

2013-18



Corporate Asset Management Plan



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1.0 About this plan

This plan summarises the Comhairle’s aims and objectives for our assets to ensure that they are used in an effective and efficient manner. The delivery of the plan supports the Comhairle’s Corporate Strategy and is built upon our values. It also provides detail on our future investment strategy and the effect this will have on our assets.

The nine main types of assets covered in this plan are:

- Property
- Burial Grounds
- Parks, Playgrounds and Open Spaces
- Roads Infrastructure
- Marine Infrastructure
- Waste Management and Disposal
- Vehicles and Plant
- ICT
- Renewables

Our Values

Working Together

Provide Excellent Services

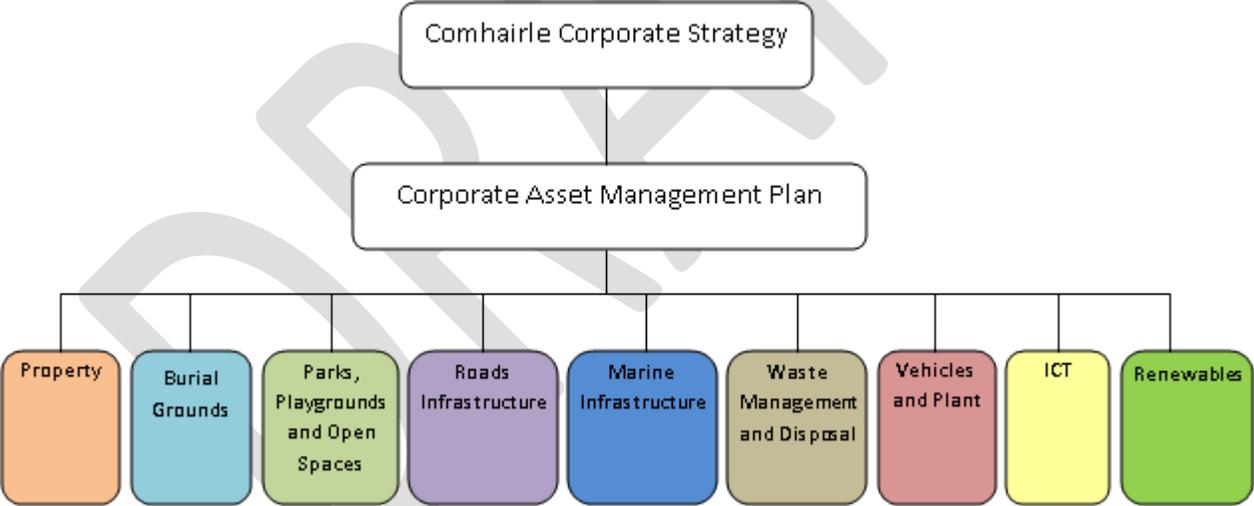
Provide Community Leadership

Represent the Outer Hebrides

Promote Sustainability

Promote equalities

In addition, each asset type has a separate detailed plan which sets out how we will achieve our asset aims and objectives. The framework is shown below:



Each detailed asset management plan follows a broadly similar structure although, by the very nature of the different types of assets, they approach asset management in different ways when required. However, they have a common theme of offering a critical appraisal of existing asset performance and the decision-making requirements that follow such work.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Wider Context

In the past, most Local Authorities, in common with the majority of other organisations in the public sector, have not in any systematic way considered how their major assets have been used and deployed. Investment in assets has been considerable but often has been based on poor information and decisions based on less than rigorous approach. Questions around the condition of the asset, its fitness for purpose and long term sustainability were at best perhaps considered informally and at worst-not at all.

These weaknesses have been widely recognised and over the last few years changes have been introduced. Most councils in Scotland have started to embrace Asset Management Planning (AMP) as a compulsory requirement for not only the proper management and monitoring of assets but critically as a tool for robust and sound investment decision making.

There have been several key influences in the development of Asset Management Plans.

- The abolition of the S94 capital controls in 2004 and the replacement of this investment system by the Prudential Code. This Code allows Councils the freedom to invest and borrow, provided it takes place within the confines of affordable limits.
- The Scottish Executive invested heavily in publicising best practice asset management techniques for the Schools estate in 2003. This led to increased monies for the schools fund and a set of guides for the preparation of detailed school estate management plans and an annual set of core facts. The progress achieved by asset management planning in schools have created the momentum for best practice procedures in other Council services.
- It was the stated intention of the regulator (Audit Scotland) to allow local authorities some breathing space in the period 2005 to 2008 to put in place proper asset management and capital planning decision making frameworks and for a full audit of such systems to be arranged post 2008. In 2009 a review of Asset Management in Local Government was undertaken by Audit Scotland resulting in the headline "Councils need to improve their asset management". Guidance has been made available to Councils and subsequent audits have focused on the implementation of asset management utilising the Best Value Framework and Toolkits.

An integrated asset management/capital planning system is a critical part of the good management of any organisation and a key principle in ensuring that all investment decisions are considered within an overall systematic appraisal system that includes the use of business cases and option appraisal.

2.2 The 'building blocks' of Asset Management

Taking in its totality and, especially when linking to the capital planning system, asset management can be a complex subject. The need for Business Cases for all investment bids and the use of option appraisal techniques complicate this even further. However asset management consists ultimately of a few key drivers that when correctly interpreted offer the 'building blocks' for sound decision making. Collecting the data is a time consuming and expensive process but this forms the key database on which well informed decisions and analysis can take place and allows us to reap innumerable future benefits. The information for each of these drivers forms the bedrock of the asset management decision making tree, monitoring and reporting on the performance of the assets and the formal basis on which Strategic Outline Business Cases (SOBCs) and the capital planning system can

be built. The drivers are as follows:

Key Driver	Description
Condition	It is essential there is an understanding of the condition of all assets. Sampled surveys or full 100% surveys are therefore required to form a reliable picture. Usually, a graded system is used to categorise the condition of assets.
Suitability	This is sometimes called the 'fitness for purpose' test. Many organisations find it difficult to assess whether an asset is delivering returns for the purpose for which it was intended. It goes beyond any question of condition and is concerned with how well the asset is suited to its current purpose. An example might be old head office premises that are in good condition but are cramped and full of corridors and small offices that are not suited to 21st century working. This is a suitability issue rather than one of condition.
Sufficiency	This is about demand and sustainability of the asset. Sufficiency is concerned with asset use both now and in the future. It is critically important because it helps to identify under utilised assets that can be identified for possible disposal or reconfiguration. It is primarily concerned with asset capacity compared to asset use and again taking the example above of the head office premises, it may have a capacity of say 300 people but is currently occupied with say only 100 meaning an occupancy rate of only 33%. In the case of this particular asset this would be the key sufficiency indicator.
Revenue Costs	The costs of operating the asset are important. The asset management plan needs to include the revenue costs of running the asset in order that maintenance costs and heat and light costs are not only controlled but within ranges the Council wishes to pay. In theory these costs should be in line with the condition rating for the asset but information on the two should assist in deciding the relative merits or otherwise of continued, economic asset use.
Accessibility	This can be on two levels. The first is linked to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and how much the asset is accessible to people with disabilities. The second is concerned with accessibility generally. For example, there may be a special piece of computer equipment that can only be used by suitably trained Council personnel. In this case it would be useful to ensure that operatives are correctly identified and appropriate cover is in place (avoiding the situation of reduced usage-sufficiency-because of the unavailability of qualified staff).
Value	Commonly overlooked in asset management plans, but a list of values of assets not only act as a reliable inventory check, but can ensure that an accurate, appropriate valuation is listed. This might not necessarily be the valuation in the accounts but could be one that the responsible asset manager knows is an accurate market value (if the Council wished to dispose of the asset) or of a replacement value if he wished to replace new.

