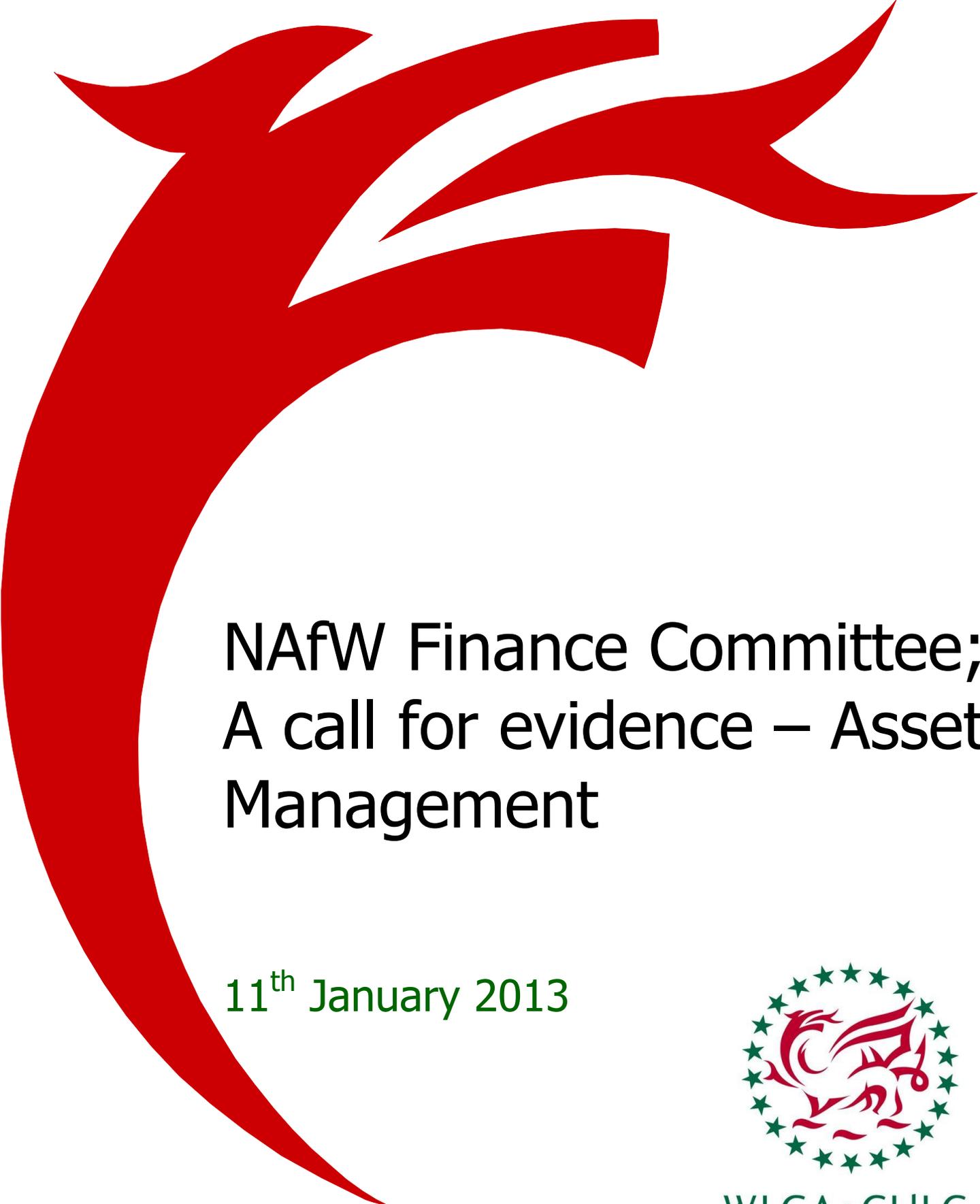


FIN(4) AM 03

Finance Committee inquiry into Asset Management

Response from Welsh Local Government Association



NAfW Finance Committee; A call for evidence – Asset Management

11th January 2013



WLGA • CLILC

A call for evidence – Asset Management

The National Assembly for Wales - Finance Committee is calling for information to help inform our inquiry into the process of Asset Management.

