

Agenda for Asset Management Forum

Thursday 1 September 2016, 9.30am



Venue: Committee Room, Knowle, Sidmouth, EX10 8HL

[View directions](#)

Contact: [Chris Lane](#), 01395 517544 (or group Number 01395 517546): Issued 24 August 2016

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- 1 [Public speaking](#)
- 2 Notes for 7 April 2016 (pages 3-5)
- 3 Apologies
- 4 [Declarations of interest](#)
- 5 [Matters of urgency](#) – none identified
- 6 Confidential/exempt items – there are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

Part A Matters for Decision

- 7 **Data – Asset Register & Land Record Management SWAP** – Documents attached
- 8 **Asset Devolution Programme** – update on progress
- 9 **Sports & Activity Club Rent Support Grant Scheme** – update on progress
- 10 **Workspace provision on Council owned land** – update on progress
- 11 **Statutory Compliance**

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[Decision making and equalities](#)

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of a Meeting of the Asset Management Forum held at Knowle,
Sidmouth on Thursday, 7 April 2016

Present: Councillors:
Geoff Pook
Philip Skinner
Andrew Moulding
Paul Diviani

Officers:
Donna Best
Richard Cohen
Chris Lane

Also present: Councillors:
Megan Armstrong
Alan Dent
John Dyson
Geoff Jung
Rob Longhurst
Marianne Rixson
Pauline Stott
Tom Wright

Apologies: Matthew Booth
David Chapman
Iain Chubb
Laurelie Gifford
Ian Thomas
Su Percival
Simon Davey

The meeting started at 9.30am and finished at 11.00am.

1 Notes

Members noted the report of the meeting held on 10 March 2016.

2 Rent support Grant scheme – launch details

Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor, provided details of a draft Cabinet report the purpose of which was to provide an update on progress to deliver the recommendations of Cabinet made on 17 June 2015 to the effect that EDDC was ready to launch the new rent support scheme and were advising members of the detail.

During discussion of the timeline for the roll out of the scheme, members of the Forum were keen to see a letter sent to all tenants and ward members affected before details appeared in the local press.

Members also discussed the para 3.1 of the report which included the words – “I understand that the canvassing of EDDC Elected Members and/or Officers to further this application will lead to automatic disqualification”. It was considered that the report should explain that Sports Clubs be advised that they could contact their

Ward Member for advice and information, but should not lobby Ward Members or Officers in respect of any applications.

- RESOLVED**
1. that all affected tenants and their ward members be sent a letter informing them of the implications of the report to Cabinet on the rent support scheme before the meeting of Cabinet on 11 May 2016;
 2. that Sports Clubs be advised that they could contact their Ward Member for advice and information on the rent support grant scheme, but should not lobby Ward Members or Officers in respect of any applications.

(Councillor Tom Wright declared an interest in this item as a member of Budleigh Salterton FC)

- 3 Data Management – Update on Strata project
Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor, reported that the Finance Service was making good progress on their project to try and allocate non specific costs to property records and had finished years 2013/14 and 2014/15 and were working on 2015/16. Until this part of the project was completed the project could not be progressed further.

- RESOLVED** that Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor, be requested to contact both Strata and the Finance Service and inform them of the urgency of the project and that the Forum expected the Data Management project to be completed by August 2016.

- 4 Asset Devolution
Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor, provided details of a draft Cabinet report the purpose of which was to provide an update on the delivery of the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan and gain member approval to the Asset Management Forum's proposals for a new focus on the Council's property portfolio and associated service delivery. This included proposals for asset devolution.

During discussions the following points were noted:

- Members acknowledged the need to be sensitive to the budgeting process of its partners in the asset devolution process, particularly town/ parish councils;
- The contents of the report could provide significant additional work for the Forum;
- Acknowledgment that some services could be provided cheaper locally;
- The proposals for asset devolution needed to be managed sensitively and a PR strategy was important;
- There was considerable amounts of land controlled by the Housing Service that were not used for housing and incurred maintenance costs;
- There was the issue of property owned by DCC, and should DCC be approached to become part of a wider devolution project.

