

# Asset management in local government

Report supplement: Summary of council survey responses



Prepared for the Accounts Commission  
May 2009



# The Accounts Commission

The Accounts Commission is a statutory, independent body which, through the audit process, assists local authorities in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources. The Commission has four main responsibilities:

- securing the external audit, including the audit of Best Value and Community Planning
- following up issues of concern identified through the audit, to ensure satisfactory resolutions
- carrying out national performance studies to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local government
- issuing an annual direction to local authorities which sets out the range of performance information they are required to publish.

The Commission secures the audit of 32 councils and 41 joint boards (including police and fire and rescue services). Local authorities spend over £19 billion of public funds a year.

Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. Together they ensure that the Scottish Government and public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds.

# Introduction

Audit Scotland has undertaken a national study of asset management on behalf of the Accounts Commission.

A range of methods was used to obtain evidence, including drawing upon existing data, field work visits to five councils, and a survey to gather information from councils about their asset management arrangements.

We have summarised councils' responses to our survey here, as this will provide useful detail for practitioners and may also be of wider general interest. We draw upon this information within our main report, to give an overview of the how councils approach asset management.

All data in the questionnaire is for the 2007/08 financial year except where stated otherwise. All councils returned the questionnaire; however not all answered every question, therefore not all responses add up to 32.

Section 1: Strategy, Policy and Plans

1.1	Has your council translated its corporate aims and objectives into implications for strategic direction in asset use and management of the land and property portfolio?	Yes	No	Notes
		21	10	
1.2	If so, have these been approved by an elected member committee or cabinet.	Yes	No	
		18	6	
1.3	Please list your council's property aims and objectives below:			

1.4	At what stage of development is each of the following?		Corporate Asset Management Strategy	Corporate Asset Management Plan	Property Strategy	Information Management and Technology Strategy (IM&T)	Roads Strategy	Vehicle Strategy
		Not yet started	0	0	4	0	0	3
		In development	15	19	9	3	15	12
		Completed but awaiting approval	2	1	3	3	3	2
		Approved by relevant council committee	14	12	13	22	13	13
		Don't know	0	0	0	2	1	0
1.5	If the council has a corporate asset management strategy and plan, what assets does it cover?		Property	IM&T	Roads	Vehicles	Other	
		Yes	25	12	16	12	9	
		No	2	8	5	7	6	
1.6	In what year were each of the following first approved by the council?		Corporate Asset Management Strategy	Corporate Asset Management Plan	Property Strategy	IM&T Strategy	Roads Strategy	Vehicle Strategy
		Approved after 2005	12	13	12	6	7	5
		Approved before 2005	8	7	9	14	13	17
		Never Approved/N/A/ Planned	12	12	11	12	12	10
1.7	How regularly are the following updated?		Corporate Asset Management Strategy	Corporate Asset Management Plan	Property Strategy	IM&T Strategy	Roads Strategy	Vehicle Strategy
		Not yet started	1	1	2	0	1	1
		In development	6	10	7	4	7	4
		Once a year	1	3	4	4	2	7
		Every 1-2 years	3	3	3	4	0	2
		Every 3-5 years	8	5	5	6	10	6
		Every 5 years or longer	0	1	0	1	1	0
		Has never been updated	2	1	1	0	0	1
		Other	4	3	4	7	5	3
		If other please specify:						
1.8	When was the last time the following were updated?		Corporate Asset Management Strategy	Corporate Asset Management Plan	Property Strategy	IM&T Strategy	Roads Strategy	Vehicle Strategy
		After 2005	7	5	8	9	10	12
		Before 2005	11	11	10	15	8	11
		Never Updated	14	16	14	8	14	9
1.9	Have any of these strategies been published for external stakeholders including the public to view?		Corporate Asset Management Strategy	Corporate Asset Management Plan	Property Strategy	IM&T Strategy	Roads Strategy	Vehicle Strategy
		Yes	11	10	10	10	12	4
		No	16	17	16	18	15	21
1.10	Have the following been equality impact assessed?		Corporate Asset Management Strategy	Corporate Asset Management Plan	Property Strategy	IM&T Strategy	Roads Strategy	Vehicle Strategy
		Yes	4	5	5	7	4	6
		No	23	22	20	20	23	18

1.11	Is the capital strategy coordinated with the asset management plan	Yes	No
		17	13
1.12	If yes, please provide details of how coordination between the AMP and Capital Strategy is achieved.		
1.13	Please briefly describe the criteria that are used to compare capital scheme bids and the option appraisal methodology used to prioritise bids.		

