

# Asset Management Strategy

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# 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this Strategy is to set out the practices and procedures which have been established to ensure that the Authority's land, property, and other assets are managed and maintained as effectively as possible to contribute to the delivery of the Authority's objectives, as set out in the [Broads Plan 2022-27](#) and other key strategic documents.
- 1.2. It also sets out a series of key principles which will be adhered to in the management of the asset base and guidance on the procurement and disposal of land and property.

# 2. Introduction

- 2.1. The Broads Authority owns or manages a significant number of land, property, and other assets. Most of the land and property assets are relatively small, the largest being the land holding at How Hill, but many of these are high profile sites and, in the case of information centres, yacht stations and 24-hour moorings, are extensively used by members of the public.
- 2.2. The Authority's property portfolio also includes offices, operational bases, boatsheds, car parks, toilet blocks, boardwalks, and storage facilities. It is important to set out how the Authority's procurement activities comply with legislative and regulatory requirements. It is important that these assets are managed effectively and efficiently, not only because they contribute to the Authority's key objectives, but also on legal, financial and health and safety grounds.
- 2.3. Historically the Authority has not sought to own significant amounts of land or property except where this has been deemed necessary for the delivery of its key objectives, a good example being the operational base at Griffin Lane, Thorpe St Andrew which was acquired in 2007. More recently, however, the Authority has been proactive in seeking to purchase sites for the disposal of spoil for dredging, and to provide free 24-hour mooring facilities for boaters.
- 2.4. The Asset Officer has overall strategic responsibility for assets, in accordance with guidance provided by the Director of Finance and the Management Team. Nominated operational managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of individual properties.
- 2.5. This document sets out:
  - a series of key principles which will be adhered to in the management of the Authority's asset base.

- current best practice, as issued by Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2022/2023', CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy)
- how the Authority manages its land and property Assets
- practices and procedures in the acquisition and disposal of assets
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- the Authority's policy in respect of the acquisition and disposal of land and property assets guidance on the acquisition and disposal of land and property assets
- arrangements for the maintenance of land and property assets
- the roles and responsibilities of staff and members in the management of land, property, and other assets
- how the Authority makes financial provision for the replacement/renewal of its assets

### 3. Key principles

3.1. The Authority will adhere to the following principles in the management of its asset base.

- The Authority will only hold land and property that can be demonstrated to support the delivery of the objectives as set out in the Broads Plan and other strategic documents. Assets which do not meet these requirements will be considered for disposal.
- New assets will only be considered for acquisition where they meet the requirements and are in accordance with the Guidance for Procurement and Disposal.
- Any proposals to acquire or dispose of assets must in the first instance be channelled through the Asset Officer, so that an overview of all property matters can be taken and if necessary, the matter be referred to the Management Team.
- The same applies when leases are due to end, or in the event of break clauses, so that the financial and strategic implications of any changes can be assessed, and to the acquisition of new responsibilities such as access agreements and management agreements, which can bring with them considerable cost and resource implications. Any significant changes or those

which have strategic, policy or resource implications will be referred to the Management Team.

- The Authority will seek to obtain value for money in the acquisition and disposal of all its assets, and where necessary will seek appropriate professional advice.
- The Authority will maintain all its assets in a condition that is fit for purpose, and which preserves their value, and will ensure that all assets are monitored, and their condition is recorded on a regular basis.
- In making acquisitions the Authority will bear in mind the principles of sustainability and consider any opportunities for achieving carbon reductions in its use of resources.
- The Authority will continue to make appropriate annual provision for capital expenditure in the following areas in accordance with the annual budget.
- The Authority will prepare and incorporate into the Financial Strategy a - program for capital purchases, maintenance, and repairs, and will review and update this programme in accordance with annual budget setting.
- The Authority will maintain a consolidated dataset of all land and property records within the Document Management System. This data set will be updated on a regular basis to have regard to acquisitions, disposals, and changes in financial or other terms.

## 4. Best Practice: CIPFA guidance

4.1. In its publication, 'Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2022/2023', CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) provides clear guidance on the need for asset registers. CIPFA's view is that the development and maintenance of comprehensive asset registers is the best possible practice across the public services. It is acknowledged that there is no "off the shelf" solution and that each organisation must do what best fits with its requirements.

