

Regeneration and Property Committee	
Meeting Date	26 September 2022
Report Title	Property Condition Surveys
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson, Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property
Lead Officer	David Johnson, Interim Property Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	To agree to outsource a programme of Condition Surveys for Swale Borough Council's property portfolio.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises Swale Borough Council's current approach to understanding and managing building maintenance and repairs, and proposes outsourcing a programme of Condition Surveys.

2 Background

- 2.1 Swale Borough Council's Property Asset Strategy (2017 – 2020) directs the strategic management of property assets across the Council's portfolio. These assets are diverse and range from offices to historic buildings.
- 2.2 The Property Asset Strategy sets out that with 'constrained' financial resources, 'it is important that the Council has a robust repair and maintenance strategy to allow repair and maintenance activities to be prioritised appropriately' (p5). This holds true and is indeed amplified for the current day. A robust repair and planned maintenance strategy is essential to enable the Council to:
- ensure facilities maintenance which allows compliance to legislation.
 - allow properly maintained equipment and buildings to last longer, so replacement costs decrease over time
 - promote increased energy efficiency which reduces utility costs.
 - set and manage budgets effectively and robustly to reduce unexpected impact to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
 - Ensure a proactive response meaning fewer unexpected issues and costs
- 2.3 The foundation of any robust repair and planned maintenance strategy is a solid understanding of the existing condition of each asset to inform future financial and resource requirements, to minimise, as far as possible, reactive spend and to prioritise the spending of limited resources. The last set of Condition Surveys for the Council's property estate were commissioned in 2018 and set out priorities and

recommendations for works over a five-year period from 2019- 2023. The properties reviewed are listed at Appendix A.

- 2.4 The Council's property, plant and equipment assets are valued at £85,925,000 in the draft 2021/22 Statement of Accounts. (NB. This is the book value of the assets, assuming continued use by the Authority. The figure does not represent the value that may be secured from the disposal of the assets on the open market.)
- 2.5 This book value is considerable and demonstrates the importance of property assets to Swale Borough Council, in terms of the contribution they make to the functioning and amenity of local communities, and in underpinning Council finances.
- 2.6 The Property Strategy is dated 2017 – 2020, and as such merits refresh. This refresh has been delayed as a result of a number of factors, primarily the impact of Covid-19 on work programmes and key staff vacancies within the Property Team.
- 2.7 The Property team is currently headed by a part-time Interim Property Manager whose contract ends in February 2023. Whilst he has pressing operational matters to attend to in the first months of his contract, it is intended that he will support the commencement of the refresh of the Property Strategy in the final weeks of his employment with Swale.
- 2.8 To support the Medium Term Financial Strategy, officers will also review the structure of the Property Team to ensure that it is appropriately resourced to manage Swale Borough Council's portfolio, and optimise its usage and income. Clearly there is correlation between the evidence base available, the strategic approach to property and the staff resources required to deliver

3 Proposals

- 3.1. That quotations be sought to undertake Condition Surveys for those properties where the Council has full or partial maintenance responsibility to include estimated costs for repairs and maintenance over a five- year period from 2023.
- 3.2. That this work be used to inform the refresh of the Property Asset Strategy and any staff restructure proposals linked to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Do nothing. This is not recommended. As set out above, Condition Surveys are the foundation of a robust Property Asset Strategy / Maintenance and Repair Strategy.
- 4.2 Delay the commissioning. This may deliver some short-term cost savings, but the sequencing of the Condition Survey work prior to the refresh of the Property Asset Strategy and potentially revised structure is significant. In addition, delaying the

understanding of required works will potentially increase the costs of reactive repairs.

- 4.3 Complete the work in-house. This is not viable with the currently available staff resource and other high priority work.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 There has been no formal consultation, as this is not considered a topic where external views would be sought. The views of the Property team have been sought and taken into account when determining the recommended option.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Plan identifies the following relevant objective: “Continue to reduce dependence on government-controlled funding sources.” Effectively-managed property assets will ensure income from Swale’s property portfolio is maximised, reactive expenditure minimised, and dependence on external funding sources reduced.
Financial, Resource and Property	A well-managed estate supports optimum income generation and effective resource management. Condition Surveys underpin effective estate management and robust financial planning.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The value of the contract is expected to be within officer delegations. It will be procured in line with Swale Borough Council’s agreed procedures and frameworks.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None specifically identified at this stage, although optimised building maintenance can contribute to reduced carbon footprints.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage, although a well-maintained estate will have positive impacts on residents’ and visitors’ perceptions and wellbeing.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	A planned maintenance programme informed by a robust evidence base will help minimise health and safety risks within Swale’s property portfolio.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage

Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage
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7 Appendices

Appendix A – list of Swale Borough Council properties reviewed in 2018.

8 Background Papers

Swale Borough Council's [Property Asset Strategy](#) 2017-2020.

Appendix A – list of Swale Borough Council properties reviewed in 2018.

Bell Road Chapel
Halfway Cemetery
Love Lane Cemetery
Central Clock Tower
Sheerness Clock Tower
Creekside Boxing
Queenborough Guildhall
Court Hall
Minster Abbey Gatehouse
Rose Street Cottage
47 Oak Road
Coronation Road
Faversham Bowls Club
Festival Pavilion
King George Pavilion, Lodge & public toilet
Milton Rec Pavilion
Oare Gunpowder
Shelters
Barton Point Café
Beachfields Pavilion
Chart Mills
Church Milton Community Hall
Masters House
Former Library
Neptune Boat Store
Rodmersham PO
Sheppey Weight Training
44 High Street
Central House
Swale House
Bank Street toilets
Forum toilets
Queenborough park toilets
Rose Street toilets
Grove Beach toilets
The Spinney toilets
Whitehouse toilets