## Section 2: Structure, roles and responsibilities

2.1	Have you a Corporate Asset Manager (or equivalent role) in place?	Yes	No	Notes
		31	1	
2.2	If so, who fulfils this role? Please provide job title (i.e. Head of Property, salary scale and position within the organisation, eg fourth tier officer)			

2.3	Do you have a strategic asset management group in place (this will most often take the form of a senior officer group including representatives from finance, key service departments and other relevant stakeholders)	Yes	No	Notes
		26	6	
2.4	If so please provide a summary of members of this group. (i.e. Chief Property Officer, finance, IT, service departments reps, etc.)	<input type="text"/>		
2.5	How regularly does this group meet?	Once a month	5	Notes
		At least once every two months	7	
		At least quarterly	8	
		Once a year	0	
		At least twice a year	2	
		Other	5	
		Other:	<input type="text"/>	

2.6	Has the council got a designated 'corporate' or strategic property team or function?	Yes	No	Notes
		30	2	
2.7	In your opinion is this team adequately staffed to carry out its functions and responsibilities?	100%	8	Notes
		75% +	3	
		51%+	7	
		25%+	12	
		0%+	1	
		2.8	Please indicate the number of FTE's within this team who work on 'Strategic' Asset Management	
		1	5	
		2	8	
		3	4	
		4	7	
		5	1	
		6	0	
		7	0	
		8	1	
2.9	Where does this 'strategic property' team fit within the overall structure of the council?	<input type="text"/>		
2.10	Is the team a separate function from any other property sections/functions within the council?	Yes	No	Notes
		13	18	
2.11	Has the council had any problems recruiting appropriately qualified asset management staff in the past year?	<input type="text"/>		

2.12	Has an elected member been allocated a 'property champion' role with portfolio responsibility for the council's property asset management?	Yes	No	Notes						
		19	13							
2.13	Do you have a specific elected member committee or cabinet which monitors implementation of asset management strategy?	Yes	No	Notes						
		26	6							
2.14	If so what is this committee/cabinet?	<input type="text"/>								
2.15	How regularly, and on what, do you report to members	Yes	No	Once a month	At least once every two months	At least quarterly	At least twice a year	Once a year	Other	
2.16	How are other councillors informed and involved in asset management and at what level? (Please provide brief notes)	<input type="text"/>								

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### Section 3: Working with service areas

	Yes	No	Notes
3.1 Have services developed a clear picture of where they are going in the future (short, medium, longer term) and the consequent asset implications been mapped out?	21	11	
3.2 If so, have the consequent property asset implications been mapped out?	16	11	
3.3 Do you develop property asset management plans for individual service areas (SAMPs) to feed into the overall corporate approach?	22	9	
3.4 Is there corporate guidance on producing service property asset management plans or on including asset management within service plans?	16	15	
3.5 If SAMPs are produced, for how many years do you consider future property needs for services within these?			
3.6 Do you analyse and reconcile corporate and service needs for property and bring them together into a coherent approach for the council?	23	8	
3.7 If yes, please provide details of how this is achieved.			

## Section 4: Data collection

Please indicate below which of the following information you hold on your property

	None	Less than 25%	Between 25% and 50%	Between 51% and 75%	More than 75%	100%
4.1 Core/basic data on property e.g. location, property type, age, ownership, covenants, occupancy, valuation, listed building status and preferably UPRN (unique property reference number). If you need to provide any clarification please do so in the box below.	1	0	1	0	4	26
4.2 Condition Information 1 - 4 (based on on-site surveys by qualified staff)	2	1	2	3	6	18
4.3 Required Maintenance (Backlog in priority bandings)	4	1	1	3	7	16
4.4 Suitability Information (fitness for purpose)	0	1	1	3	4	22
4.5 Sufficiency Information (capacity/quantum)	4	8	3	5	0	12
4.6 Usage (hours)	15	7	2	1	0	7
4.7 Energy Usage (consumption/costs)	0	1	1	2	6	22
4.8 Environmental performance including CO2 emissions	5	2	0	2	5	18
4.9 Accessibility issues (DDA)	1	1	2	4	6	18
4.10 Water and Sewerage costs	3	0	2	3	1	23
4.11 Asbestos Content	0	0	1	1	7	23
4.12 Health and Safety Surveys	12	0	2	0	1	17
4.13 Water Hygiene Information	1	2	2	3	1	23
4.14 Fire Risk	6	2	4	1	4	15
4.15 Maintenance spending patterns	5	2	0	1	1	23
4.16 Financial Performance (Commercial Estate only)	8	0	0	0	0	24
4.17 Energy Performance Certificates	23	9	0	0	0	0

	Yes	No
4.18 Do all appropriate staff have online access to the asset management database?	24	8
4.19 Please describe the extent to which the asset management database is linked to other relevant systems,	<input type="text"/>	
4.20 Please describe the software you use for your property asset management systems. Eg developed in-house based on Excel, on Access, other or commercial software (please specify).	<input type="text"/>	
4.21 How many separate asset registers does the council have? Eg for finance, for property, etc.	<input type="text"/>	