3.0 Asset Management planning in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

3.1 Financial Climate

Around £120m of capital investment will have been delivered between 2008 and 2013, an average of over £24m per annum. £68m of this spend has been on the Western Isles Schools Project (WISP), which has delivered six new schools across the Western Isles. This capital investment programme (2008-13) has helped the Comhairle realise significant improvements to service delivery and facilities provision, including the secured development of Lews Castle, preserving one of the main heritage sites in the Western Isles. The outlook for 2013 -2018 however paints a different picture where revenue and capital resources will be significantly lower. The Comhairle faces a challenge of continuing to manage an asset portfolio that supports corporate objectives with a £6m reduction in revenue and a likely capital allocation of £35m.

Effective prioritisation of capital resources and pro-active asset management are crucial in the period ahead.

Although several assets have been declared as surplus to requirements, the economic situation is restricting market interest and communities' ability to utilise assets.

3.2 Approach to Asset Management

Asset management has historically been undertaken at a Service or Departmental level within the Comhairle. This has meant that service areas have naturally built up a good knowledge of asset requirements and have managed resources accordingly. Whilst this approach provides a close correlation between asset and service delivery it does not necessarily promote the most efficient and effective use of assets, resources or skills at a corporate level.

It has been widely recognised that effective and efficient use of assets requires corporate visibility of all relevant data, a consistent approach to management, an understanding of all service requirements and objective means of prioritising investment. Asset management processes have therefore been the subject of audit and best value reviews. To date the Comhairle has been able to report progress with some areas of good practice in asset management, however has not been able to demonstrate that corporate asset management has been embedded. This process will take time, however this Plan establishes an asset management framework to drive the development of service plans and establish the principles of corporate performance reporting and investment prioritisation.

The Comhairle has established the Assets and Infrastructure Section within the Technical Services Department, with responsibility for Asset Management, Property Maintenance and Roads Maintenance. This Section has ownership of the properties and roads repair and maintenance budgets along with the capital Property Investment Programme and Roads Investment Programme.

An Asset Management Group Structure has been established to provide direction and leadership and the Property Panel provides a decision-making gateway to ensure that management decisions are undertaken in a corporate manner.

Significant work is already underway in each of the sectoral asset categories:

Property

- *Property Rationalisation Review* – consider on a council wide basis all possible opportunities for reducing the number of properties to allow limited resources to be more effectively targeted
- *Commercial Portfolio Review* – undertake a review to assess performance with the objective of maximising return and disposing of poorly performing assets
- *Review of Property Revenue Maintenance Budgets* – these budgets have been transferred to the Assets and Infrastructure Section
- *Disposal of Surplus Assets* – the progression of surplus assets through the asset disposal procedure
- *Joint Working* – working with partners on co-location opportunities
- *Data Management* – consolidation and review of data sources
- *Condition Assessment* – independent assessment of operational portfolio

Burial Grounds

- Review plot allocations and layouts to make efficient and sensitive use of available areas

Parks, Playgrounds and Open Spaces

- Review of grounds maintenance specifications in light of biodiversity reviews and budget reductions.
- Place based review of playground provision and investment requirements

Roads Infrastructure

- Independent scanner condition assessment and backlog maintenance estimate
- Compilation of Asset Management Plan through SCOTS workshops and project participation
- Review of road strengthening options to optimise effectiveness of treatment and minimise future liabilities.

Marine Infrastructure

- Condition assessment of all major assets with options to suspend investment based on inspection results

Waste Management and Disposal

- Development and Implementation of an Outer Hebrides Waste Strategy
- Provision of landfill capacity to 2019
- Cross boundary review of disposal options

Vehicles and Plant

- Asset Register
- Balanced maintenance/replacement strategy

ICT

- Asset Register
- Strategic Plan
- Server Virtualisation
- Desktop virtualisation review

Renewables

- New Schools BREEAM Excellent Rating
- Pilot Hydrogen fuel production
- Pool Electric Vehicles
- Single site wind turbines
- Energy from waste (Digester Gas)
- FIT Partnership working (Seilebost School)

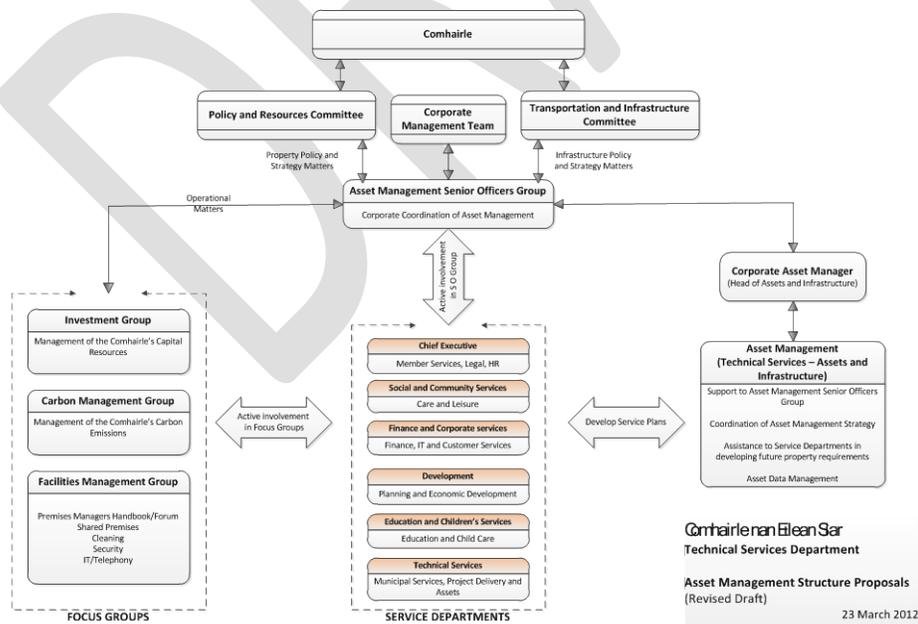
Joint Working

- North Hub Territory Diagnostic Review
- Western Isles Local Diagnostic Review

3.3 Framework for Asset Management Planning

In order to support the integration of asset management planning and investment decisions, a management framework structure has been established. This framework ensures that asset management planning is dealt with at a sufficiently senior level.

This is shown in the diagram below.