- RESOLVED** 1. that Donna Best, Principal Estate Surveyor, send a link to the Asset Register to all members attending the Forum, [Find out if we own a particular piece of land](#);

2. that the report to Cabinet as presented, including the recommendations be agreed in principle, subject to the financial and legal implications being completed by the Finance and Legal Service and the updates made at the meeting.

5 Green Space Strategy

Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor reported on the draft Green Space Strategy. She confirmed that the playing pitches would be part of this Strategy, along with open space, play areas, beaches and nature reserves and which was looking at new ways of managing the Council's Green Space. Opportunities to increase income or decrease costs would also be considered. Charlie Plowden, leading officer for this project was unable to attend the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Green Space Strategy be considered at a future meeting of the Forum, including a presentation by Charlie Plowden, Service Lead - Countryside and Leisure.

6 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Asset Management Forum would be held on **Tuesday 14 June 2016** at 9.30am in the Council Chamber, Knowle, Sidmouth.

East Devon District Council

▶ Asset Register & Land Record Management

Issued to: Simon Davey
Strategic Lead - Finance

Donna Best
Principal Estates Surveyor

Gerry Cox
Chief Executive

Working in partnership with



Date of Report: 1st August 2016

Issued by: Moya Moore
Assistant Director

David Hodgson
Senior Auditor

Kristian Hawkes
Lead Auditor

Asset Register & Land Record Management

Management Summary

As part of the 2015/16 audit plan a review has been undertaken to assess the adequacy of the controls and procedures in place for the Asset Register and Land Record Management at East Devon District Council (EDDC).

The Council currently manage and own a portfolio of land and property assets which include;

- Corporate Buildings
- Public Halls, Pavilions and Cinemas
- Sports centres
- Car Parks
- Parks and Pleasure Grounds
- Housing Stock

Assets are managed through an existing Asset Management Plan (AMP) adopted by the Council, though Housing stock is subject to its own Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

The Council also use an Asset Management forum (AMF), which has an agreed terms of reference (TOR). Roles and responsibilities of the forum are documented within the existing Asset Management Plan 2014-17. Overall the forum notes in the AMP as being 'key to ensuring there is an effective dialogue on asset management issues across the Council and with our partners'.

The Council currently use a system called Uniform as their asset register. However there are a range of assets which are recorded on other Council systems/databases including Housing and assets managed by StreetScene. None of these other systems used to record Council assets currently have a direct interface with Uniform.

The Strategic Lead-Finance has expressed a keenness in using a single system to record all land and property assets in future, and intends to work with the Principal Estates Surveyor in issuing a paper to SMT to look into this in more detail and map out where all the Council's assets are currently documented.

Summary of Significant Findings

The following were identified as key findings for the service and therefore categorised, in accordance with the definitions attached, as a level '4' or '5' priority in the action plan.

- Use of Uniform as a Corporate Asset System.

Further details of audits' findings can be viewed in the full audit report, which follows this Management Summary.

Conclusion and Audit Opinion



I am able to offer partial assurance in relation to the areas reviewed and the controls found to be in place. Some key risks are not well managed and systems require the introduction or improvement of internal controls to ensure the achievement of objectives.

A significant part of this audit was devoted to the mapping the various asset registers and creating the document attached as Appendix A, intended to assist the Strategic Lead – Finance in his discussion with the Strategic Leadership Team over the suitability of implementing a centralised asset register system, possibly using Uniform (an existing system).

In order to compile Appendix A, a number of observations were made regarding existing arrangements at the Council to record and manage assets. It's these observations that have resulted in partial assurance, based on the following issues:

- Responsibility for overseeing improvements to asset management records is not well defined. Although many issues with existing arrangements are known about corporately, coordination and implementation of improvements has slipped as a result of undefined accountabilities in relation to this.
- Access to the various asset records does not appear to be well controlled, which may result in commercially sensitive information being insecure.
- The variety of asset records and registers in place increases the risk of:
 - Data conflicts, if assets are recorded across a number of systems
 - A lack of consistency over the information recorded about assets.
 - Inefficient working practices (for example to collate information manually across a number of systems for reporting purposes).

Objectives & Risks

The key objective of the service and risks that could impact on the achievement of this objective were discussed and are identified below.

