

An aerial photograph of a coastal town and beach, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue rectangle. The town features a mix of residential and commercial buildings, a prominent Ferris wheel, and a sandy beach with many people. The sea is visible on the right side of the image.

# Strategic Asset Management Plan 2025-2030

**BCP COUNCIL**

## BCP Council Asset Management Plan

### Overview of the Council's Assets

BCP (Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole) Council has a wide-ranging portfolio of property assets inherited from the four legacy authorities in 2019.

On 31 March 2022 the portfolio was valued at a total of circa £2.07bn. This total includes housing (£682.8m attributed to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), schools, libraries and community centres, specialist centres providing adult day care and residential care and a range of support for children and young people, administrative and civic buildings, cemeteries & crematoriums, the regional mortuary, public conveniences, and maintenance depots.

The Council also has several heritage assets that include Museums, Castles and Parks all of which are maintained to ensure their upkeep. BCP also maintains and develops many entertainment venues such as the Bournemouth International Centre (BIC), Pavilion and Poole Lighthouse; sports centres, sports pitches, and pavilions; car parks, investment properties, and a range of seafront assets including beach huts and cafes.

Property assets can become liabilities as they need on-going maintenance and investment to ensure they remain fit for purpose. It is therefore essential that the assets held by the Council are the right ones, efficiently supporting the provision of quality services, helping deliver our strategic aims, and making a positive difference within the community they serve.

It is important that the Council constantly challenges the use of its assets to ensure the principles set out in this document are maintained and the estate re-shaped accordingly. This is set out in our Asset Re-Use Procedure.

## What is an Asset Management Plan and why do we need one?

An Asset Management Plan (AMP) is the foundation to ensuring a portfolio of assets is being managed in the most efficient and effective way. An AMP is a timebound commitment to action that ensures that the Council's property assets are proactively managed to fully meet both its current and future requirements, with an increasing focus on long term financial and climate sustainability.

The Council's Financial Regulations set out the responsibilities of the Corporate Property Officer which include *“establishing an asset management plan that details short-, medium-, and long-term use of assets, and establishes arrangements for monitoring and reporting asset performance”*. The inclusion of this section on Asset Management within this Financial Paper helps set the tone for how the Council will take this forward.

The Council has set out its key priorities within the Corporate Strategy. Part of the AMP's role is to establish a golden thread, linking the Council's priorities and ambitions through the management of and investment in its assets.

The AMP should also be developed and read in conjunction with other strategies and plans including Regeneration, Housing, Highways, Seafront, and transformation. For noting, the management of the HRA is set out in the annual HRA Budget Papers. The AMP focuses on corporate 'general fund' land and property assets.

The AMP has an important role to play regarding the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). For example, surplus assets can contribute to funding the capital programme and in turn capital expenditure can support the provision of new asset requirements identified by services or council priorities. Surplus assets can also be used to fund transformation expenditure via the governments Flexible Use of Capital

Receipts regulations. The AMP should also horizon scan, identifying asset requirements that might require capital investment to deliver and maintain them in the future.

Since 2023 the property estate has been continually reviewed and there is an on-going set of objectives to ensure core data gaps are reduced and data interaction is recognised. The alignment and standardisation of property Use and Type's is vital to support service strategies and projects such as area clustering, where assets are analysed from a geographical perspective alongside the documentation of long-term service needs. The suitability of property and its purpose is now questioned and assessed through the Virtual Landlord function. This landlord approach ensures that property decisions are made by the relevant teams within Estates and Facilities Management teams. There are 2,620 asset entries on the corporate asset register, this is a breakdown of Sites and Specific Establishments of which over 80% are freehold assets.