Asset Management Senior Officer Group

The Asset Management Senior Officer Group is chaired by the Chief Executive and meets on a quarterly basis. This is supported by the establishment of a Property Panel, also chaired by the Chief Executive, where the corporate decisions on property related matters are agreed. It is attended by Directors and lead officers and is responsible for the following:

- Ensure the development of the complete Corporate Asset Management Plan to support the options for future investment.
- Monitor progress in relation to the development of the Corporate Asset Management Plan.
- Coordinate the collation of investment options for those not driven by the asset management plan.
- Provide a forum to identify best asset practice.
- Provide all necessary expertise on asset management issues
- Raise corporate asset management issues.
- Disseminate best practice in the management of assets.
- Identify potential improvement and good practice in the management of the council's assets.
- Coordinate the development of a suite of asset management performance indicators.

Investment Group

The Investment Group is chaired by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and is attended by Directors and lead officers involved in capital planning and delivery. The remit of the Group is to:

- Establish procedures to compile and monitor the capital investment programme.
- Ensure the preparation of a comprehensive range of options for future investment.
- Coordinate future options for investment between different asset types to avoid any potential duplication.

Carbon Management Group

The Carbon Management Group is chaired by the Head of Assets and Infrastructure and is attended by lead officers who can influence the progression of Carbon Management initiatives. The remit of the Group is to progress, monitor and report on the Comhairle's carbon footprint.

Facilities Management Group

The Facilities Management Group is chaired by the Head of Exchequer Services and is attended by lead officers from across Comhairle Departments who can influence and progress property and facilities management priorities. The remit of the Group is to ensure a consistent approach across the Comhairle in matters relating to the utilisation, management and maintenance of buildings.

3.4 Links to Best Value

Best Value is a critical driver to the management of our assets. The duty to secure best value has emphasised the need to manage assets effectively. Asset management planning is consistent with the accepted principles to enable the delivery of best value:

- We are accountable to our customers.
- We are transparent and open in the way in which we do business.
- We are committed to continuously improving our services.
- We take ownership for Best Value.

To take forward best value, the Comhairle will utilise the Best Value Toolkit: Asset Management as developed by Audit Scotland. This process will assist the Comhairle in demonstrating Best Value secure, continuous improvement in the services being provided and ensures that assets continue to support service delivery.

3.5 Detailed Asset Management Plans for Each Asset Category

Each of the asset management plans for the nine categories follow a broadly similar structure although by the very nature of the different types of assets, they approach asset management in different ways when required. However, they have a common theme of offering a critical appraisal of existing asset performance and the decision making requirements that follow such work.

Sections now follow which cover the key aspects of each of the six plans, which together form the Corporate Plan. For each asset category, there is a context, an aim and a series of specific goals.

4.0 Property

4.1 Context

Property assets are essential to the services delivered by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Managing these assets is a structured process that seeks to ensure best value for money from property assets and improved performance in meeting strategic needs. It is recognised that:

- Managing property assets effectively is a key driver of service transformation.
- Properties are at the centre of the public's perception of local authority.
- The value of property assets and expenditure on construction and running the estate is significant.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar currently has a property portfolio in the region of 240 properties. This is broken down into two distinct types:

Operational properties

Property used to directly support council service delivery.

Non-Operational properties

Properties used to stimulate economic development and provide the Comhairle with a stable revenue income stream and surplus assets for disposal.

The list of Operational Property is shown below.

Operational Property	Number of Properties
Care Unit	3
Community Buildings	3
Day Centres	4
Depots	10
Education Centres (non-school)	4
Library	(others provided within community schools) 1
Miscellaneous Property	2
Museum	1
Nursery	1
Offices	13
Primary School	10
Primary School/Nursery	8
Primary School/Nursery/Child Care	2
Primary/Secondary School	1
Primary/Secondary School/Nursery	5
Public Conveniences	15
Residential Homes	7
Secondary Schools	2
Special Schools	2
Sports Centres	(others provided within community schools) 2
Temporary Supported Accommodation	19
Transportation Waiting Rooms	5

Over the investment period 2008-2013 there has been a significant improvement in the schools property portfolio. This has included the construction of six new schools and significant refurbishment of the Stornoway Primary

School. The property investment programme has assisted with progressing some high priority building fabric issues, however there remains a considerable backlog in repairs and maintenance across the estate.

4.2 Aim

“To make more effective and efficient use of the Comhairle’s property assets”

4.3 Goals

We will ensure property is managed as a corporate resource by:

- Ensuring the framework and responsibility for the management of operational and non-operational property assets is embedded in the Comhairle scheme of administration and operational procedures.
- Ensuring service management planning identifies the property needed to support service delivery and follows the corporate framework for asset management planning.

We will ensure all property investment and disposal decisions are based on thorough option appraisal by:

- Setting out the framework and responsibility for property investment decisions
- Using a business case approach to future investment

We will regularly monitor the performance of property and set out responsibility for securing continuous improvement by:

- Preparing regular property performance reports
- Benchmarking property performance
- Valuing land and buildings in accordance with legislation.

We will ensure that property asset management information is collected, maintained and stored effectively by:

- Having an up to date asset register
- Reviewing the Comhairle’s property related information systems
- Developing a corporate property asset management database.
- Developing a commercial property management system to manage third party tenant leases, rental payments and rent arrears.
- Utilising industry standard data systems such as e-PIMS and ISSYS
- Having current layout and operating plans for all properties.

We will ensure best value in the delivery of property asset management services by:

- Applying the Audit Scotland Best Value Toolkit as the method for measuring and monitoring performance.
- Utilising the “How Good is Our Council” Framework for self-assessment
- Benchmarking service delivery with other authorities

We will ensure that only property that meets the Comhairle’s corporate objectives is retained by:

- Regularly reviewing and challenging property retention.

We will consider the needs of stakeholders by:

- Establishing and participating in local and national stakeholder events
- Regularly consulting with communities through the use of Locality Plans

- Utilising the established Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership

We will ensure our property portfolio is suitable for its current use and supports efficient and effective service delivery both now and in the future by:

- Measuring and reporting the suitability of the property portfolio.
- Measuring and reporting the suitability of the school estate.

We will ensure properties are in an appropriate condition and maintained effectively by:

- Measuring and reporting the condition of the property portfolio.
- Managing property maintenance corporately.
- Ensuring planned maintenance spend is targeted at the areas of greatest need.
- Maximising the amount of revenue planned maintenance.
- Providing a reactive maintenance service to ensure properties remain open and available.
- Providing a regular property inspection regime to identify defects at an early stage.

We will ensure properties are compliant with relevant legislation by:

- Establishing key responsibilities
- Carrying out all necessary statutory servicing and inspections.

We will ensure properties are accessible for people with disabilities by:

- Measuring and reporting the accessibility of the areas of buildings likely to be used by the public.
- Measuring and reporting the accessibility of the school estate.
- Ensuring all new properties and refurbishment of existing property meet acceptable accessibility standards.
- Ensuring that the routine replacement of building fabric and services elements is consistent with good practice.