Objective: There is a centrally maintained system that holds relevant details of the Authority's Assets and Land Records which can be easily retrieved and provide information for targeted distribution.

Risks:

1. The Authority is not aware of all assets/land owned.
2. Land or assets owned by the Authority cause injury or harm to a member of staff or member of the public due to insufficient inspection, record management and actioning of work.

Method & Scope

This audit has been undertaken using an agreed risk based audit. This means that:

- the objectives and risks are discussed and agreed with management at the outset of the audit;
- the controls established to manage risks are discussed with key staff and relevant documentation reviewed;
- these controls are evaluated to assess whether they are proportionate to the risks and evidence sought to confirm controls are operating effectively;
- at the end of the audit, findings are discussed at a close-out meeting with the main contact and suggestions for improvement are agreed.

The following paragraphs detail all findings that warrant the attention of management.

The findings are all grouped under the objective and risk that they relate.

1. Risk: The Authority is not aware of all assets/land owned.

1.1 Use of a Centralised Asset System

At present there are a number of standalone systems which record Council assets. Although the Strategic Lead – Finance has expressed his intention to take a paper to SMT to discuss the possibility of having a centralised asset register, the appetite of this approach among managers had yet to be tested at the time of the audit.

During the audit a number of issues were identified as follows, which support the need for a centralised approach:

- Without an interface between the many systems in use at the Council there may be inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the data and a lack of certainty over the most up to date information. There is currently no automated integration of reconciliation between the Uniform system and the Legal and Finance systems for example.
- There is no criteria to stipulate what assets should be included in the asset registers (for example type or value of asset).
- Regarding valuation, there is no interface between the capital accounting system and the other systems, meaning changes made to assets, which may affect their value, are not communicated directly to the Accountancy Team.
- Without an integrated, shared system there is a risk of duplication of effort, and time consuming preparation of reports where information has to be manually collated from a number of sources. Uniform is capable of producing report templates to display virtually any information it stores, which could be of use to all relevant services; depicted in Appendix A.
- The Principal Estates Surveyor believes EDDC could be maintaining assets that is no longer owned by EDDC because of a lack of interface between different systems. We understand that the Strategic Lead-Housing is currently looking at reducing the amount of cost/time spent maintaining land that is Devon County Council's jurisdiction.

As part of this review, we liaised with the Principal Estates Surveyor to create a diagram highlighting current processes and potential opportunities which should be considered for further review (See appendix A).

1.1a The Strategic Lead-Finance will seek agreement from the Senior Management Team to commit to the use of a central asset register.

The Uniform system is already in place at the Council and is therefore the most likely system to be adopted as a central asset register, should the Council decide to implement it as such.

However, at the time of the audit, there was a lack of certainty over the suitability of the system to meet the needs of the Council and a full review of the following functionalities against the Council's requirements had yet to be carried out:

- Records of Decisions - potential use of workflows
- Liaison and information channels between services
- Formal templates and documents to be used between services to capture movement/changes to assets/land
- Reconciliation of systems/registers
- Document management, including:
 - Scanned documents
 - referencing/indexing of documents to asset reference numbers
 - document retention
- Audit trail in system
- Correspondence records
- Retention of documents/data
- Reporting

1.1b The Strategic Lead – Finance will seek agreement from the Senior Management Team for an assessment to be completed over the suitability of the Uniform system as a centralised asset register.

1.2 Asset Management - Senior Management responsibility

In discussions with the Strategic Lead-Finance and with the Principal Estates Surveyor there are a number of improvements that need to be made across the Council to ensure assets are being recorded accurately, effectively and timely and to make better usage of the Uniform System as a central asset record.

However, it was evident in this review, that while some issues are already known about, there is no senior officer with overall responsibility for managing the asset management system including the required changes needed to improve usage of the system.

There is a risk that limited actions are undertaken to improve the usage of the Uniform system as a result of lack of responsibility and ownership at a senior level.

1.2a The Strategic Lead-Finance will seek agreement from the Senior Management team on whether responsibility for overseeing and managing the asset management system (or systems) is assigned at a Senior Officer level.