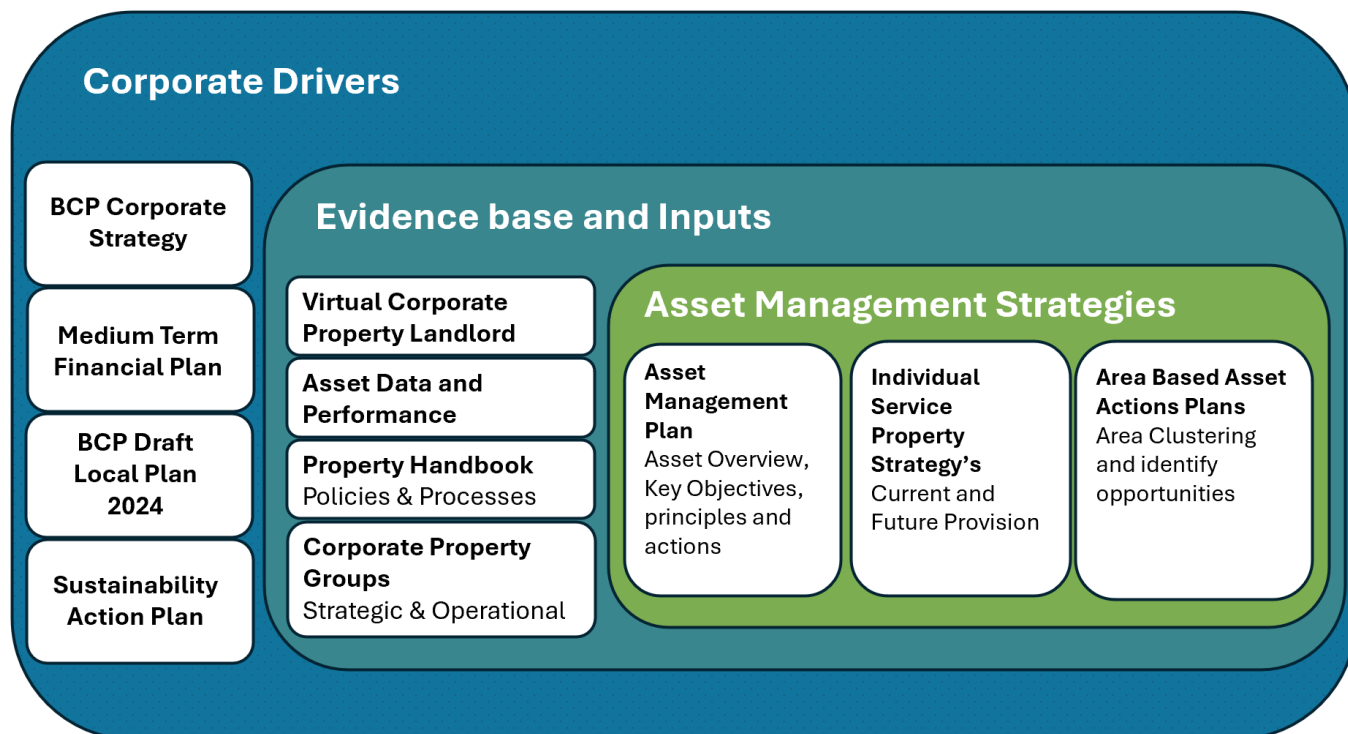
<b><i>Leading Directorate/ Service</i></b>	<b><i>Asset Count</i></b>
<b><i>Adult Social Care</i></b>	<b><i>42</i></b>
<b><i>Children's Services</i></b>	<b><i>194</i></b>
<b><i>Communities</i></b>	<b><i>51</i></b>
<b><i>Customer &amp; Business Delivery</i></b>	<b><i>44</i></b>
<b><i>Destination &amp; Culture</i></b>	<b><i>650</i></b>
<b><i>Development</i></b>	<b><i>51</i></b>
<b><i>Environment</i></b>	<b><i>922</i></b>
<b><i>Finance</i></b>	<b><i>93</i></b>
<b><i>Housing</i></b>	<b><i>221</i></b>
<b><i>Law and Governance</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>
<b><i>Transport &amp; Engineering</i></b>	<b><i>351</i></b>

The data and strategic outline held on the Corporate Estate is now structured to help the underlying principles that support future decision-making, representing a checklist to assess new estate-related business cases against. So, in the future the BCP Council estate should be:

- **Relevant - in a strategic sense.**
- **Resilient – protecting BCP Operations and our communities.**
- **Fit for purpose / Safe / Compliant – in a technical sense.**
- **Transformation - digitally enabled.**
- **Connected – accessible to customers.**
- **Flexible – to accommodate future changes and targets.**
- **Sustainable – carbon neutral / environmentally.**
- **Sustainable – financially in the medium to longer term.**

An output from a piece a work by Avison Young in 2021 was a recommendation to implement a more centrally controlled organisational structure for all aspects of land and property management. This is now being actioned with the implementation of a Virtual Corporate Landlord Model which is detailed more in the section below.