We will ensure office space is used efficiently by:

- Undertaking utilisation audits and reporting the office space used per person
- Identifying areas of best practice in office area utilisation and considering implementation in the Comhairle estate

We will minimise the number of poorly used properties by:

- Providing visibility of property and space availability internally and externally to the Comhairle
- Challenging service providers
- Measuring and reporting the footfall at properties used by the public

We will meet future demand of an aging population by:

- Reviewing the adequacy of the Residential and Care estate
- Examining the alternative means of procuring care provision

We will ensure that cost and consumption of resources in the operation of our properties is minimised by:

- Measuring and reporting the cost and consumption of resources in the operation of our properties

- Ensuring accurate data management
- Focusing on energy reduction initiatives through the Carbon Management Group

We will ensure that the commercial portfolio continues to generate sufficient revenue and encourage economic development by:

- Ensuring that the commercial portfolio is well managed
- Ensuring that properties are held for a clearly defined purpose and that a regular review in terms of service delivery and investment/financial performance is undertaken.

We will manage surplus property effectively by:

- Preparing for disposal process in advance of vacancy.
- Regularly reporting and monitoring progress through the disposal process

We will ensure efficient procurement and project management of construction projects by:

- Effective monitoring and reporting of construction project performance.
- Developing effective procurement practices that can demonstrate improvements in value for money.
- Carrying out post project reviews

We will minimise the impact to the environment from the construction and operation of our properties by:

- Aiming for BREEAM “Excellent” standard in capital construction projects.
- Including bio-diversity considerations over the lifecycle of a project.

We will ensure the appropriate management of public art and heritage assets owned by or the responsibility of, the Comhairle by:

- Establishing a framework and responsibility for the management of public art and heritage assets owned by, or the responsibility of, the council.
- Developing an accurate register of public art and heritage assets owned by, or the responsibility of, the council.
- Monitoring the performance of public art and heritage assets owned by, or the responsibility of, the council.
- Developing a strategy for improving the condition of public art and heritage assets owned by or the responsibility of, the council.

4.4 2013-18 Investment Requirements

It is unlikely that capital and revenue funding provision will meet backlog maintenance requirements over this period therefore the proposed strategy for property maintenance is to retain a steady state position with regards to condition and suitability. There are however risks of deterioration, or threat to service availability, which must be accounted for.

A detailed condition survey is being undertaken which will more accurately prioritise investment; this is due for completion in March 2013. However a high level review of requirements has been undertaken that indicates that between £2.6M and £3.0M revenue is required to undertake annual repairs and maintenance. Over and above this is a requirement to invest £11M of capital on foreseen risks. These risks have been graded based on likelihood and impact with the highest risks (likely to occur in the five year investment period) amounting to £4M.

5.0 Burial Grounds

5.1 Context

The Comhairle owns maintains and manages eight burial grounds throughout the Outer Hebrides. The Comhairle is not the only provider of this service as there are other community owned and operated burial grounds.

Burial is the traditional practice in the Outer Hebrides. As funeral services utilise churches or community halls, the only buildings associated with burial grounds are small equipment stores. The main asset is therefore the land.

Most of the burial grounds are located in sandy coastal areas, however there are “constructed” grounds, where the local area is of peat or rock terrain. It is extremely important that good records are maintained both from a sensitive nature and also to enable appropriate utilisation of the space available.

Considerable work has recently been undertaken to update record systems and to ensure that income is recovered to meet the maintenance an operational costs of the service.

An asset management plan is being developed which will map out the predicted lifespan of each individual burial ground highlighting the options to deal with capacity and maintenance issues.

5.2 Aim

“To provide a high quality facility and sensitive management service to support communities through bereavement”

5.3 Goals

We will ensure corporate visibility of investment requirements, taking account of aging population profile by:

- Ensuring service requirements are reviewed annually and reported through the asset management framework.
- Ensuring that comprehensive asset management information and data is collected and stored effectively.
- Ensuring all investment decisions are supported by a robust outline business case with fully costed options.
- Ensure strategy and investment decisions are taken at an appropriate corporate level.

We will ensure that service provision is providing best value and is financially robust by:

- Monitoring income and expenditure by site on a quarterly basis
- Considering alternative strategies for delivery of the service where appropriate
- Regularly consulting with appropriate user groups on burial ground issues.

We will ensure that burial grounds are in an appropriate condition and maintained effectively by:

- Ensuring adequate financial provision is collected and used effectively
- Consulting with appropriate user groups.
- Taking account of environmental and bio-diversity considerations

We will ensure compliance with relevant legislation by:

- Monitoring requirements and undertaking regular inspections of sites
- Providing, where practical, access for people with disabilities.

We will consider the reasonable needs of service users and stakeholders by:

- Addressing any reasonable changes or improved needs requirement that is brought to our attention.

5.4 2013-18 Investment Requirements

Over the investment period 2013-18 it is anticipated that there may be a requirement to undertake an extension of the Laxay burial ground.

6.0 Parks, Playgrounds and Open Spaces

6.1 Context

The Comhairle owns and maintains a number of Parks, Playgrounds and Open Spaces. For definition, a Park would be classed as an area out-with school grounds with some form of sports or leisure provision, Playgrounds are areas containing children's play equipment and open spaces are areas that are within Comhairle ownership and maintained for general amenity, community or aesthetic reasons.

Although there are only two areas that would be classed as parks within the Comhairle portfolio, there are many facilities available through school lets or in community ownership.

The Comhairle owns and maintains 34 Playgrounds; however there is a similar number in community ownership and additional facilities provided at schools. Not all playgrounds at schools are currently available for public use. Playground equipment is in general traditional swings, roundabouts and multi-play equipment. Although there has been significant investment in Playgrounds over the years, the equipment is expensive to replace at the end of its useful life and now with a lack of budgetary provision to repair or replace, certain items of equipment are taken out of use.

There are a variety of open spaces ranging from; Perceval Square in Stornoway Town Centre, which is a bookable area available for public performance, markets, etc., to small landscaped areas in traffic islands. These are generally managed through the grounds maintenance contract.

6.2 Aim

“To provide fit for purpose assets that meet the needs of our communities, encouraging lifestyle enhancement, whilst minimising cost and future liability.”

6.3 Goals

We will ensure parks, playgrounds and open spaces are managed as community resources by:

- Establishing a framework and responsibility for the management of parks, playgrounds and open space assets.
- Ensuring all open space decisions are supported by a robust outline business case with fully costed options.
- Ensure strategy and investment decisions are taken at an appropriate corporate level.
- Regularly consulting with members, public and appropriate user groups on current issues and future aspirations.
- Preparing an annual report detailing what improvements have been possible.
- Continuing to develop and maintain an open space asset management database with accurate and up to date information.
- By continuing to maintain and develop our GIS that links to our open space database.

We will maximise opportunities to provide joined up solutions by:

- Regularly consulting with all Planning partners on future changes that may increase or decrease or change the nature of assets
- Developing the principles of a co-location strategy.

- Ensuring best practice is followed in terms of educational, biodiversity and environmental advice and experience.
- Establishing guidelines in the Comhairle's development guide for developers.

We will consider the reasonable needs of stakeholders by:

- Addressing any reasonable changes or improved needs requirement that is brought to our attention and is affordable within available budgets.

We will ensure our assets are suitable for purpose and supports the needs of the users where affordable by:

- Regularly measuring and reporting the suitability of the assets.
- Preparing options for future investment that address educational, suitability and sustainability issues.
- Linking future aspirations that are financially practicable to Service Plans.

