



Summary of our report

Getting the right information to effectively manage public assets: Lessons from local authorities



Public assets, such as the roads people drive on, the footpaths they walk on, the infrastructure that delivers drinking water, and the playgrounds and parks that children play on, affect the quality of life of all New Zealanders. Local authorities are responsible for managing these sorts of public assets, and people expect them to be managed well.

Local authorities need high-quality information about those assets to have meaningful discussions with their communities about them and the services they provide, and decide how to effectively manage them. As communities and environments change, the challenges that local authorities face are becoming more complex and so are the decisions that they need to make.

This report looks at how five local authorities approached identifying and gathering the right information on their assets.

Each of the five local authorities understood the relationship between their assets and the services they deliver. However, they need to improve how they identify and prioritise gathering information about their most important assets. Prioritising the most important assets will help them to use their limited resources to best effect.

The five local authorities understood how this information helped them know more about the actual condition of their assets, what they needed for day-to-day asset management, and how the information could support them to make well-informed decisions about maintaining and replacing their assets.

Local authority staff value information quality and, by challenging and testing the information's continued fitness and readiness for use, work towards ensuring the information is high quality. The five local authorities were improving their systems and processes for gathering, recording, and retaining asset information.

Once local authorities have more comprehensively defined what the right asset information is for them and gathered

Vital statistics:

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it, these systems and processes will help the local authorities to more effectively manage and plan for their assets.

Local authorities can learn from their peers and other asset-intensive organisations about good practices and approaches to common challenges. In our view, local authorities should be looking for opportunities to form mutually beneficial relationships with such organisations. Relationships like these can ultimately lead to improved asset information in individual local authorities and more broadly throughout the local government sector.

The five local authorities were making improvements to how they ensured that asset information was available and accessible to those who need it, including those that make decisions and direct the management of assets, and those who have other uses for that information. They all saw benefit in, and were moving towards using, technology systems and processes that will better support the integration of asset information. Although the five local authorities ensured their asset information was made available to inform their asset planning, most had identified opportunities to improve the quality of asset information to better inform decision-making, including when best to replace their assets.

We encourage all asset-intensive entities to consider the lessons in this report and reflect on how they are gathering, recording, and retaining asset information.