



Press release

Strictly embargoed until 00.01 on the 30 June 2009

New property review highlights nationwide savings

4ps will tell the LGA Conference today that a review of property assets in the West Midlands has identified the potential of achieving some £700m of cashable savings over 10 years for the region as a whole, comprising capital receipts and revenue savings. Launching the results of an asset management programme piloted in the West Midlands, 4ps and Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands – the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership - will explain how local authorities can deliver real change by innovative use of property assets.

Property owned by Staffordshire County Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Tamworth Borough Council, Walsall Council and Coventry City Council has been reviewed for potential efficiency savings. The new programme will enable local authorities to respond in a systematic way to the Audit Commission's recent report on asset management, *Room for Improvement*, which encourages councils to make full use of 4ps' experience working with local authorities on improving efficiency.

This programme has also been integrated and developed closely with the Office of Government Commerce's work to align local authority and civil estate opportunities in the region. This will help ensure that the entire public sector in the region is able to respond positively in a joined up way to the recommendations in Lord Carter's report on assets as part of the government's operational efficiency programme.

Andrew Rowson, Director of Housing and Property at 4ps, said: "As local communities and services change, it is right to review property assets. We are delighted with the results of the West Midlands programme – it has been a real success. We will now work with other local authorities and regional and national stakeholders to consider how a collaborative approach to asset management can secure considerable financial savings and service improvement."

Keith Gordon, Assistant Director for Efficiency and Delivery, Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands, said: “Local authorities in the West Midlands have an extensive asset portfolio and the asset management review has provided us with an excellent opportunity to consider how we can best manage these assets.”

Cllr Mark Winnington, Cabinet Member responsible for Property, Staffordshire County Council said: “Given the major challenges that Staffordshire and other councils will be facing over the next few years, the work done in the West Midlands shines a light on the benefits that can be achieved by proactive and collaborative strategic management of property. There are, without doubt, significant opportunities to be had. We are keen to be at the leading edge and take forward this work to deliver real savings and service improvements for the people of Staffordshire.”

The project has been carried out with the support of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP with Staffordshire acting as the lead authority. Over the next few months 4ps will be working with the six authorities involved in the West Midlands pilot and the Improvement and Efficiency Partnership to secure investment and put in place the resources required to implement the programme fully before extending it to other authorities and regions across the country.

A full report detailing the results and next steps of the pilot programme will be published in July.

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For further information please contact the 4ps press office on 020 7025 7590 or 4pspressoffice@trimediauk.com

Notes to editors

About 4ps

1. The West Midlands Asset Management Programme was commenced at the beginning of March
2. 4ps, local government’s partnerships and project delivery specialist, works exclusively to help local authorities deliver better public services via major infrastructure and service projects.

3. 4ps was established in 1996 by the English and Welsh local authority associations (predecessors to the LGA). 4ps works in partnership with all local authorities to secure funding and accelerate the development, procurement and implementation of PFI schemes, public private partnerships, complex projects and programmes. 4ps' multidisciplinary team provides hands-on projects support, gateway reviews, skills development and best-practice know-how.
4. For more information on 4ps please go to www.4ps.gov.uk

About Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands

1. Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands is the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) for the West Midlands. A RIEP is a network of councils, fire authorities and other local services that have come together to challenge, collaborate, and share ideas and expertise. They co-ordinate and support improvement, innovation and efficiency work at a regional and often sub-regional level. A RIEP is led by councillors who are advised by a group drawn from council and chief executives, partners and representatives from organisations within the region. Further information about Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands can be found at www.westmidlandsiep.gov.uk