We will ensure open space assets are in an appropriate condition and maintained effectively, where affordable by:

- Biannually measuring and reporting the condition of the assets.
- Managing maintenance corporately.
- Ensuring planned maintenance spend is targeted at the areas of greatest need, whilst maintaining the overall portfolio in balance to avoid increased costs at some later date.
- Providing a maintenance service to ensure assets remain available and functional, within budgetary constraints.
- Providing a regular open space inspection regime to identify defects at an early stage.

We will ensure assets are compliant with relevant legislation by:

- Establishing responsibility for specific areas of operation
- Cyclical servicing as required.
- Routine inspections.

We will ensure assets are accessible for people with disabilities by:

- Regularly reviewing and reporting the accessibility of the areas of open space likely to be used by the public.
- Ensuring all new or refurbished open space assets meet current accessibility standards.
- Ensuring that the routine replacement of equipment with specific elements is consistent with good practice (e.g. colour, signs, surfacing access gates etc.)

We will minimise the number of poorly used assets by:

- Annually reviewing the Comhairle portfolio, alongside community assets to assess if any areas could be converted to another function to improve its added value.
- Working at a strategic level with planners and community groups to identify non-strategic spaces or assets that may form part of an asset rationalisation process.

We will increase public participation in managing parks , playgrounds and open space assets through education, special interest groups and environmental enforcement by:

- Engaging with children at school about the benefits of their assets
- Engaging with residents and citizens about the benefits of their assets

- Consulting with all categories of users at one off events and community meetings

6.4 Strategic Direction and Investment Requirements

To enable all playgrounds to remain open and to upgrade parks facilities a capital investment in the order of £1.5M would be required. To continue to provide similar equipment attracts high annual revenue costs. Officers are aware of good practice nationally and internationally where robust, sustainable and educational playgrounds with low maintenance equipment have been provided. A strategy is therefore being developed where the playground portfolio is gradually changed to these new models, encouraging joint working and rationalisation with school and community assets. It is suggested that some pilot projects are established, whilst maintaining a steady state condition over the remaining playgrounds. It should be highlighted that, without adequate funding, some playgrounds may have to be closed.

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7.0 Roads Infrastructure

7.1 Context

The road network is the largest and most visible asset for which the Comhairle is responsible and comprises roads, footpaths, street furniture, lighting, drainage infrastructure and structures such as culverts and bridges.

The whole infrastructure network comprises a number of diverse assets and the principles of asset management are applied to all of these components within the groupings set out in the following table:

Asset Group	Elements
Carriageways	Carriageways, highway drainage, road markings
Footways, Cycleway and Hard verges	Footways, Cycleways (dedicated and shared used), hard paved verges, footway gullies
Lighting	Columns, lamps, cabling, feeder pillars, illuminated signs, subway lights, illuminated bollards
Traffic Signals	Signalised junctions, pedestrian crossings, school crossing lights
Signs, Barriers & Street Furniture	Advance direction signs, direction signs, warning signs, information signs, signposts, street nameplates, non-illuminated bollards, road fences, pedestrian barriers, safety barriers, and other street furniture.
Bridges & Other Structures	Bridges, subways, culverts, retaining walls.
Winter Maintenance	Salt storage areas, gritters and grit bins
Water-related assets	Flood Prevention Schemes, Reservoirs, ponds, swales, detention basins, rivers and watercourses, headwalls and screens, weirs and culverted watercourses including some structures with heritage value.

Being such a highly visible part of the Council's asset portfolio, adequate maintenance is essential in order that the existing infrastructure continues to support the communities throughout the Outer Hebrides.

7.2 Aim

"To provide a road network that will help to generate and promote growth in business, leisure and everyday living within the community."

7.3 Goals

We will ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulations affecting the assets by:

- Continuing to develop our people and their knowledge
- Taking a proactive part in the development of new legislation
- Regularly inspecting our assets and assessing their condition & compliance
- Assessing activities associated with the asset to ensure a high standard of compliance

- Networking and monitoring legislative changes
- Ensuring that necessary repairs are carried out timeously and to a high standard

We will regularly monitor and report on the performance of the assets and set out responsibilities for securing continuous improvement by:

- Reporting established Key Performance Indicators and regularly publishing details of our performance against established targets.
- Continuing to develop our IT infrastructure to handle detailed asset, condition and maintenance history
- Regularly inspecting our assets and surveying their condition
- Regularly reporting to elected members
- Taking a proactive part in National Improvement Programmes

We will ensure comprehensive asset management information to support decision-making is collected, maintained and stored efficiently by:

- Developing our IT infrastructure, data handling detailing asset condition and maintenance history
- Working with other organisations to gather information on asset condition
- Participating in National projects in compiling RAMP documents

We will ensure 'best Value' in the delivery of the service to maintain the assets by:

- Establishing a robust process for investment decisions
- Regularly consulting with elected members and customers on their perceptions of the asset and the service
- Networking with similar organisations through established protocols, exchanging information and taking an active role in benchmarking activities
- Utilising Audit Scotland Best Value Toolkits.
- Utilising self assessment tools such as How Good is our Council
- Monitoring and controlling the costs associated with maintenance
- Taking an active part in benchmarking with others
- Utilising appropriate procurement frameworks and contracts.
- Procuring services and materials in accord with Standing Orders
- Seeking greater innovation.
- Improving organisational flexibility Helping our teams to adapt more easily to change

We will meet the demand of a changing climate by:

- Reducing our usage of raw materials by reuse and recycling
- Encouraging the use of less damaging products, materials and techniques.
- Working, in a joined-up way with a wide range of other organisations from the public, private, charitable and voluntary sectors
- Keeping inspection routines under review

7.4 Strategic Direction and Investment Requirements

Independent scanner results indicate a backlog maintenance cost of £42M and a steady state figure of £3.8M p.a. for the Western Isles Roads network.

Further work is required on bridge inspection and assessment to enable an accurate investment strategy to be developed, however it is suggested that provision of £1M is made in the 2013-18 investment programme to enable this development and as a risk allocation for structural remedial works or repairs.

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8.0 Marine Infrastructure

8.1 Context

Marine infrastructure is critical to the economy, culture and transport links of the Outer Hebrides. The Comhairle owns and maintains 41 piers and harbours, five of which are used as transportation links with vehicular ferry facilities.

The piers and harbours infrastructure comprises a number of diverse assets and the principles of asset management are applied to all of these components within the groupings set out in the following table:

Asset Group	Description
Harbour	Surrounding land and sea channels, including navigational aids (Markers and Buoys).
Pier	Fixed Landing structures. May include fixed link vehicle ramps.
Pontoon	Floating landing structures
Slipway	Launching/landing structures
Crane	Mechanical loading facilities
Services	Water, power
Facilities	WC, Showers, waiting rooms, stores, waste oil reception, camper-van waste reception.
Fuel	Self-help marine fuel tanks and pumps.
Ice	Ice making facilities

Being such a critical element of the Comhairle's asset portfolio, adequate maintenance is essential in order that the existing infrastructure continues to support the economy of the Outer Hebrides.