4.2. The purposes of an asset register can be applied to the following uses:

- Financial reporting
- Supporting best value and asset management planning
- Property review
- Property management and maintenance

- Supporting miscellaneous internal and external enquiries.

## 5. Practices and Procedures: General Asset Management

5.1. In Information relating to property (including land, buildings, and infrastructure) is collated for the purposes of managing and maintaining sites and properties effectively and efficiently. All the Authority's land and property assets have been captured and entered onto a Document Management System.

Each record includes, amongst other things, information relating to the: type of documentation; location and Grid Reference; status of any agreement; terms and conditions; responsible officer; relevant dates; valuation; running costs; and maintenance or other liabilities.

The information is regularly updated and has been placed on the Authority's Intranet so that this information is accessible to all members of staff. Responsibility for ensuring that the database remains up to date lies with the Asset Officer.

5.2 The Fixed Asset Register - Various members of staff require information about assets in different forms. For example, the Finance Section needs to maintain a Fixed Asset Register, to comply with financial reporting requirements. All assets with a value of at least £5,000 are recorded on the Register, depreciated in accordance with the Authority's policy, and recorded on the Balance Sheet. It is the responsibility of the Responsible Officer to review the assets in a five-yearly basis and assess for impairment annually. This information is currently held on a separate Excel spreadsheet and the assets are split into the following categories: -

- Land and buildings (both operational and community)
- Infrastructure assets
- Vehicle and vessels
- Furniture and equipment

5.3 Insurance Database - In addition, the Finance Section maintains a database which is used in part for insurance purposes which includes assets owned by the Authority worth over £250. Certain low value assets are sometimes grouped together for the purposes of insurance.

5.4 GIS - The Authority's Geographical Information System (GIS) contains information relating to assets such as bridges, bridge gauge boards and electric charging points. Asset related information is being captured spatially, on an appropriate platform and this data is now linked to a web map-based system using GIS.

- 5.5 Asset Information - Details of assets are currently captured on the Document Management System. A condition monitoring information recording system is currently being used and captures information about assets within the navigation network, including facilities and structures such as signs, buoys, channel markers, safety ladders, mooring posts and water points. It will be used by the Authority to assist in the management of moorings, and to develop and prioritise a programme of maintenance for them. Each mooring is inspected on a fortnightly basis in the summer period and a monthly inspection in the Winter period by Rangers and data is fed back into the database. Maintenance reports are generated for the Rivers Engineer and Maintenance Supervisor who feed issues into the maintenance programme, and comment back to the database.
- 5.6 Computer Assets - Computer and other IT equipment is acquired in accordance with operational need. The Authority operates a five-year rolling program for its computer hardware. All purchases are made in accordance with Standing Orders Relating to Contracts (SORC). Provision for replacement costs in relation to hardware is incorporated within the IT budget.

## 6. Practices and Procedures: Acquisitions and Disposals

- 6.1 The Scheme of Powers delegated to Chief Executive and other authorised officers sets out who can make decisions and the limits applicable on the acquisition (purchase or lease) and disposal of land and property. It can be accessed here [https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0023/182831/Scheme-of-Powers-delegated-to-Chief-Executive-and-other-authorised-officers.pdf](https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/182831/Scheme-of-Powers-delegated-to-Chief-Executive-and-other-authorised-officers.pdf)
- 6.2 All acquisitions and disposal of land, property or other assets must be made in accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders Relating to Contracts (SORC), to ensure that the Authority always receives the best value for money. This will generally mean, except in cases of urgency where the Chief Executive has delegated powers to act, that all acquisitions and disposals more than the delegated limits must be approved by the Broads Authority or appropriate committee.
- In the first instance any such requests should be set out on the form entitled 'Instructions for the Acquisition/Disposal/Agreement for an Asset or accrual of Liability for the Broads Authority' (Appendix 1), which can be found on the Intranet. Once completed the form should be submitted to the Asset Officer, who will determine whether the matter should be referred to the Management Team.
- 6.3 The Authority has entered into a formal Agreement with The NPS Group (property consultants) to advise on and where appropriate manage all land and property acquisitions and disposals, and to provide both general and specialist advice. The

latest Agreement ends in May 2024. A full list of the services available from NPS is set out in the Agreement.