2. Risk: Land or assets owned by the Authority cause injury or harm to a member of staff or member of the public due to insufficient inspection, record management and actioning of work.

2.1 System Access

In discussions with the Senior Systems Analyst-Strata, user rights are controlled by individual managers who are responsible for setting individual user access on Uniform. According to the Senior Systems Analyst there is some oversight from the Planning Practice Manager who is considered to be the 'main customer owner' of the system.

There is a list of roles/profiles recorded on the Uniform system and these include officers with 'Global Access' to the Uniform system. On review of the different levels of access provided to staff, we are able to conclude that there appears to be a reasonable and logical breakdown of roles/tasks for the majority of service areas and appropriate segregation; i.e. Use of read only, administrator, and supervisor access. However, at the time of this audit we found limited information available to provide a comprehensive breakdown/explanation of access rights which were available against each user profile recorded on Uniform.

Until access rights are more tightly controlled, there is a risk that data held on the system (which may be commercially sensitive) is not secure including compliance records.

2.1a The Strategic Lead-Finance will seek agreement from the Senior Management Team for a full and detailed review of access rights to be completed and the user profiles updated appropriately for all systems holding asset data.

The Final Action Plan provides a formal record of points arising from this audit and, where appropriate, the action management has agreed to take and the timescale in which the action will be completed. All findings have been given a priority rating between 1 and 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high.

It is these findings that have formed the opinion of the service's control environment that has been reported in the Management Summary.

Finding	Recommendation	Priority Rating	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
<p>Objective: There is a centrally maintained system that holds relevant details of the Authority's Assets and Land Records which can be easily retrieved and provide information for targeted distribution</p>					
<p>1. The Authority is not aware of all assets/land owned.</p>					
<p>1.1a Corporate appetite of a central asset register has not been tested.</p>	<p>I recommend that the Strategic Lead-Finance seeks agreement from the Senior Management Team to commit to the use of central asset register.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>SWAP Ref: 32729</small></p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Agreed. This report and action plan will be included on the forthcoming SMT agenda.</p>	<p>Strategic Lead-Finance</p>	<p>10th August 2016</p>
<p>1.1b Lack of certainty over the suitability of Uniform as a central asset system.</p>	<p>I recommend that the Strategic Lead – Finance seeks agreement from the Senior Management Team that an assessment is completed over the suitability of the uniform system to meet the needs of the Council as a centralised asset register.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Agreed. See above response.</p>	<p>Strategic Lead-Finance</p>	<p>10th August 2016</p>
<p>1.2a Senior Management Ownership</p>	<p>I recommend the Strategic Lead-Finance seeks agreement from the Senior Management team that responsibility for overseeing</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Agreed. See above response.</p>	<p>Strategic Lead-Finance</p>	<p>10th August 2016</p>

Finding	Recommendation	Priority Rating	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
	<p>and managing the asset management system (or systems) is assigned at a Senior Officer level.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SWAP Ref: 32715</i></p>				
<p>2. Land or assets owned by the Authority cause injury or harm to a member of staff or member of the public due to insufficient inspection, record management and actioning of work.</p>					
2.1a System Access Control	<p>I recommend the Strategic Lead-Finance seeks agreement from the Senior Management Team that a full and detailed review of access rights is completed and the user profiles updated appropriately for all systems holding asset data.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SWAP Ref: 32831</i></p>	3	Agreed. See above response.	Strategic Lead-Finance	10 th August 2016

Audit Framework Definitions

Control Assurance Definitions

Substantial	▲★★★★	I am able to offer substantial assurance as the areas reviewed were found to be adequately controlled. Internal controls are in place and operating effectively and risks against the achievement of objectives are well managed.
Reasonable	▲★★★	I am able to offer reasonable assurance as most of the areas reviewed were found to be adequately controlled. Generally risks are well managed but some systems require the introduction or improvement of internal controls to ensure the achievement of objectives.
Partial	▲★☆☆	I am able to offer Partial assurance in relation to the areas reviewed and the controls found to be in place. Some key risks are not well managed and systems require the introduction or improvement of internal controls to ensure the achievement of objectives.
None	▲☆☆☆	I am not able to offer any assurance. The areas reviewed were found to be inadequately controlled. Risks are not well managed and systems require the introduction or improvement of internal controls to ensure the achievement of objectives.

