

# **TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

## **COMMUNITY ESTATE POLICY**

Approved by: Clare Huber – Director of Development and Estates

Dated: November 2022

## 1. Introduction

Trafford Council's vision is for a Trafford where all our residents, businesses and communities prosper. Supporting this vision, this policy sets out the Council's approach for the management and operation of its Community Estate and how it works with and supports these assets both now and in the future.

Our Community Estate, which is a group term for all of our property and land assets that are located within the community and contribute towards the ambitions of the Council. Some of the Community Estate is managed directly by the community, other assets by the Council. The Community Estate comprises of 162 assets as follows:

No.	Asset
8	Corporate
35	Allotments
12	Used by Council Social Services
10	Community buildings
18	Sports and Leisure
70	Parks with buildings
4	Public convenience (3 closed)
5	Youth Centres

This policy will set the vision to deliver a better integrated public service across the borough, working in partnership with our health partners and community groups to provide a fit for purpose community asset base.

The Council recognises the vital role that our health partners and community play in achieving the Council's vision, priorities and outcomes as set out in the Corporate Plan. The aim of this policy is to support these outcomes of: Reducing health inequalities, supporting people out of poverty and addressing our climate crisis.

The policy comes at a time when we are being asked to do more with less, so it is right that we make the best of our resources to deliver these priorities, while achieving best value from our estate. That means working with our partners and communities to deliver a fit for purpose community estate that puts the needs of our communities at the heart of everything that we do.

## 2. Policy

The policy is based on the following Principles:

*Principle 1: Partnership working. Working with partners to co-locate and integrate services to provide a better offer and to ensure a fair and equitable share of property costs.*

*Principle 2: Supporting communities. The community estate will be managed by the people who are best placed to secure the maximum benefit, and provide value for money for the Council.*

*Principle 3: Supporting regeneration. Supporting growth through providing services based on community need.*

*Principle 4: Releasing assets. Where assets no longer provide best value or meet the Council's vision, work with communities to dispose of those assets in the most appropriate way.*

*Principle 5: Addressing our climate crisis. Reviewing our estate and making decisions that are driven by the targets in our carbon neutral action plan.*

### 3. Background

The Council has a successful track record of working with Public Sector and Third Sector partners to provide better services. Our health partners share space in our corporate buildings and across our estate. We have successfully supported community organisations to run and manage community buildings as we recognise that the Council is not always the best organisation to deliver services to communities. This policy will focus on our future approach to the delivery of Council owned community estate, including our corporate buildings.

### 4. Community Estate

This policy covers the following assets:

- All corporate assets that are used wholly or jointly by partners for the delivery of services.
- Small and medium sized assets located in our communities. Assets such as Community Centres, Youth Centres, Libraries and all other buildings that support the provision of services directly to the community.
- Assets used to deliver non-statutory services.

### 5. The purpose of this policy

The policy will address a range of issues, including:

- Providing a clear process for the Council's involvement in community assets
- Providing a transparent and consistent approach to supporting community assets across the Borough and how these assets support the Council's priorities.

- Ensuring that the physical condition of our assets are fit for purpose and support our carbon neutral action plan
- Rationalisation of our community estate to ensure assets are in the right locations and reducing over provision. Encouraging Community Asset Transfer and Assets of Community Value processes where appropriate
- Supporting the efficient delivery of Council services by managing our corporate and community estate to ensure it is sustainable and delivers best value

The policy will provide a framework for the approach to reviewing each of our community and corporate assets to support the delivery of services and supporting our communities while ensuring the estate is well managed and provides value for money.

## 6. Policy principles

*Principle 1: Partnership working. Working with partners to co-locate and integrate services to provide a better offer and to ensure a fair and equitable share of property costs.*

This will be achieved by working with local partners to provide a better offer and approach to communities by achieving improved flexible service delivery. Sharing resources and facilities will result in savings and benefits to the communities.

The Council will work with partners to analyse the need for co-location, help to assess what services could co-locate, estimate the cost benefit and appropriate recharges and provide a support service for partners to maximise the benefits of collaborative working.

The Estates service will support partnership working decisions to ensure that the property consequences are considered in the decision making process and to ensure a fair and equitable share of property costs.

*Principle 2: Supporting communities. The community estate will be managed by the people who are best placed to secure the maximum benefit, and provide value for money for the Council.*

This will be achieved by ensuring our community assets are well managed and support the needs of our communities, that residents have access to the right services in the right locations and that community assets support the corporate priority to reduce health inequalities.

The Council will review our assets to ensure they are fit for purpose and that the costs and liabilities associated with assets are appropriate and proportionate. We will take action to ensure that our community assets are aligned with our future budget parameters.

*Principle 3: Supporting regeneration. Supporting growth through providing services based on community need.*

This will be achieved by supporting regeneration to deliver the right services in the right location recognising that some community assets are well placed to support town centre regeneration and reflect specific community needs.

The Council will work with partners to ensure that assets are fit for purpose, maintained to a good standard so they are more efficient and to maximise income opportunities.

*Principle 4: Releasing assets. Where assets no longer provide best value or meet the Council's vision, work with communities to dispose of those assets in the most appropriate way.*

This will be achieved by working closely with our communities to determine the future options for each asset. The decision to close, sell or transfer a community asset is not taken lightly by the Council however there are several circumstances where this action is required.

This could be because:

- The service model has changed and the physical asset is no longer required
- The asset no longer meets the Council's outcomes
- There is a viable community asset transfer option, or the property has been proposed as an Asset of Community Value
- There are assets nearby that duplicate services on offer
- The asset is no longer structurally viable or the condition is poor and isn't feasible to improve
- There is no community interest to take on the asset
- The asset is not viable and makes a financial loss

In all circumstances, the Council will work with partners and communities to select the route to disposal, working collaboratively to ensure the best outcome. This could mean that community assets are repurposed through redevelopment, or that assets are disposed of to support future capital investment.

*Principle 5: Addressing our climate crisis. Reviewing our estate and making decisions that are driven by the targets in our carbon neutral action plan.*

This will be achieved by a rolling programme of condition surveys across our estate to enable decision making on each asset.

The Council is committed to reducing our carbon footprint and tackling the impact of climate change. The Council's estate is wide and varied and the ability to make significant improvements to tackle the climate crisis needs to be understood. The Council has been successful in securing external funding to improve the estate and will continue to review our assets and install carbon efficient measures where appropriate and beneficial.

#### 7. Management of this policy

The policy will be managed by the Council's Estates Team and will work with colleagues, Members and communities on each asset to determine the most appropriate options.

The Community Estate will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure continued alignment to this policy and to review legacy arrangements.

The Council will support the transfer, acquisition and management of assets by community groups and will adopt a proactive approach to enable engagement with a range of communities.

The Council will work inline with approvals and delegations and will bring forward proposals via the appropriate decision-making body for approvals.