- 6.4 The Authority's property consultants should be consulted by the Asset Officer on all matters relating to the management of property where there are likely to be significant financial implications (including acquisitions and disposals), to ensure that the Authority is obtaining value for money.

## 7. Guidance for Procurement and Disposal

- 7.1 Land and Buildings (Operational and Community) and Infrastructure Assets - all procurement should contribute to the strategic and / or operational aims and objectives of the Authority, as set out in the Broads Plan.

Because of its limited capital budget, and to minimise maintenance and running costs, the policy of the Broads Authority is not to purchase land and property except in certain specific circumstances or where capital grants become available. Instead, the Authority prefers to facilitate the acquisition of land by partner organisations, who can manage it in accordance with the Authority's Asset management principles (Section 3). Partner organisations can include parish councils and community groups, charities etc.

- 7.2 The circumstances under which the Authority will consider the acquisition (whether freehold or, more commonly, leasehold), of land and property are as follows:
- as a last resort, to protect land and property which is of critical importance to the enhancement and integrity of the Broads, subject to all other options having been exhausted, e.g., the How Hill Estate which was purchased to maintain the estate and provide a demonstration project for large scale conservation management land and buildings (both operational and community).
  - for key operational reasons, such as the acquisition of the operational base at Thorpe St Andrew, or sites for the disposal of spoil; and
  - to provide key community and visitor benefits as identified in the Authority's strategies and priority objectives, including the provision of 24-hour moorings in identified locations, where there are no possible alternative providers.
- 7.3 In all such cases the Authority must take professional advice to satisfy itself that the costs of the acquisition are reasonable, and that they are proportionate to the benefits which will be attained.

7.4 The Authority's land and property database currently contains records, including the operational base at Thorpe St Andrew, and the land holding at How Hill and Hulver Ground which is managed in the main for purposes of nature conservation. In addition, there are a significant number of leasehold agreements in place, many of which are for the provision of 24-hour moorings, together with several written agreements relating to the management of sites.

7.5 The Authority's policy in respect of specific functions/services is set out below:

- **Offices/Field Bases/Boatsheds-** The Authority's head office is currently based at Yare House, Norwich and is leased. The Authority also has field bases at Thorpe St Andrew (freehold), Beccles and two in Horning (all leasehold), as well as the freehold of four boatsheds for the overnight berthing of the Authority's fleet of launches in the northern rivers. Any new acquisitions are made in line with operational need, although there are no current plans (or an identified need) to acquire further properties in the foreseeable future.
- **Information Centres/Yacht Stations-**The Authority currently operates a network of three visitor 'hubs' at Hoveton (freehold), How Hill (freehold), Ranworth (freehold) – and in addition manages yacht stations at Great Yarmouth and Norwich, both under a lease agreement with the relevant local authority.
- **Land for Conservation Purposes-** The Authority has acquired 365 hectares of land at How Hill and 12 hectares of land at Hulver Ground which it manages primarily for conservation benefit as an exemplar of good practice. Any further acquisitions of this nature are likely to be as a last resort only, to protect land which is of critical importance and is under threat. Even then this would only be after the Authority has exhausted all other options, including facilitating the acquisition of the land by a partner organisation (such as a wildlife trust for example), to manage the land in accordance with Broads Authority principles. The Authority's Fen Management Strategy [Fen Management Strategy](#) sets out what was effectively an audit of land under management and existing management techniques and has informed the Authority's engagement in Higher level Stewardship agreements.
- **24 Hour Moorings -** The Authority's Mooring Strategy includes information relating to its principles in respect of the provision of moorings, and a series of criteria relating to the provision of moorings. The Authority will seek to increase freehold sites to secure their long-term future for use as 24-hour moorings, as part of a prioritised programme of key strategic sites. This work was reviewed with members and stakeholders in 2014 and subsequently a report was taken to the Broads Authority meeting in November. The report identifies a ten-year action plan for re-piling the Broads Authority's existing piled moorings which is



informed by the Authority's Asset Management Strategy and takes account of the comments made at the stakeholder mooring workshop held in July 2014 and the Navigation Committee in October 2014 and at which officer's recommendations were adopted.