The Asset Management Plan sits within an Asset Management Framework which responds to our corporate drivers and uses other inputs and enablers to support its delivery:



In conclusion, the Framework sets out a series of actions to move the Council towards a strategic (and corporate best practice) approach to estate management, and a more targeted, needs led approach to identifying estate re-alignment and rationalisation opportunities.

The final section of this initial Asset Management Plan summarises some of the key themes as part of a high-level action plan, listing the challenges and opportunities that will have an impact on the management of the Council's assets over the next few years. These all provide context to the shaping of the AMP.

## *Challenges, Opportunities, and what we need from our assets in the future.*

### 1) Financial climate

The Council's assets have a key role to play regarding responding to the unprecedented financial challenges the Council faces over the next few years. Assets can directly affect both the revenue and capital positions of the Council.

The Council must ensure that its land and property assets deliver value for money in terms of service benefit, operating costs, financial returns, and regeneration. The Council must therefore continually challenge whether its assets are required, fit for purpose, and contribute to the delivery Council services and priorities.

Financial efficiencies are directly linked to the implementation of the Virtual Corporate Landlord Model particularly relevant to the annual budget will be the reductions in revenue operating costs. Further work has also begun to utilise Civica to ensure that all property expenditure is initiated within the Corporate Property Management System with an interaction to finance systems.

Currently not all financial costs can be linked to individual assets and our aim is to ensure that all costs shown below can be linked back to this level of detail.

*	General Fund	HRA	Total
<b>Rates</b>	£4,991,500	£311,300	£5,302,800
<b><u>Maintenance:</u></b>			
<b>Hard</b>	£6,684,200	£7,873,400	£14,557,600
<b>Soft</b>	£19,900	£295,200	£315,100
<b><u>Utilities:</u></b>			
<b>Gas</b>	£906,219	£765,500	£1,671,719
<b>Electric</b>	£6,487,098	£1,407,100	£7,894,198

\*Please Note, the figures above were based on the 2023-24 revenue budget.

## 2) Regeneration / Place Shaping

The Council has committed to revitalising the towns and neighbourhoods across Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole, and has several key delivery partners.

The [Bournemouth Development Company](#) has been a key player in regenerating Bournemouth Town Centre for the last 14 years. Most recent developments include 'Treetops' in St Stephens Road and 'West Cliff Mansions', both utilising council land formerly used as surface car parks. More efficient multi-storey car provision has been provided to offset the loss of these car parks.

The Boscombe Towns Fund is using £22m as part of the Government's Town Deal programme to turbo charge ambitious regeneration plans for Boscombe.

The identification and redeployment of under-used and surplus assets is an important driver for regeneration, and critical to the success of these endeavours. Equally, there is a need to consider how active land and property management can of itself deliver regenerative benefits ahead of and as a precursor to the development of land and property. Asset Management is also about understanding what future services might look like and the assets required to support services. This valuable information can feed into the place shaping work led by these partners.

### 3) Transformation

The Council is undertaking an extensive transformation programme which has three elements: how and where we work, how we are organised; and how we support our colleagues through these changes.