8.2 Aim

“To provide a marine infrastructure that will help to generate and promote growth in business, leisure and everyday living within the community.”

8.3 Goals

We will ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulations affecting the assets by:

- Continuing to develop our people and their knowledge
- Taking a proactive part in the development of new legislation
- Regularly inspecting our assets and assessing their condition & compliance
- Assessing activities associated with the asset to ensure a high standard of compliance
- Networking and monitoring legislative changes
- Ensuring that necessary repairs are carried out timeously and to a high standard

We will regularly monitor and report on the performance of the assets and set out responsibilities

for securing continuous improvement by:

- Developing Key Performance Indicators and regularly publishing details of our performance.
- Regularly reporting to elected members
- Developing and implementing affordable planned maintenance schedules

We will ensure comprehensive asset management information to support decision-making is collected, maintained and stored efficiently by:

- Developing our IT infrastructure, data handling detailing asset condition and maintenance history
- Regularly inspecting our assets and surveying their condition

We will ensure 'best Value' in the delivery of the service to maintain the assets by:

- Establishing a robust process for investment decisions
- Regularly consulting with elected members and customers on their perceptions of the asset and the service
- Networking with similar organisations and key partners through established protocols, exchanging information and taking an active role in benchmarking activities
- Utilising Audit Scotland Best Value Toolkits.
- Utilising self assessment tools such as How Good is our Council
- Monitoring and controlling the costs associated with maintenance
- Utilising appropriate procurement frameworks and contracts.
- Procuring services and materials in accord with Standing Orders
- Seeking greater innovation.
- Improving organisational flexibility Helping our teams to adapt more easily to change

We will meet the demand of a changing climate by:

- Reducing our usage of raw materials by reuse and recycling
- Encouraging the use of less damaging products, materials and techniques.
- Working, in a joined-up way with a wide range of other organisations from the public, private, charitable and voluntary sectors
- Keeping inspection routines under review

8.4 Strategic Direction and Investment Requirements

Income is received from pier dues and rental which assists with the operation and maintenance of the piers and harbours. The assets are however in a particularly corrosive and damaging environment and income streams are vulnerable due to economic variables in fishing and tourism.

Conditions assessments have indicated some areas for concern over the next five years for which the risk of capital intervention must be considered. These are:

Location	Description	Cost £K
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Sounds of Harris & Barra	Fender Replacement	250
Various	Navigational Aids	100
Lochmaddy	Linkspan	250
Brevig	Dredging	tbc
Crossbost	Undermining	tbc
Skigersta	Cracking in structure	tbc
Breascleite	Structural repairs	tbc
Scalpay	Redundant structures becoming unsafe	tbc
Eriskay (Acarsaid) Pier	Reaching end of useful life (Consider options)	tbc
Ardveenish	Fender Replacement	tbc

The total capital risk for the portfolio could easily stretch into millions. Legislative requirements could also place a heavy burden on the Comhairle.

Further work is required on the future strategy which will require consultation with the key industry partners in ensuring that the infrastructure is fit for purpose and sustainable for the future.

9.0 Waste Management and Disposal

9.1 Context

Waste Management is in some ways a very visible service in terms of being on everyone's doorstep, however what happens thereafter is rarely thought about by the general public. The disposal of waste is a highly regulated industry with increasing levels of taxation. The Outer Hebrides have some specific challenges in collection, disposal and recycling due to geography and logistics.

The assets required are specific for purpose and have therefore been considered as an asset group on its own. The assets range from engineered landfill cells to complex mechanical and biological process plants.

There are several recycling centres and transfer stations throughout the Outer Hebrides, however all of the waste is ultimately transferred to Lewis for landfill, processing or recycling.

A new landfill cell was commissioned in 2012 and there is a central recycling facility capable of processing organics and separating plastics, glass, metals and paper. The glass can be crushed and used as decorative ground covering or aggregate supplement. Plastics, metals and paper are baled and transported to mainland centres where there are suitable outlets.

9.2 Aim

"To manage waste in the Western Isles in a manner that is efficient and sustainable, whilst being sensitive to environmental and biodiversity considerations in the Outer Hebrides"

9.3 Goals

We will maximise community and business participation in waste management by:

- Consultation with public and businesses on requirements and acceptable options.
- Ensuring waste recycling targets and taxation implications, along with current performance is communicated to businesses and public alike.
- Providing adequate facilities to enable efficient separation, storage and collection.

We will ensure all investment and operational decisions are based on thorough option appraisal by:

- Setting out the framework and responsibility for investment decisions relating to the Area Waste Plan and Strategy
- Using a business case approach to future investment
- Ensuring that technical and operational requirements are clearly understood by decision makers

We will regularly monitor the waste operations and set out responsibility for securing continuous improvement by:

- Preparing regular property performance reports

- Benchmarking waste management performance

We will ensure best value in the delivery of waste management services by:

- Applying the Audit Scotland Best Value Toolkit as the method for measuring and monitoring performance.
- Utilising the “How Good is Our Council” Framework for self-assessment
- Benchmarking service delivery with other authorities

We will consider the needs of stakeholders by:

- Establishing and participating in local and national stakeholder events
- Regularly consulting with communities
- Utilising the established Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership

We will ensure assets are in an appropriate condition and maintained effectively by:

- Measuring and reporting the condition of the assets
- Ensuring planned maintenance schedules are in place and undertaken
- Providing a regular asset inspection regime to identify defects at an early stage.

We will ensure compliance with relevant legislation by:

- Establishing key responsibilities
- Participating in industry network groups and Government consultations
- Carrying out all necessary statutory servicing and inspections.

We will ensure that cost and consumption of resources in the operation of our properties is minimised by:

- Measuring and reporting the cost and consumption of resources in the operation of our properties
- Ensuring accurate data management
- Focusing on energy reduction initiatives through the Carbon Management Group
- Considering renewable and energy from waste initiatives

We will minimise the impact to the environment from the construction and operation of our operations by:

- Aiming for BREEAM excellent standard in capital construction projects.
- Including bio-diversity considerations over the lifecycle of a project.
- Maintaining and regulating the treatment processes and effluent streams from our sites.

9.4 Strategic Direction and Investment Requirements

There has been significant investment over the past ten years in property, plant and infrastructure. It is likely that this investment will be sufficient to deal with demands for the next five years; however the very nature of the plant requires a certain contingency to cover replacement and failure.

Although a new landfill cell has been commissioned in 2012, an additional cell will require to be in operation by 2019/20, therefore a capital allocation for the planning and design of this cell will be required in the 2013-2018 investment plan. There is also the requirement to undertake the capping of the old/full landfill cells and in managing leachate and gas emissions from these sites.

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10.0 Vehicles and Plant

10.1 Context

The Comhairle has a fleet of vehicles and plant that support in the delivery of services. They include:

- 88 vehicles over 3,500kg
- 18 buses
- 16 car derived vans up to 3,500kg
- 2 Zero Emission Vehicles ZEV
- Various plant items

Plant items and fleet stock currently has a replacement value of £15M.