- Land for Disposal of Spoil -The success of the Authority's important dredging programme is dependent to a large degree on the availability of suitable sites to deposit spoil. The Authority has acquired a licensed site at Postwick Tip but needs to identify and acquire further sites if the momentum of its ambitious programme of dredging is to be maintained. [Waterways Management Strategy Action Plan 2022](#) gives an overview of the challenge of managing the Broads waterways and prioritises the maintenance requirements and programmes includes a section setting out options for the disposal of dredging.

The Authority will seek to develop a strategic network of new sites which are suitable by virtue of their location, which will need to have waste management licenses. However, it is recognized that these opportunities are limited and therefore short-term lease arrangements for reuse of sediment will also be pursued. In 2014 the Authority successfully purchased 2 new sites for the disposal of spoil, and these will be managed for conservation benefit in between dredging campaigns. However, the purchases have depleted the ring-fenced reserves for the purchase of sites and budgetary pressure has meant that contributions to this reserve have been removed from the revenue budget. Any further opportunities will therefore need to be considered on an ad-hoc basis, but land in the Hickling area remains a priority.

- Countryside Management - The Authority leases and manages several sites which have been previously acquired to provide community benefits or provide facilities for visitors. In some cases, these are subject to agreements with landowners and other authorities (such as parish councils) to assist with the maintenance of the site. The Authority has reviewed and confirmed these arrangements and will not enter any new arrangements of this nature unless they are of strategic importance as identified in the [Integrated Access Strategy 2019](#). The Authority will not, other than in exceptional circumstances, seek to acquire and/or manage any additional facilities, such as car parks or toilets for example, but will instead seek to negotiate for these facilities to be provided or managed by other public authorities, such as parish or district councils. The Authority will annually review these facilities and look to dispose of its interest in these sites where potential for community asset management exists and can be negotiated.
- Public Rights of Way - The Authority currently has limited financial capacity to assist in the day-to-day management of the public rights of way network, for

which statutory responsibility lies with the County Councils, but has agreed to maintain a series of 'priority paths' which have been identified because of their significance to the Broads. In view of the financial restrictions, a ceiling of 30km (about 10% of the total network) has been set up for the maintenance of such paths. The Authority has developed an Integrated Access Strategy, to identify and implement opportunities to link public rights of way and access agreements with other facilities such as 24-hour moorings, to form an integrated and joined up access network, and these will be developed as permissive path agreements can be negotiated.

- Section 106 Agreements, Town & Country Planning Legislation - Where the Authority enters into an agreement with a landowner for land and/or a particular facility, the arrangements for the management and/or maintenance of this land and/or facility will be set out in a Section 106 Legal Agreement. Section 106 will set out the responsibilities and liabilities of each party, including the Authority. The Authority will expect that other than in exceptional circumstances the primary responsibility for the maintenance of the land and/or facilities will remain with the landowner unless otherwise specified. This will include the requirement as set out in Planning policy DM33 of the Local Plan for the Broads where new visitor moorings will be provided in line with adopted policy requirements. This process will be subject to Management Team approval as for other acquisitions set out above.
- Open Access land - This applies to land which is less than ten percent built upon and open to the public where it is then deemed as public open space. Land falling under these criteria needs to be treated in line with the Local Government Act 1972, Section 123 and advertised and sold accordingly and will incur additional time and expense for the disposal.
- Community Right to Bid - The Community Right to Bid allows communities and parish councils to nominate buildings or land for listing by the local authority as an Asset of Community Value. An asset can be listed if its main use currently benefits the community (or it did so in the recent past). Listed assets remain on the list for up to five years. If a listed asset is sold during this time, a moratorium (pause) on the sale process (of up to six months) may be invoked, providing local community groups with a window of time to raise the finance to make a bid to buy the asset on the open market.

If an expression of interest is received during this six week interim moratorium period, a further four and half month pause in the sale process is triggered, providing six months in total. During the 6-month moratorium period the owner cannot conclude a sale. The Community Right to Bid does not give a right of first

refusal to community groups to buy a listed asset. And at the end of the moratorium period the owner can sell the asset for whatever price they wish to whoever they want.

