



Joint Response to a Call for Evidence on Asset Management from the Welsh Assembly Government's Finance Committee

from

**ACES (The Association of Chief Estates Surveyors and
Property Managers in the Public Sector) Welsh Branch**

**CLAW (The Consortium of Local Authorities in Wales)
Estates and Asset Management Group**

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Background and Role of ACES / CLAW in Asset Management

CLAW and ACES Members are responsible for property and asset management in a range of public sector organisations across Wales, including the Welsh Government. Through these organisations members are supported through sharing of best practice, training and collaboration in property asset management and wider estate management.

Training and Guidance

CLAW produced asset management guidance in 2001 and 2003 which remains essential guidance for asset managers in Wales.

CLAW members receive regular training events through the Asset Management Planning Network provided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The Asset Management Planning Network offers advice, events and training on the key issues affecting public sector asset management and planning. The Network has been running for thirteen years and has built up a solid network of contacts throughout central and local government, giving members an insight into emerging policies and recognised good practice around asset management. The AMP Network has access to an extensive knowledge base and links with Central Government, RICS and other key

organisations. The Network includes over 270 Authorities throughout the UK. It is considered that the AMP Network provides an extremely valuable training to ensure asset managers are kept up to date with best practice from around the UK and can share their own good practice with other organisations.

The Group's meetings also regularly include site visits, training and speakers on asset management and other estates topics to ensure members are kept up to date on current best practice.

Benchmarking

CLAW commissions annual benchmarking of key asset management performance indicators for unitary authorities through the Local Government Data Unit Wales. The indicators cover:

- Condition
- cost of maintenance
- office space planning
- office occupation costs
- levels of surplus and vacant property

Results have been collated over several years which help to support individual organisations in mapping progress and in benchmarking across the sector, which can feed into individual asset management plans and strategies

National Assets Working Group

CLAW and ACES members are represented on this Group and provide a valuable link to the wider asset management community in Wales. Meetings of the Group include standing agenda item on the work of NAWG to disseminate the activity of the Working Group. CLAW and ACES considers that NAWG has successfully consolidated the co-ordination of asset management work across Wales and provided a valuable focus on the subject. CLAW / ACES members have been instrumental in encouraging facilitating, developing and in some cases leading some of these areas of work:

- Highlighting of updated asset management best practice examples following on from the Wales Audit Office Buildings Management Review. In September 2010 the following 9 projects were selected and highlighted by the Working Group out of a total of 32 submissions:
 1. Blaenau Gwent Asset Review
 2. Cardiff Local Service Board Asset Review and e-PIMS Implementation

3. Carmarthenshire County Council Local Asset Review and e-PIMs Implementation
 4. EA/CCW/FC Pan Wales Co Location
 5. Torfaen County Council and Gwent Police Co Location
 6. Carmarthenshire Local Service Board Llandovery Joint Service Centre
 7. South Wales Police Operational Hub
 8. Bridgend County Borough Council Waterton Framework Master Planning
 9. Flintshire County Council - Development of a Single Community Service Centre
- Securing Invest to Save funding that supported some of the above projects and others that have come forward since.
 - The Land Transfer Protocol, which encourages collaborative appointment of valuation advice, saving duplication of fees and smoother transfer of property assets with the public sector.
 - Encouraging the take-up of the Electronic Property Information Mapping Service (e-PIMS) across the public sector to assist with collaborative discussions. CLAW and ACES meetings have played a key role in encouraging member organisations to participate in this project
 - Following on from e-PIMS, the current Workstream exploring the potential for an all-Wales property database, which aims to save the cost of individual licences and encourage more collaborative working across the public sector.

Response to Questions Raised by the Finance Committee

In 2010 the Wales Audit Office made the following recommendations, from your experience, to what extent has progress been made in relation to these?

- *The Assembly Government should enable more effective land and buildings management across Wales by consulting with public bodies to ascertain what further guidance, information, support and incentives may be required to encourage an improved and more co-ordinated approach to the management of land and buildings.*

CLAW and ACES consider that existing guidance from various professional bodies including CLAW, RICS, CIPFA and others offer sufficient guidance and advice to asset managers. Further guidance from the Welsh Government is not considered necessary.

Continuation and expansion of the work of the National Assets Working Group, ensuring full representation in the Group from all parts of the public sector, would be the best way to co-ordinate and deliver a more collaborative approach to land and buildings management in Wales. CLAW and ACES welcome the opportunity for previous and continued involvement in the work of the Group.

The Wales Audit Office could also potentially play a part through updating, expanding and keeping current the list of case studies included on the Buildings Management Good Practice Exchange

Enquiries to the Chair of the joint CLAW / ACES Property & Estates Group:

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Background information

CLAW is the Consortium of Local Authorities in Wales that supports the professional and technical interests of property management in local government in Wales. CLAW was formed in 1962 and now works with representatives from the elected members and officials of all Welsh local authorities together with a number of associate member organisations for the promotion of excellence in the management of property assets.

Further information on CLAW can be found here: www.claw.gov.uk

ACES is the Association of Chief Estates Surveyors and Property Managers in the Public Sector and is a group of people with a common interest in managing public property for the public good. ACES originated in 1908 and has around 400 members representing 250 public sector bodies throughout the UK. ACES is supported by 9 branches covering all regions of England Wales and Scotland.

Further information on ACES can be found here: www.aces.org.uk

In Wales the CLAW Estates and Asset Management Group meets jointly with the ACES Welsh Branch 3 times a year to support members and share best practice in estate and asset management