The Comhairle provides fleet maintenance services for all its fleet, with garages and reactive breakdown services run from Stornoway, Tarbert and Benbecula.

10.2 Aims

“To provide an efficient and effective Fleet Management and Vehicle Maintenance Service to support service delivery”

10.3 Goals

We will ensure Comhairle Services have the appropriate vehicles to carry out their responsibilities and duties by:

- Advising Service Users on economic maintenance and replacement periods for vehicles.
- Holding regular meetings with Service users
- Offering 24 hour workshop facilities

We will ensure vehicles are maintained to VOSA (Vehicle Operator Services Agency) standard by:

- Regular safety inspections (currently every 13 weeks for vehicles under 3500kg and 6 weeks for vehicles over 3500kg as defined by the terms and conditions applicable to our Operators Licence OM)
- Ensuring vehicles are fit for purpose and kept roadworthy and comply with C&U regulations.
- Providing in-house Class IV, V & VII MOT facility by VOSA trained mechanics.
- Subjecting vehicles to spot checks and roadside checks by VOSA.
- Using approved and calibrated inspection equipment.

We will ensure Fleet Asset Management information and data is collected and stored effectively by:

- Ensuring asset register is updated as and when new vehicles arrive and are disposed of.
- Updating of individual files and service records.
- Ensuring fuel providers provide electronic consumption data by vehicle registration number.

We will demonstrate Best Value by:

- Benchmarking with other authorities.
- Benchmarking with Private Sector.
- Self-evaluation using “How Good is Our Council” format.

We will consider the needs of Stakeholders by:

- Holding regular meetings with service users.
- Advising on legislation and new technology.
- Arranging vehicle demonstrations or inspections.

We will ensure vehicles are environmentally friendly by:

- Using the latest engine technology available to comply with emissions standards.
- Electronically limiting vehicles to 60 M.P.H to reduce both emissions and fuel consumption by up to 10%.
- Promoting and organising driver training courses.
- Carrying out a Green Fleet review with assistance from the Energy Savings Trust
- Evaluating alternative fuels.
- Trialling LEV and ZEV vehicles

10.4 Strategic Direction and Investment Requirements

Vehicle replacement is funded through Departmental Prudential Borrowing. Capital investment is required to keep up to date with vehicle diagnostic equipment and replacement garage equipment.

There may be an opportunity to provide an additional VOSA inspection lane which is currently being investigated. This would require additional investment, however would also provide an additional income stream.

11.0 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

11.1 Context

Within the Comhairle, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is managed on a corporate level within the Finance and Corporate Resources Department. However, due to differing service requirements, ICT in schools is managed from within the Education and Children's Services Department. The ICT Asset Management Plan for the Comhairle will therefore be compiled from the service requirements of both.

The assets owned and maintained by the Comhairle include;

- Data centre facilities (Data Rooms, Server Racks, Air Conditioning, UPS)
- Communication Lines and network equipment (including Cabling, Switches, hubs etc.)
- Servers (Applications, storage etc.)
- PCs, Laptops, Handheld devices, printers, scanners etc.
- Software Licences – Application e.g. MS Office, etc.
- Specialist Software and interfaces
- Video conferencing facilities
- Digital TV networks and screens
- Interactive smartboards
- Telephony equipment
- Mobile phones and android devices
- Data and Information

In general service departments will purchase hardware and software dependent on service needs with the assistance of the IT and Procurement specialists. Equipment is serviced by IT technicians or through specialist contracts.

11.2 Aim

“To make effective, efficient, economical and ethical use of the Comhairle’s ICT assets in support of its strategies, plans and service delivery.”

11.3 Goals

We will ensure effective and efficient identification, management and operation of iCT Assets by:

- Ensuring that comprehensive asset management information is collected, maintained, readily available and stored efficiently;
- Ensuring efficient and consistent information relating to roadmaps, lifecycles and replacement plans;
- Ensuring detailed information is maintained in relation to contractual obligations, leasing, warranties and software
- Ensure asset management information is in line with all other council processes and procedures e.g. financial planning, service planning and project management.

- Ensure asset management procedures inform, prioritise and direct ICT operations management.

We will ensure the effective planning, procurement and deployment of ICT Assets solutions by:

- Informing ICT Capital and Revenue budget planning, ICT service and workload planning.
- Managing the deployment of ICT assets
- Identifying the optimum point for system upgrades, minimising operational impact whilst ensuring efficient delivery using appropriate deployment tools
- Minimising costs via efficient processes, partnership approaches and economies of scale
- Assessing affordability and determining priorities
- Centralisation purchasing and supply contracts for hardware and standard software
- Ensuring an option appraisal framework is in place to clearly demonstrate benefit, best value and total cost of ownership
- Ensuring compliance with all other council strategies including the Technical Strategy, Security, e-procurement, legal and framework agreements for hardware and software
- Ensuring a corporate approach to the exploitation of shared service/ infrastructure/ hardware/ systems opportunities
- Ensuring all new hardware and software are thoroughly tested to ensure technical and operational compliance

We will ensure that assets are suitable, operational, accessible and maintained to required standards by:

- Challenging the need for ownership/retention of under-performing assets
- Considering a corporate approach to ownership in a shared infrastructure
- Minimising operational overheads and annual running costs
- Co-ordination of assets, management and budgets
- Ensuring effective capacity planning is undertaken
- Ensuring regular monitoring and report on the performance of ICT assets
- The identification of redundant hardware and software
- Ensuring backup/recovery of systems
- Ensuring disaster recovery of critical systems
- Maximising interoperability opportunities between hardware, applications, systems and networks
- Ensuring appropriate ICT and information security (Availability, Integrity and Confidentiality)
- Ensuring compliance with Network Management, Audit and security IT systems.

We will ensure that new assets are sustainable and affordable for the whole life of the asset by:

- The identification of operational sustainability systems including storage, space and cooling;
- Ensuring all new hardware is energy efficiency in line with Government and Comhairle targets
- Extending as much practical life out of assets as possible
- Working closely with hardware vendors to ensure maximum benefits are realised and support contracts are in place and fully documented
- Developing roadmaps and replacement plans for all ICT assets integrating opportunities for consolidation and the application of new, budget saving technologies
- Ensuring operational efficiency with all other assets i.e. hardware, software, applications and networks

We will ensure the effective retiral and disposal of ICT assets complying with legislative and operational requirements by:

- Complying with the EC Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)
- Ensuring an Information Storage, Retention and Archive framework fulfils the statutory obligation of the council in relation to Freedom of Information etc.
- Ensuring replacement plans for hardware, systems and networks are in place
- Ensuring the efficient and safe removal of electronic data

10.4 Strategic Direction and Investment Requirements

Schools ICT is directly linked to curriculum requirements which will influence strategy and investment requirements. There is a Schools ICT Policy in place (currently being updated) that sets out the current position and future strategy for ICT provision. There is also an inventory of networked and mobile devices which is progressively being updated and improved upon. There is a target ICT infrastructure/device replacement programme based on Government provision guidelines and funding requirements. The current practice is to maintain and maximise the life of the asset (average 4 years for user devices) and for at least the warranty period (min 3 years) of the respective device.

