, ecology or green infrastructure, therefore worsening the risk of surface water flooding and contributing to poor air quality. The redevelopment of surface-level car parks in the

borough, including the Church Lane Car Park site, with high quality residential-led development at the heart of our town centres, is key to achieving this ambition.

- 5.3. The replacement of a car park with a new, energy-efficient development will assist in the council's mission to 'Lead the way for a net-zero borough' and implement the associated Climate Action Plan objective. Furthermore, the delivery of new homes and re-provided community facilities supports the following borough missions:
- Ensure every family and every child are given every opportunity
 - Tackle the housing crisis head on
 - Make Waltham Forest a great place to live and age well
 - Safe, green neighbourhoods where everyone can thrive

6. Consultation

Asset Transformation

- 6.1. The Asset Transformation team has worked collectively with the Senior Leadership Team, the Council's relevant Strategic Transformation Board and working groups, as well as individual Senior Responsible Officers (SROs), and property and service experts to develop the Asset Transformation Strategy.
- 6.2. Consultation has taken place with political leadership to ensure the Strategy is aligned to priorities in their respective portfolios.
- 6.3. In addition, the implementation of the phase 1 delivery programme has been informed by Member and Chief Officer Engagement. This delivery programme will be subject to the necessary due diligence and statutory consultation and engagement where appropriate.

Church Lane Car Park

- 6.4. The closure and sale of Church Lane Car Park is subject to the statutory process for making a Traffic Management Order including the necessary consultation, and therefore this report seeks in-principle approval of Cabinet to the sale of this site subject to this statutory process, with the decision to sell delegated to the relevant Strategic Directors.
- 6.5. As set out above in paragraphs 3.29 - 3.31 consultation was carried out by the council on the future use of this site as part of the consultation processes for Local Plan Part 2 (between 8th November 2021 and 31st January 2022 and 6th August to 9th October 2024) and the Leytonstone Town Centre Area Framework in Spring 2023.
- 6.6. Consultation was also carried out by Sixty Bricks Ltd. in the development of their proposals for redevelopment of the site in June 2023, as set out in paragraph 3.34.
- 6.7. Engagement with internal stakeholders including the Portfolio Lead Member and ward councillors, S151 officer and Planning, and other relevant colleagues has been undertaken as part of the internal governance processes.

7. Implications

7.1. Finance, Value for Money and Risk

Asset Transformation Strategy

- 7.1.1. A key objective of the Asset Transformation Strategy is to protect the council finances to ensure long-term financial resilience. The outcome of the programme is to ensure a self-financing asset transformation programme, which leverages and re-invests capital receipts from land release for regeneration and maximises the use of external funding as far as possible. Buildings and/or land are to be released to ensure any investment in the retained estate is self-funded and the investment drives commercial income or reduces service financial pressures.
- 7.1.2. Future proposals in the Asset Transformation Programme will need to deliver the objectives set out in this Strategy and demonstrate how any investment in land/buildings will be funded from receipts from surplus assets and/or external funding, and/or the revenue opportunity the building or land will deliver if proposed for alternative use. Finance leads will be engaged as proposals emerge to ensure value for money and the long-term financial resilience of the council.
- 7.1.3. The first phase of the Asset Transformation Programme is to enable the delivery of capital receipts to forward fund the conversion of four vacant sites into temporary accommodation as far as possible. This is subject to final due diligence and consultation. The proposed programme drives forwards four temporary accommodation conversions £3.2m of annual cost avoidance per year (when compared to commercial hotels) and potentially generates an estimated £11 million of capital receipts from the redevelopment of vacant sites or sites identified for growth in the Local Plan to forward fund the conversions as much as possible. Wider property operational savings and further capital receipts will be considered in phase 2 in 2026.

Church Lane Car Park

- 7.1.4. The site sits within the General Fund, thus s123 of Local Government Act 1972 applies and the Council must obtain best consideration for a sale of land. The council must additionally comply with its Financial Standing Orders and the council's Constitution, which may include s151 and the Corporate Property Officer agreeing if a sale is considered at less than best consideration, should social aspects of a sale become a driver for any transaction. Officers are of the view that the council's best consideration conditions have been met with the recommended option.
- 7.1.5. One of the bids received proposed a leaseback arrangement rather than a capital receipt. This would have tied up the council to a significant period of lease payments, which would be funded by the rent paid by tenants, with lease payments linked to inflation and the rental increase linked to government policy, meaning the council would take all of the risk, compounded over many years. Whilst the net present value of this lease bid is higher than the other, it presents a significant cost risk over the period, compared to a minimal risk from the capital receipt bidders, as they are an acquisition.

- 7.1.6. The council instructed Sixty Bricks Ltd (the council's now dormant, wholly owned housing company) to consider several viable schemes on this site, which totalled a cost of £918,057 and this has been transferred to the council's balance sheet as an asset under construction. This cost will need to be written off at the point of sale and for the leaseback option, would mean a £918,057 impact on the General Fund in year, which would need to be offset by any surplus future rents. Given the risk and uncertainty around the rent surplus that may or not be achievable over the longer period, this is too great for the General Fund to consider.
- 7.1.7. Of the two remaining bids, on quality, price and assessment of the schemes, the bid from Pocket Living Ltd. (being wholly residential) meets the housing supply needs and provides an opportunity through the overage mechanism for the council to benefit should any additional accommodation be provided. The offer from the other capital bidder required the commercial and community space in their scheme to be sold back to the council, thus making the net receipt to the council largely similar, but Pocket Living does not pose any risk to the council in terms of future cost exposure.
- 7.1.8. The redevelopment of the site will result in a loss of revenue income and the Neighbourhood's Directorate income target will also consequently need to be modified. This will be managed corporately so there is nil impact to the general fund position.