- Crichel Downs - The Crichel Down Rules can constrain the sale of public land. The general rule set out in Rule 10 states that if land is surplus and is to be sold, it must first be offered to the former owner of the land at its current market value. This is provided that its character has not materially changed since acquisition. However, if the obligation to offer back does not apply, for instance if there has been material change to the land, the former owner will still have to be notified of the decision. This means there are obligations with which the disposing body must comply in any event. If the Rules apply, then the disposing body follows a specific procedure set out in the detail of the Rules.

## 8. Vehicles, vessels, and equipment

8.1 Vehicles - Since 2018 the Authority has purchased most of its vehicle fleet, funded either by the earmarked reserves or capital grants. The Authority has a [Vehicle Procurement Strategy](#) that provides guidance and advice to responsible officers on vehicle procurement decisions. The strategy ensures that:

- Best value for money is achieved in meeting operational vehicle requirements.
- The vehicles being acquired are appropriate for projected operational needs.
- The vehicle fleet is being used in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.
- Ensuring purchases are made in line with the need to decarbonise the Authority, and the preferred option will be for electric or other zero emission cars; and
- The vehicle being acquired is safe for the users.

8.2 Vessels and Capital Equipment - The Broads Authority is investigating options for replacement patrol launches include both electric and hybrid propulsion. Once the options appraisal is complete designs will be drawn up and new launches commissioned as required and as funding becomes available.

A spreadsheet for the rest of Operations on when equipment is replaced is maintained and covers the next 10-year period. Additionally, a vessel and equipment replacement strategy has been developed and approved for the review of current inventory and to determine the future requirements.

8.3 Other Field Furniture and Equipment - A record of all navigation and countryside field furniture is maintained and related information has been captured spatially, on an

appropriate platform and this data is now linked to a web map-based system using GIS. The decision of the Authority to take over responsibility for Breydon Water and the Lower Bure added to the number of assets for which the Authority is responsible, including markers, buoys, and signage, together with the structure known as Turntide Jetty.

Records are maintained of equipment such as chainsaws and brushcutters, including the date of purchase, reference number, vibration level and maintenance records. Details are stored on Excel spreadsheets and where appropriate these are also recorded on the Inventory maintained by the Finance Section

8.4 Computer and IT equipment – The computer and other office equipment is acquired in accordance with operational need. The Authority operates a five-year rolling program for its computer hardware. All purchases are made in accordance with Standing Order. Provision for replacement costs in relation to hardware is incorporated within the IT budget.

8.5 Disposal of Land Property Assets - The Asset Officer will review land and property assets as and when lease or other agreements are due for renewal, to ensure that they continue to contribute to the Authority's aims and objectives. Where a property is no longer serving a useful purpose, the Asset Officer will present the case and obtain the approval of the Management Team to dispose and will also determine whether member approval may be necessary. As with acquisitions the Authority's property consultants should be consulted on any disposals where there are likely to be significant financial implications, to ensure that the Authority is obtaining value for money.

All assets owned or otherwise managed by the Broads Authority when reviewed and considered for disposal must qualify under at least one of the following four characteristics:

- They do not meet an operational need.
- They do not generate a measurable net profit.
- They have the potential to be transferred.
- They will be disposed because the Broads Authority is not uniquely placed to maximise their potential for the benefit of the Authority's Vision.

The process of value assessment will be used to review all our assets and those failing to demonstrate value (including non-financial values) will be disposed of. Factors to be considered will include:

- Where the Broads Plan or Authority's objectives can be achieved without Authority ownership or responsibility for the asset.

- Where a level of threat has diminished to an acceptable level and the Authority considers it can wisely dispose of a property whilst safeguarding the Authority's purposes.
- Where a 3<sup>rd</sup> party can utilise the asset to contribute to the Broad's Authority vision more efficiently or effectively than the Authority can itself.
- Where it would be sensible for the Authority to dispose of the asset to pursue other objectives more effectively, having considered the Organisational Strategy, the points above and considering:
  - Where ownership does not make sound economic sense
  - The benefits of realising the capital value.
  - The timing of disposal to optimise the return to the Authority (market value, special interest, or windfall value).
  - The potential reduction in resources devoted to the management or maintenance of the asset.
  - Any resultant impacts on annual income.
  - Likely capital receipts in accordance with the principles of best value.
  - The legal and consultancy fees involved in the transfer of Asset.