This inquiry will adopt a cross –public sector approach under two main areas:

- processes involved in the management of the Welsh Government’s own estate; and
- guidance, support and the promotion of good practice by the Welsh Government in relation to asset management across the wider Welsh public sector

INTRODUCTION

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the interests of local government and promotes local democracy in Wales. It represents the 22 local authorities in Wales and the 3 fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities are associate members.

The WLGA’s primary purposes are to promote better local government and its reputation and to support authorities in the development of policies and priorities which will improve public services and democracy.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Welsh Local Government Association welcomes the opportunity to provide comment to inform the National Assembly for Wales - Finance Committee inquiry into the process of Asset Management.

Welsh local government is committed to good business practice and recognises the important role of asset management within the broader aspects of building, property and resource management, toward the delivery of services as well as achieving the wider objectives relating to community’s social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

This response is provided from the perspective of the Welsh Local Government Association in its overarching role in the knowledge that Authorities will be reflecting their views individually and collectively via CLAW, which will give a more specific view of development in this at their organisational and operational levels.

Response to specific Points:

1. is asset management linked to wider strategic and policy objectives, both in the Welsh Government, and across the wider public sector?

There appears to have been broad acceptance of the laying of the foundations which could lead toward asset management linking in toward contributing to wider strategic and policy objectives. However there may be some way still to go before integration of all contributing elements can be demonstrate the all important *practical results* anticipated.

LG has continued to progress the development of asset management planning across Wales and has contributed positively into collaborative approaches led through the Public Services Leadership Groups (PSLG) National Assets Working Group [NAWG], such as exploration around a common asset management ICT solution.

Local Government holds a significant asset base, however it is important to recognise that in times of diminishing resources targeting additional support to developing what may be perceived as “back office” functions can be contentious.

Welsh Government [WG] has initiated a number of work strands ranging from the Welsh Infrastructure Investment Plan, to utilisation of vehicle fleet; which might capture asset managements contribution to the broader strategic and policy objectives, but might need to consider the relative importance of these strands in order to adequately weigh the support it provides to achieving its proposed level of development and integration.

2. what lessons can, or have, been learnt from existing good practice in Wales, or elsewhere, in relation to approaches to asset management improvement in the public sector?
 - ❖ **This matter will be better addressed through sources responses incorporating a more organisational or operational level.**
3. what progress has been made by the Welsh Government in strategic asset management and implementing initiatives to improve the efficiency of asset management across the Welsh public sector?
 - ❖ **Within the context of the answer to point 1. above, this matter will be better addressed through sources responses incorporating a more organisational or operational level.**
4. in 2010 the Wales Audit Office made the following recommendations, from your experience, to what extent has progress been made in relation to these?
 - ❖ **Generally; progress by the Assembly Government on these recommendations should be considered specifically against the baseline for the initial recommendations themselves, however in subjective terms:**
 - a. 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;
 - ❖ **PSLG has been established by WG incorporating the NAWG, which effectively took over the role from the similar group under the mantle of the previous WG Efficiency and Innovation Board. Established in 2010.**
 - b. ensure land and buildings strategies are up to date and link clearly with corporate and service objectives;
 - ❖ **Guidance from professional bodies and CLAW have provided a baseline for the development of asset management planning across Local Government [LG]and these are clearly maintained currently relevant to their individual organisational requirements.**

The availability of the proposed information platform/s which might provide accessibility to enable a wider assessment of this in terms of broader objectives is being led by the NAWG.
 - c. involve all stakeholders in the development of land and buildings strategies with ownership of the strategies at the highest level.

- ❖ **Guidance from professional bodies and CLAW have provided a baseline for the development of asset management planning across LG.**
- d. develop service land and buildings plans which link to the corporate land and buildings strategy;
- ❖ **Guidance from professional bodies and CLAW have provided a baseline for the development of asset management planning across LG.**
- e. integrate land and buildings management with service planning, workforce planning and ICT strategies, doing more to improve utilisation through flexible working and land and buildings rationalisation;
- ❖ **in respect of broader integration of asset management please see response to point 1. above.**
- f. ensure roles and responsibilities for managing land and buildings are clearly defined, understood and communicated.
- ❖ **This matter will be better addressed through sources responses incorporating a more organisational or operational level.**

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