7.2. Legal

Asset Transformation Strategy

- 7.2.1. The Council has powers to hold, acquire and dispose of property for the discharge of its functions under the Local Government Act 1972, as well as property powers under other specific legislation.
- 7.2.2. The Asset Transformation Strategy sets out the vision and objectives for best use of holding, acquiring or disposing of property and the associated appropriate governance to ensure any future decisions regarding property and land are made in line with its legal duties and the Council's Constitution.

Church Lane Car Park

- 7.2.3. Church Lane Car Park is a designated off-street car park provided by the Council under the powers in section 32 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Sale of the car park requires that it be declared surplus and a Traffic Management Order made for the car park to be closed. The required Traffic Management Order must be made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Local Authorities Traffic Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The procedure requires publishing the proposed order, consultation and consideration of any objections received before an order can be made.
- 7.2.4. The Council has the power to dispose of land under S123 Local Government Act 1972 at the best consideration reasonably obtainable. By conducting a marketing exercise for the sale of the land and assessing all bids received, this provision has been complied with.

7.3. Equalities and Diversity

7.3.1. The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

Asset Transformation Strategy

7.3.2. An initial screening exercise of the equalities impact of this decision in relation to the Asset Transformation Strategy was undertaken (attached as Appendix 4). This assessment determined that no impact would arise as a result of the report. As individual proposals are considered, the relevant teams will complete equality impact screening exercises and as such, effectively assess and manage equalities impacts at programme and project level in accordance with the council's equality duty. It will also be necessary to consider the potential equalities implications of the cumulative impact of the Strategy as individual proposals are brought forward.

Church Lane Car Park

7.3.3. An initial screening exercise of the equality impact of this decision was undertaken and determined that there was no negative impact on the Council's equality duty. The provision of more residential accommodation in the borough will benefit homeless households, among whom affected groups are disproportionately represented. The screening assessment is provided as Appendix 5.

7.3.4. A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be required for the purposes of the planning application process and the Traffic Management Order process for the closure of the car park.

7.4. Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)

Asset Transformation Strategy

7.4.1. The Asset Transformation Strategy demonstrates the council's commitment to ensuring future initiatives contribute to the council's mission to "Lead the way for a net-zero borough". The Asset Transformation Strategy sets out a clear objective of achieving a financially and environmentally sustainable estate which is less expensive to maintain, and which supports our net-zero ambitions. In addition, the Strategy further sets out best use of the council's estate to help tackle the Climate Emergency and deliver the council's Climate Action Plan, in particular driving forwards the council's commitment to reduce car parks by 2030.

- 7.4.2. Individual proposals that arise from the Asset Transformation Programme will need to ensure the sustainability implications of any capital investment are effectively considered and managed to meet the objectives of the Asset Transformation Strategy, as well as to secure external funding and planning permission.
- 7.4.3. The Asset Transformation programme makes clear that our land and buildings need to support and strengthen our communities. Any proposals will be service-driven and ensure they deliver against this principle. This will ensure consideration of partners' requirements in terms of provision of healthcare services where appropriate, and tackling current challenges which contribute to health, such as affordable housing, to ensure a health standard of living for all.
- 7.4.4. In addition, the principle of using on our land and buildings to support our preventative approach will ensure every child gets the best start in life and create opportunity for fair employment for all. Overall, the Strategy sets out principles and a vision which supports the creation and development of healthy and sustainable places for residents.
- 7.4.5. Individual proposals that arise from the Asset Transformation Programme will need to explore community safety opportunities as part of the design and planning process. This could include measures such as enhancing lighting and sightlines and improving areas to deter crime and anti-social behaviour. The Strategy has set the principles to drive forwards the best use of our estate to enhance community safety and ensure our buildings contribute to preventing crime and building safer neighbourhoods. Bringing underutilised or vacant buildings or land back into effective use, or divesting of them where they are surplus, will assist with creating safer neighbourhoods for our residents.

Church Lane Car Park

- 7.4.6. The replacement of a car park with a new, energy efficient, carbon neutral development will assist in the mission to "Lead the way for a net-zero borough" and implement the associated Climate Action Plan objective.
- 7.4.7. The discontinuance of the car park operation will assist in the control and reduction of carbon emissions and support a shift to better air quality within the town centre, whilst improvements to the cycleway and footpath network within the site will foster a more climate-focused approach to transport and mobility.
- 7.4.8. The proximity of the development to both rail and bus hubs will encourage greater use of public transport, while improvements to the existing footpaths and cycleways crossing the site, will encourage adoption of active travel (walking and cycling).
- 7.4.9. The existing car park is a key hotspot for anti-social behaviour and crime, with regular reports of drug dealing, drug use and street drinking. Regenerating the area will positively impact on community safety, improving its design and use to provide active surveillance, increased

footfall and generally improve its look and feel. This will impact on both perceptions and experiences of safety in the area.

7.4.10. More generally, the regeneration will consider crime prevention in the design of the new properties, such as natural surveillance and security features, that will help prevent crime and enhance community well-being.

7.4.11. From a climate emergency perspective, it should be noted that the redevelopment of the site will be required to comply with the Local Plan, with particular reference to water and energy efficiency, low carbon heating, biodiversity net gain etc.

7.5. Transformation and Council Infrastructure

7.5.1. This Strategy sets out the vision, objectives and outcomes for the Asset Transformation Programme, and as a result, sets the principles for future decisions in relation to this programme.

7.5.2. Individual proposals that are brought forward following Asset Reviews will have implications for the council's land and buildings and potentially other council infrastructure. The relevant council infrastructure leads will be consulted as necessary to ensure suitable resources are in place to deliver any proposals.

Background Information (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None.