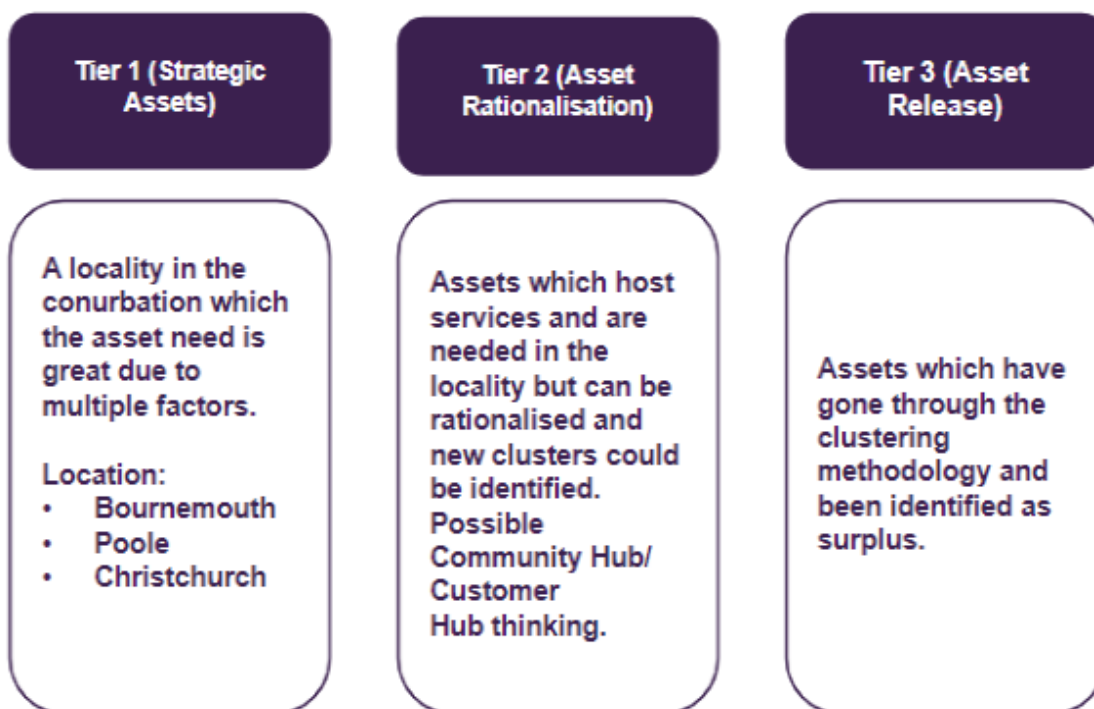
Whilst the Council will continue to support customers face to face, a new operating model of investment in technology, digitalisation, and automation of services with 24/7 access will have a significant impact upon the Council's operational estate.

The Council has already acted delivering Phase 1 of its Estates & Accommodation (E&A) Programme with the reconfiguration of the former Bournemouth Town Hall Complex into the new BCP Civic Centre. Significant work has also been undertaken at Poole Customer Hub & Library and Christchurch Customer Hub & Library to provide more modern and agile environments for both customers and staff. This has facilitated the closure of the other two civic centre sites. One, is progressing towards disposal, the other is the subject of soft market testing.

Phase 2 of the E&A programme commenced to primarily focus on the administrative buildings out in the conurbation so that the whole office estate is rationalised, this work focusses on identifying space utilisation and service opportunities as often buildings are shared spaces. The asset clustering project focusses on properties and their demand for an improved service in the relevant areas across BCP, a place-based approach. The Virtual Landlord approach is helping to ensure the review is effective, by highlighting what assets are a frontline service and recommending more efficient ways of utilising those properties, while still providing an acceptable level of service to customers.

The council ambition is to continue with vacating, repurposing and disposal of relevant buildings across the conurbation. The outcome from this will likely see more shared space and long-term consideration of use and requirements from the services, in turn creating buildings fit for their purpose with better operational alignment and efficiencies. Whilst also reducing the number of assets used to deliver these services.

The model below helps to visualize how this approach is achieved.



#### **4) Climate Action**

BCP Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019. This set a commitment as an organisation to become carbon neutral by 2030, and then the conurbation of Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole by 2050.

The Council's assets have a significant role to play in us achieving these targets. An AMP that sets out clear direction in terms of which assets are required in the future by each service, can in turn help direct the maintenance of and investment in those assets to improve their energy efficiency and reduce their carbon emissions. The climate impact of each asset needs to be built in as one of the key performance indicators for our portfolio alongside running costs, backlog maintenance and utilisation. Adaption is another area that needs consideration for the portfolio, so future proofing our assets from floods, extreme heat, fire, and wind.

There is an urgent need to consider both the performance of assets from a resource consumption, fabric first and circular economy, perspective; as well as considering how the physical disposition of council and public assets interacts with trip generation both for staff and for customers.

When the Council pursues new build or acquisition programmes in the future it will be guided by the framework within the Local Plan. However, the Council may choose to complement this with its own sustainable construction principles in the future. This could ensure a consistently high standard across everything it does itself and in collaboration with its partners.

#### **5) Service need**

Council services are dealing with many challenges from financial, demographic, legislative, to service improvement and this is on top of bringing together 4 legacy authorities and learning to live with worldwide pandemics, such as Covid. Whilst the provision of quality services is front and centre in their thinking, the Council's Estates team, working within the context of a Landlord Model, will support services to ensure the built

estate is considered in that thought and design process, and where possible the most appropriate assets are retained and invested in. Estates will guide and develop individual service property strategy's and where necessary by type and locality, this will ensure the ownership of all property assets and the responsibility for their management and maintenance is transferred from the service departments to the Virtual Landlord, which is a centralised function of the Council.