## Section 5: Performance Management

5.1	Do you collect performance information for property assets?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>29</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	29	3																															
Yes	No																																					
29	3																																					
5.2	If so do these include:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>All</th> <th>more than half</th> <th>Some i.e. less than half</th> <th>None</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>i. FPS Asset Management Indicators in conjunction with Audit Scotland</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>9</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ii. The Improvement Service's suggested indicators</td> <td>0</td> <td>4</td> <td>6</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>iii. Local indicators specific to your council</td> <td colspan="4"> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>iv. Any other nationally recognised indicators (i.e. NBVBS, National Audit Office Value)</td> <td colspan="4"> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					All	more than half	Some i.e. less than half	None	i. FPS Asset Management Indicators in conjunction with Audit Scotland	6	6	9	8	ii. The Improvement Service's suggested indicators	0	4	6	16	iii. Local indicators specific to your council	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Yes	No	21	9	iv. Any other nationally recognised indicators (i.e. NBVBS, National Audit Office Value)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Yes	No		
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Yes	No																																					
5.3	Are you in a benchmarking group for asset performance?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>27</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	27	5																															
Yes	No																																					
27	5																																					
5.4	If so which group?	<input type="text"/>																																				
5.5	How do you currently demonstrate that you are achieving good value for money in relation to asset management?	<input type="text"/>																																				
5.6	Do you consult stakeholders within and outside the council on property performance measures? If so please state who, and how.	<input type="text"/>																																				
5.7	Do you inform other stakeholders within and outside the council on property performance? If so please state who, and how.	<input type="text"/>																																				
5.8	If possible please provide a copy of the performance measures you collect for property including current and historic performance data.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>22</td> <td>9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	22	9																															
Yes	No																																					
22	9																																					



## Section 6: Implementation

6.1	Does your council have a strategic approach for capital prioritisation?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>27</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	27	5											
Yes	No																	
27	5																	
6.2	Has your council used option appraisal techniques to decide on the best solution for individual schemes?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>31</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	31	1											
Yes	No																	
31	1																	
6.3	If yes, have you got a strategic documented corporate approach to option appraisal that is used on major projects?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	24	8											
Yes	No																	
24	8																	
6.4	If yes, does it include mechanisms for consulting service users?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	21	7											
Yes	No																	
21	7																	
6.5	Do you use whole life costing/appraisal techniques when considering options for major projects?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>22</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	22	10											
Yes	No																	
22	10																	
6.6	Do you carry out post project evaluations on major projects?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>20</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	20	12											
Yes	No																	
20	12																	
6.7	Please provide information on how the council's maintenance programme is prioritised.																	
6.8	Please estimate the approximate percentage of buildings open to the public that have had an access audit conducted.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>None</th> <th>Less than 25%</th> <th>Between 25% and 50%</th> <th>Between 51% and 75%</th> <th>More than 75%</th> <th>100%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>21</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					None	Less than 25%	Between 25% and 50%	Between 51% and 75%	More than 75%	100%	0	0	3	5	3	21
None	Less than 25%	Between 25% and 50%	Between 51% and 75%	More than 75%	100%													
0	0	3	5	3	21													
6.9	How many buildings open to the public have an access plan in place as a result of the access audit?	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>14</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					5	1	1	3	4	14						
5	1	1	3	4	14													
6.10	Has your council got a disposal strategy document?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>29</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	29	3	Notes										
Yes	No																	
29	3																	
6.11	Has your council got a strategy or policy for the management of historic buildings?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>26</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	4	26	Notes										
Yes	No																	
4	26																	
6.12	How many land and property common good assets do you have in your council area?	range		0 - 263														
6.13	Does your council meet the recently revised CIPFA / LASAAC guidance for data on common good assets published in December 2007?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	21	7											
Yes	No																	
21	7																	
6.14	Does your council ensure that its use and management of common good assets adheres to any conditions originally attached to each asset?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>25</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	25	4											
Yes	No																	
25	4																	
6.15	Please describe briefly the impact on the councils asset management arrangements of properties designated as common good assets.	<input type="text"/>																
6.16	Has your council developed a environmental/green strategy and/or procedures relating to the management and use of assets.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>23</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	23	8	Notes										
Yes	No																	
23	8																	
6.17	How does your council actively keep up to date with best practice and the latest information on asset management?	<input type="text"/>																
6.18	Is your council considering new and flexible methods of working and examining how the asset portfolio can support this? If so please provide details	<input type="text"/>																
6.19	Do you provide internal training on asset management to ensure relevant stakeholders have the knowledge they need to actively contribute?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>20</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	20	12	Notes										
Yes	No																	
20	12																	
6.20	If so, please list the various stakeholders that training is provided for.	<input type="text"/>																