Categorisation Of Recommendations

When making recommendations to Management it is important that they know how important the recommendation is to their service. There should be a clear distinction between how we evaluate the risks identified for the service but scored at a corporate level and the priority assigned to the recommendation. No timeframes have been applied to each Priority as implementation will depend on several factors, however, the definitions imply the importance.

Priority 5: Findings that are fundamental to the integrity of the unit's business processes and require the immediate attention of management.

Priority 4: Important findings that need to be resolved by management.

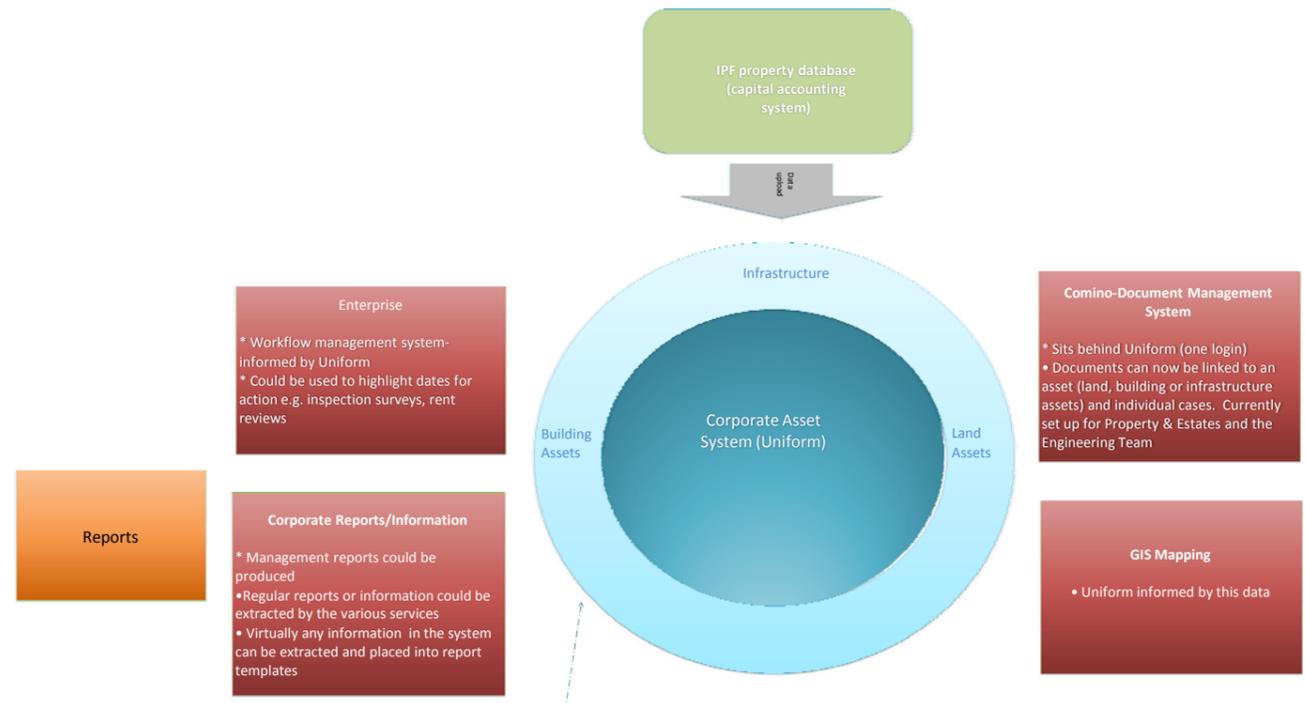
Priority 3: The accuracy of records is at risk and requires attention.

Priority 2: Minor control issues have been identified which nevertheless need to be addressed.

Priority 1: Administrative errors identified that should be corrected. Simple, no-cost measures would serve to enhance an existing control.