Service Strategies will need to align to the relevant individual Service Property Strategy, this will require services to state best practice and identify **next practise and future demand**, this will involve seeking opportunities to reduce revenue expenditure and must be conducted with a sensitive approach as most services have a high level of complexity to how and where they run their services from.

## **6) Maintaining the Council's assets, & ensuring they are safe & compliant.**

An asset can quickly become a liability if not repaired, maintained, and managed properly. Like all local authorities, BCP Council has a substantial maintenance backlog to address within its estate. Maintenance budgets are focussed on ensuring inspections are carried out and statutory responsibilities maintained so buildings are safe for staff and visitors.

Buildings are being maintained on a reactive basis; this has its risks as we do not hold a full set of live condition information as budgets are stretched to only ensure the regular servicing and compliance is upheld. However, funding opportunities are being explored to see how buildings can become more efficient and how old plant can be replaced with much more low carbon and sustainable solutions. Ongoing consideration is also being given to which buildings are no longer needed for service delivery and can then be sold or redeveloped. In doing so the resources available to the council can then be spread more effectively over less buildings. The

Virtual Landlord Model will have a vital effect on prioritising budgets using a more direct approach to our professional property and asset teams.

## **7) Accurate and up to date Property Records**

The Council's Corporate Property Management System is now a single system where multiple departments utilise the asset structure and hierarchy that is maintained by the Property Records Team, this means that Projects and Facilities Teams can be confident that defects and jobs are linked to a shared asset register that helps support surveys such as building condition, inspections, asbestos, and water management.

Project teams and ICT are also currently working on projects to bring the asset register data into a single IT system and associated mapping system. These are significant pieces of work and essential to having an efficient and up to date data set of the council's ownership records. These records include the core property ownership data and estate management data which includes Unique Property Reference Number alignment, leases, rent review dates and break & expiry dates.

This data is critical not only to the safe and efficient day to day running of the estate, but also for supporting regeneration and other transformational activities.

Keeping up to data is vital and we rely on our services and teams to provide on the ground information to our estates teams to fulfil this obligation. In turn the data is required to be publicised to ensure the assets can be viewed across the public domain in line with the Data Transparency Code 2015. Whilst BCP has previously worked with neighbouring Councils to achieve this, BCP are now ensuring a more direct route to this data via its own website.

## **8) Virtual Landlord Model and current governance arrangements**

The Council is in the process of introducing a Virtual Landlord Model (VLM) to the way it manages its land and property assets. The different routes and scenarios are being mapped out and reviewed to ensure a

more seamless approach is found that meets the needs and flexibility of our property management systems. This means bringing together the different functions and activities into one single centre of excellence or service directorate. From Strategic Asset Management, Estate Management, Facilities Management, Compliance, Repairs & Maintenance and Design & Construction. This consolidation of technical and professional resources and budgets will help the Council operate more efficiently. VLM should infuse corporate best practice.

The Facilities Management team, Estates and Property team's act as the Virtual Landlord function, by managing the stages of the property life cycle they can efficiently support a more financially sustainable and flexible approach for service delivery and community improvement. This approach supports services with standardised professional advice and ensures their focus remains solely on service improvement whilst investing time for long-term service strategies. BCP aims to reduce and/or remove the risks and trends highlighted below: -

- Property 'owned' by individual Services /Directorates
- Pockets of data, and what there is, is held by directorates
- Data inconsistent, out of date & no audit trail.
- Cost of occupation unknown
- Space utilisation unknown
- Space standards inconsistent
- Maintenance position unknown
- Maintenance prioritised by reaction
- Capital investment not prioritised corporately
- Statutory obligations / Legislative testing programmes unknown
- Inadequate training for achieving a Landlord Approach

- Inconsistent standards of accommodation
- Workplace risk assessment position unclear
- No Whole Life Cost analysis
- Unable to develop corporate strategies because people will still do their own thing.
- Asset plans not aligned to service business planning
- Chasing funding
- Piecemeal approach to procurement
- No coordination between services on assets
- Inability for wider coordination with public sector

The aim of the Virtual Landlord model is to improve, consider and identify risks and benefits on the above points but also more locally for BCP, we need to: -

- Manage and maintain property centrally
- Manage the property list and the strategic data directly in the Property System.
- Invest in property maintenance with a programme of works
- Improve income generation
- Ensure the right balance of smart business decisions and community improvement.
- Centralise property budgets, adopt a single shared property reference such as a UPRN in Property, Finance and Utility systems to obtain a single property cost analysis.
- Pilot a centralised budget approach in April 2025 by linking corporate register assets with their associated costs in the finance system.