Where a site is approved for disposal the Broads Authority will in the first instance seek interest from possible partner organisations or third parties via a public process, and proposals received will be judged against the criteria set out above.

## 9. Replacement and renewal of Assets

9.1 The Authority previously established an Asset Management reserve account to provide for the future repair and maintenance of property assets which it may not be possible to fund through the revenue account. This Asset Management reserve has now been consolidated into a wider Property reserve account to allow the Authority greater flexibility in dealing with significant one-off costs for assets. These liabilities and associated costs have been assessed and prioritised and built into an ongoing three-year programme for proposed contributions. Additional reserve accounts have been established for Premises, and Plant, vessels, and equipment. The annual contributions and splits between National Park and Navigation to these reserves can be found in the annual budget report [Financial strategy \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/financial-strategy) within the earmarked reserves appendix .

- 9.2 Premises reserve- The reserve contains the previously separate reserves for office accommodation, dockyard site maintenance and other operational depots including boathouses, TICs, and yacht stations.
- 9.3 Plant, vessel, and equipment reserve –The reserve contains the previously separate reserves for fen management equipment, launch replacement, vehicle replacement and dockyard vessels and equipment.
- 9.4 Property reserve – As stated above the reserve contains the previously separate Asset Management. In addition, it also contains Mutford Lock endowment and the consolidated dredging disposal, moorings and piling reserves.
- 9.5 In November 2014 the Broads Authority approved the annual financial provision required to allow for future renewal of replacement of assets as set out in the Asset Management Plan, as part of the Authority’s Financial Strategy.
- 9.6 As a general principle it was agreed that any underspend on asset management budgets because of securing more favourable prices should be ring fenced and added back into the appropriate reserves. Similarly, the reserve strategies should be annually reviewed, updated, and amended as required.
- 9.7 Limited provision for other routine maintenance costs is built into and funded from the Authority’s revenue account.

## **10. Roles and responsibilities**

- 10.1 Management Team - The Management Team has overall responsibility, through the Director of Finance for ensuring that the practices and procedures which have been established through this policy contribute to the delivery of the Authority’s objectives as set out in the Broads Plan 2022-27 and other strategic documents. It is responsible for any strategic decisions relating to the Authority’s property portfolio and those which have significant financial implications, and for providing guidance to the Asset Officer in the management of these assets.
- 10.2 The Asset Officer - The role of the Asset Officer is to lead on and coordinate all matters that relate to the management, disposal, and acquisition of assets by the Authority, including conveyancing, Asset Management systems, relevant strategies, documenting risk assessments and landowner liaison. The Asset Officer should be consulted by all members of staff on any issues relating to the acquisition or disposal of land and property assets, or any other related issues which could have strategic or significant financial implications.
- 10.3 Responsible Officers - Officers have been designated as being responsible for the day-to-day management of the Authority’s land and property assets, as set out in

Appendix 3 to this policy. The specific responsibilities of these officers will be as follows:

- to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the security of the premises, that alarm systems are regularly tested and maintained, and that the premises are secure overnight.
- to plan for the health and safety of staff whilst working on the premises, including the undertaking of any risk assessments which might be necessary.
- to plan for key holders
- to ensure that appropriate fire arrangements are in place, that a suitable fire risk assessment has been carried out and that fire extinguishers and other firefighting equipment are appropriately maintained.
- to be responsible for arranging routine repairs and maintenance
- to ensure that arrangements are in place for the testing, certification, and maintenance of any specialist equipment.
- to hold Asbestos Survey Reports and ensure that details are brought to the attention of any contractors working on site, as appropriate.
- to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for waste disposal.
- to be responsible for any specialist or legal arrangements unique to the site or property

## 11 Review

- 11.1 This Strategy will be reviewed every three years, or more frequently, when there are significant changes in the environment within which the Authority operates. Responsibility for ensuring that regular reviews are carried out lies with the Asset Officer.