Definitions of Corporate Risk

Risk	Reporting Implications
Low	Issues of a minor nature or best practice where some improvement can be made.
Medium	Issues which should be addressed by management in their areas of responsibility.
High	Issues that we consider need to be brought to the attention of senior management.
Very High	Issues that we consider need to be brought to the attention of both senior management and the Audit Committee.



Services CURRENTLY using Uniform for asset management



Services which are involved in the management of council assets for which there is scope to benefit from use of the Corporate Asset System

Housing Health and Environment			Legal, Licensing and Democratic Services	Finance	Economic Development	Economy	
<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing stock (dwellings) is recorded on the Capita Open Housing System. However, the following is not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing land Associated records of licenses and leases Requests for disposal Wayleaves Easements Disputes to resolve Covenants Housing land ownerships overlays are not being updated on GIS Mapping 	<p>Countryside</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential to use Uniform and its interface with Comino to store documents against the appropriate asset records There is also scope to store inspection dates and records along with the Enterprise workflow management tool to bring up dates for future inspections 	<p>StreetScene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently use Down to Earth system (which is due to be replaced) and standalone beach hut management system Scope to record survey and inspection dates and associated documents Scope to run events management on Council land through Uniform Scope to manage beach hut hire through Uniform (subject to resolving waiting list arrangements) Scope to manage projects through Uniform 	<p>Legal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to property ownership records Access to tenancy records Access to individual case documents Access to legal documents (in interim prior to development of virtual deed room) Scope to make efficiencies in relationship between instructing departments and Income and Payments Team, along with other teams such as Business Rates 	<p>Income and Payments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to tenancy information Scope for interface creation to produce invoices from Uniform 	<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope for Business Centre to significantly increase the time taken to put in place new tenancies 	<p>Property & Estates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible scope for management of works and maintenance module to be utilised Possible scope for interface with Lagan reactive maintenance Scope for interface with Cedar Finance system for invoicing 	<p>Economic Development and Regeneration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope to access ownership records, tenancy records and documents indexed to assets. Ability to make file notes to ensure all services are aware of any project implications

SMT Report

Asset Register & Land Record Management Audit – 29 June 2016

Recommendations for action

Objective: There is a centrally maintained system that holds relevant details of the Authority's Assets and Land Records which can be easily retrieved and provide information for targeted distribution

1.0 The Authority is not aware of all assets/land owned

	SWAP Finding	SWAP recommendation	Suggested course of action
1.1a	Corporate appetite of a central asset register has not been tested	I recommend that the Strategic Lead – Finance (SLF) seeks agreement from the Senior Management Team to commit to the use of a central asset register	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Determine requirements of teams involved in management of property assets (some of this work already undertaken by Strata but in team isolation rather than with a strategic corporate remit). Include Streetscene, Countryside, Housing, Property & Estates Services, Strata, Legal and Income and Payments. 2) Investigate capability of Uniform to meet team requirements 3) Arrange meeting with Managers and relevant staff involved with the management of the council's property assets to demo the existing corporate register (Uniform) (and associated links to Comino EDMS and Enterprise workload management software. 4) Examine capability of interface between Uniform, Lagan, Down to Earth, PSS, Open Housing, Cedar, GIS overlays, etc
1.1b	Lack of certainty over the suitability of Uniform as a central asset system	I recommend that the SLF ensures that an assessment is completed over the suitability of the Uniform system to meet the needs of the Council as a centralised asset register	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The suitability will be determined by undertaking the actions set out above at 1.1a

1.2a	Senior Management Ownership	I recommend the SLF ensures that responsibility for overseeing and managing the asset management system (or systems) is assigned at a Senior Officer level	1) SMT allocate an appropriate officer to ensure a strategic corporate approach is established.
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2.0 Land or assets owned by the Authority cause injury or harm to a member of staff or member of the public due to insufficient inspection, record management and auctioning of work.

	SWAP Finding	SWAP recommendation	Suggested course of action
2.1a	Systems Access Control	I recommend the SLF ensures that a full and detailed review of access rights is completed and the user profiles updated appropriately for all systems holding asset data	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Seek a report on the current protocol from the Senior Systems Analyst, a review of existing access arrangements and recommendations for any changes. 2) Ensure any recommendations are tested by SMT and then implemented.