## Section 7: Commercial Property - Tenanted Non-Residential Property (TNRP)

	None of them	One of them	Two of them	All of them				
7.1 Has your council set out a medium term strategy for ownership and management of the Tenanted Non-Residential Property 'TNRP' that sets out: • The reasons for holding such property • Standards for management • How such property will be reviewed and challenged?	9	1	10	11				
7.2 Have you developed performance measures that are analysed and reported for TNRP.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>22</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	22	10		
Yes	No							
22	10							
7.3 If so is such performance based on financial return, or socio-economic benefit (e.g. economic development, regeneration), or both?	8	0	14					
7.4 Is performance compared, benchmarked and reported to councillors and other relevant stakeholders?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	15	15		
Yes	No							
15	15							
7.5 Have you set out a strategy for dealing with and engaging tenants?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	16	15		
Yes	No							
16	15							
7.6 When was the last time you reviewed your TNRP estate?	range <input type="text"/>							
7.7 How often are commercial rents usually reviewed?	<input type="text"/>							

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## Section 8. Property Review

Has your council carried out any of the following property reviews? If so please provide brief details of the scope of the review and what the outcomes were.

	Yes	No
8.1 Property review based on a single building type	24	8
<hr/>		
	Yes	No
8.2 Review of the office portfolio	28	3
<hr/>		
	Yes	No
8.3 Review of a single service area	25	6
<hr/>		
	Yes	No
8.4 Review based on a geographical area	20	11
<hr/>		
	Yes	No
8.5 Review based on a geographical area with other public sector organisations	20	9
<hr/>		

## Section 9: Other Areas

9.1	Have you got a plan in place which will reduce your backlog maintenance requirement in the future?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		16	15
9.2	Has your council market tested any property maintenance or facilities management contracts during the past 3 years?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		28	4
9.3	Are maintenance costs analysed to examine trends and used to identify projects in the council's asset management programme?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		23	9

9.4	Are the maintenance costs arising from capital schemes taken into account when schemes are put forward?	<b>Yes, in outline only</b>	<b>Yes, in detail</b>	<b>Yes, for major items</b>	<b>No</b>
		12	6	9	5

9.5	At what stage of development are formal procedures for carrying out joint premises projects with other public sector organisations?	<b>In use</b>	<b>Developed but not yet in use</b>	<b>In development</b>	<b>not yet started</b>
		9	2	15	6

9.6	Has the council mapped its property against those of other public sector organisations?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
		15	17	0

9.7 Does the council have a joint property strategy with any other public sector organisations?  
no responses

9.8 If yes (or in development), which organisations are involved?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9.10	To what extent have you made use of the joint futures 'Joint Premises Toolkit'?	<b>Full use</b>	<b>Limited use</b>	<b>No use</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
		16	8	2	5

9.11	For any joint premises projects you have undertaken, have you completed the Minimum Core Dataset for Joint Premises Development and Joint Service Planning?	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		6	3	20

9.12 Please provide brief examples of the 3 most significant joint premises projects undertaken by the council (including type of project, involvement of other partners):  
\_\_\_\_\_

9.13 Please describe the three key issues your council has faced when planning/undertaking joint premises projects? Please describe in brief how were these overcome:  
\_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Outcome measures developed at outset of all projects</b>	<b>Outcome measures developed during development of all projects</b>	<b>Outcome measures developed post-completion of all projects</b>	<b>Outcome measures for projects currently being developed</b>	<b>Plans to develop outcome measures not yet started</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>No plans to develop outcome measures</b>	<b>Other</b>	
9.14	Thinking about joint premises projects you have undertaken, at what stage are you in developing outcome measures to assess the impact of the project?	4	0	0	6	11	1	3	1

If other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

9.15 If you are developing/using outcome measures, please provide some examples below:  
\_\_\_\_\_

9.16	Have you undertaken post project evaluations for any joint premises projects completed?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		6	20

9.17	Have you undertaken any post-occupancy evaluations for any joint premises projects undertaken?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		6	20

9.18	Have you consulted with staff about proposed changes to the buildings they use?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		27	3

if yes, how?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9.19	Have you consulted with service users about proposed changes to the buildings they use?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		27	4

if yes, how?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9.20	Have you developed a strategic approach to working with voluntary or community organisations in relation to assets?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		13	18

9.21 Please provide brief details. i.e. "We have developed a procedure for working with community organisations which is on our website, it includes....."  
\_\_\_\_\_

9.21	If possible please provide a copy of any agreement or procedures in this area. (included?)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		8	11

# Asset management in local government

## Report supplement: Summary of council survey responses

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