The Schools ICT projected Capital Requirement for 2013/14 is £521K with recurring annual revenue costs of £323K.

There is a Corporate ICT Policy in place that sets out the current position and future strategy for ICT provision. There is also a corporate inventory of networked devices which is progressively being updated and improved upon. Individual Service Departments are, however, responsible for maintaining inventories of mobile devices and retain budgetary responsibility for provision and replacement of equipment. There is no set replacement programme based on specification and the current practice is to maintain and maximise the life of the asset.

There are projects such as server and PC virtualisation being considered as efficiency initiatives. These could be considered under capital investment or prudential borrowing funding streams.

12.0 Renewable Energy

12.1 Context

The Comhairle leadership is actively promoting and encouraging the development of large scale renewable development throughout the Outer Hebrides and there are a number of well advance proposals awaiting confirmation of the provision of connecting cable provision. There are also proposals for wave energy pilots to be constructed by developers.

The Comhairle has installed a number of first generation wind turbines at some sites with varying degrees of success. A hydrogen generation plant has also been commissioned, however the vehicle technology to utilise such a fuel is in early development and not practical to be a viable option for the Comhairle or partner agencies to run.

Properties are being reviewed for the suitability of advancing technologies such as PV panels and wind turbines in order to reduce costs and the Comhairle's carbon footprint.

12.2 Aim

"To promote the Outer Hebrides as a leading example of energy efficiency and green energy production."

12.3 Goals

We will reduce the carbon footprint of the Outer Hebrides by:

- Participation in the ISLEPACT programme;
- Working with the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership
- Promoting energy efficiency initiatives with local business forums.

We will reduce the carbon footprint of the Comhairle by:

- Monitoring progress on energy efficiency initiatives through the Carbon Management Plan;
- Ensuring Departmental focus and participation in initiatives through the Carbon Management Group;

We will promote the Outer Hebrides as a Green Zone by:

- Leading by example
- Facilitating development in renewables
- Active involvement in infrastructure enhancement discussions

We will ensure that new assets are sustainable and energy efficient by:

- Ensuring all projects are considered in terms of whole life cost;
- Consideration of carbon, biodiversity and environmental impacts of all projects at conception and design phases
- Specifying BREEAM excellent standards
- Working closely with agencies such as the Carbon Trust in reviewing emerging technologies.

12.4 Strategic Direction and Investment Requirements

The Comhairle has the desire to explore all means of progressing the development of renewable technology throughout the Outer Hebrides and although it will look to develop in a manner that will provide a return on any investment, capital funding will be required to either establish fixed assets or run pilot schemes.

Partners will also be sought to enable development of renewables on the Comhairle's assets.

13.0 Joint Working

Working with our public sector partners, the voluntary sector and local businesses in terms of sharing premises and, in some cases, service provision is a key element of the future strategy. There are already good examples of joint working with the Northern Constabulary in sharing office accommodation. With ever increasing demand on efficiency and effectiveness in both public and private sectors there is a requirement for joint forward planning at an early stage.

The Comhairle has been participating with the Scottish Futures Trust's (SFT) diagnostic review of the North Territory. The draft output Report has highlighted certain areas for consideration by participating members, however it has been recommended that the Outer Hebrides and other island groups consider hosting a localised diagnostic review workshop. This would include all interested parties coming together to discuss property requirements and strategic plans. The outputs of the North Territory review could be used as a starting point for discussion, however alternative and localised specific initiatives could emerge as being of more value or greater priority.

An Outer Hebrides Property Review is therefore being organised for early in 2013 with the intention that prioritised work-streams will emerge together with the establishment of a central coordinating group. Potential work-streams/objectives could include:

- Stornoway Place-Based Review
- Balivanich Place-Based Review
- CnES Office Optimisation Review
- Outer Hebrides Property Management Forum

Core property data availability and visibility are fundamental aspects of property management and joint working. The SFT is managing the digital mapping system of property information (e-PIMS), which will provide partner organisations with base information on all properties within a certain locality. The Improvement Service is also rolling out an electronic system to public authorities which is more of a management system for property assets (ISSYS). Both will enhance the ability of partner agencies to share information.

14.0 Capital Investment Strategy and Asset Management

The corporate asset management plan sets out the Comhairle's aims and objectives for our assets to ensure that they are used in an effective and efficient manner. This section deals with the links between asset management planning and capital investment strategy.

14.1 Corporate Approach

The Prudential Code placed a formal requirement on local authorities to take account of asset management planning and option appraisal when agreeing capital investment proposals. Outputs of the asset management plans should therefore be used to assist in preparing ten year capital investment options, as well as options for areas not directly linked to Comhairle assets, such as town centre improvements. It is however recognised that there are internal and external influences which can have significant effects on capital planning and it is therefore important that processes are dynamic and that the asset management plans are regularly reviewed.

14.2 Business Cases to support Capital investment

For the 2008-13 Capital Programme, Outline Project Briefs were prepared and scored against set criteria. This resulted in a capital programme, prioritised and delivered based on funding availability. Projects were thereafter developed to a detailed stage prior to achieving formal approval to proceed through the submission of a Project Initiation Document (PID) to the Policy and Resources Committee and relevant Service Committees.

For the 2013-2018 investment period, a revised capital planning and option appraisal framework to support and inform future capital investment decisions is being developed through the Investment Group. The framework will ensure that the outputs of the asset management plan be used to prepare options for capital investment, and will consist of a gateway process to ensure corporate consistency. The Comhairle is mindful of the significant reduction in both revenue and capital funding for this period, against the picture of significant maintenance backlogs in asset portfolios, and the requirement to deliver on key strategic objectives.

The developing framework will therefore require the preparation of a detailed business case, the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC), for all bids for capital investment for the five year period 2013-18. Each SOBC should contain the following information on the proposed investment area:

- Strategic Context for investment;
- Investment options for consideration, including a do nothing option;
- Financial information for each option containing both capital cost and revenue implications;
- Supporting information for each option e.g. impact on asset and/or service delivery;
- Impact on outcome agreement targets.

A key improvement from previous capital planning processes is that each SOBC will contain a range of options, which allows a far greater degree of flexibility in decision making, as there are various costed solutions that achieve the investment objectives.

14.3 Option Appraisal and prioritisation process

In the course of developing this process alongside asset management planning, it should be recognised that there will be an essential core level of investment required to meet statutory needs and backlog/lifecycle investment requirements in the Comhairle's current asset infrastructure. Taking this into account, it is important to agree a process to assist in the prioritisation of capital investment. It is recognised that the process should be an aid to decision making for officers and Members, rather than as a definitive method of arriving at investment decisions. In summary, the stages of the process are as follows:

- Identify essential core statutory investment;
- Identify essential core backlog/lifecycle investment;

- Assess and prioritise remaining options for statutory, backlog and lifecycle investment and new capital projects;
- Consider capital investment priorities based on these information factors.

14.4 2013-18 Capital Programme

The production of the capital investment strategy for 2013-18 will involve:

- Quantifying available resources;
- Identifying essential core statutory investment;
- Noting existing approved capital commitments;
- Prioritising investment for the remaining resources.

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