- Improve accessibility of information in the property system and other corporate software for all relevant stakeholders to view.
- Re-structure asset data from Christchurch digitisation project.
- Ensure decision making maps are clear and followed at the appropriate boards and groups.
- Strategies are adopted and policies are accessible.

## 9) Partnership Working

Across the County of Dorset there is a range of public sector services from Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), South West Ambulance Trust, Dorset Police, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, The Ministry of Defence (MoD), Dorset Council, and Town and Parish Councils. All these organisations have their own portfolio of assets as well as share those of others.

The council is keen to find opportunities for collocation with partners where that supports integrated working between agencies. This is now taking place within the BCP Civic Centre with the NHS sharing office space with Adult Social Care. Furthermore, where council surplus assets can support the requirements of partner agencies this is also being explored on a commercial basis, with Northmead House currently being considered by the NHS as a more cost-efficient solution to meeting its local office requirements.

So, it is incumbent on all partners including BCP Council, to make the best use of these assets and work together in delivering services. A Dorset Public Estate Board has been set up to ensure a more cohesive approach to the use of assets by these organisations and BCP will play an active role in this group.

It is also important to recognise the role of third parties and community groups. This Council is keen to enable communities more with regards the retention and provision of services.

*Approach to developing the Asset Management Plan – next steps.*

Accepting the themes highlighted above, its essential that the Council resources and sets out a more detailed asset management plan for the medium to long term. This includes developing:

- Improved inter-departmental working is helping to progress the collection of procedures and standards, these principles are being established to structure a Handbook which sets out the nuts and bolts for how we do asset management, including policies, processes, and procedures.
- A Performance Review – this should include a suite of performance indicators to allow the Council to measure how its assets are performing, and detail the key areas for change that will affect future asset requirements across services; and
- A detailed Asset Strategy and Action Plan which sets out all the asset related activity over the next 3 – 5 years in support of the Council's priorities and services.

The short-term focus is very much on direct support to the Council's Financial Strategy. In particular:

- bringing forward the disposal of non-strategic assets to help fund current and future years of the Council's transformation programme; and
- continuing the fundamental review of buildings occupied by BCP Council with a view to further consolidating the staff in the Civic Centre and

considering future options for owned buildings or passing back leasehold properties as soon as practical.

- Review and continue to streamline the Community Asset Transfer process.
- Pilot the Virtual Landlord model for the library service, test recommendations and communicate outcomes for the service.
- The extent to which the community would be better placed to manage council assets (An Enabling Council – Strength Based Approach)
- Consideration of the performance and location of assets through the lens of regeneration and climate adaption.

Currently the Council has two Corporate Property Groups (CPG) which meet monthly. The CPG Operations Group focusses on operational matters and trying to find solutions to new asset requirements. It also provides the forum for highlighting an asset that might be under-used or surplus to that service's requirements. The group can then discuss whether there might be alternative operational needs that could be met from that asset, or it could be recommended as surplus. CPG Strategic maintains an overview for how the Council's assets are being managed and approves any changes to how assets are deployed. Essentially, these CPGs act as the conduit for all asset related activity, although it is important to note that asset activity must still comply with the Financial Regulations and Constitution.

From a record management perspective BCP have improved its data to improve information in the public domain and helped remove data gaps and alignment of services using its assets. Type and Use naming has been redefined to a set standard which will in turn create a simple way of reporting and analysing size, use, location and expenditure at service level.

The Facilities Management team following the formation of BCP Council have a single view of the servicing and inspection activity across the whole

of the corporate estate having centralised the data from the legacy authorities into the single asset management system.

Single policies and procedures have been adopted for the compliance work with support from the Health and Safety team.

The Council will continue to manage the estate on a day-to-day basis with a common-sense approach and to the benefit of the council and services provided.