

Good Estate Management for Schools

A brief guide



A Brief Guide to Good Estate Management

and how your school, academy or MAT can benefit

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“We chose the right partners in S2e, who delivered exceptional value for money on a complex project within very short time scales.”

Ben Elliott, Director of Corporate Services,
Higham Lane School

Introduction

Why have we created this guide?

The Department for Education (DfE) and the Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have worked together to produce a Good Estate Management (GEM) guide and toolkit to support schools, academies and multi-academy trusts in managing their estates efficiently and effectively. Ensuring the fundamentals of good estate management are in place will not only make the most of each estates resources but also allow for a more secure future.

This eBook is aimed at anyone working within a school, academy or trust that has any responsibility in overseeing or managing their estate and would like to learn a bit more about GEM and how they could improve their understanding and best practice in this area. The eBook is broken down into 6 sections to make it easier to review.

We hope you will find it useful!

The Surveyors to Education Team



“The school is now a fantastic place to be and has been absolutely transformed by the work S2e have carried out.”

David Green, School Business Manager,
Woodbrook Vale School

Vision & Strategy

Why is it important to have these in place?

To ensure educational needs and objectives are supported, it is important that a strategic approach is undertaken, backed with supportive documentation. It is most effective when the whole organisation has been involved and they have been integrated within the regular business planning processes.

Strategic management will help deliver both financial and non-financial benefits, whilst poor management can lead to any number of issues that could either disrupt the everyday running of the school or compromise the health and safety of everyone on the premises.

Vision

A vision does not need to be complex or lengthy but it does need to be agreed as a starting step in the whole process. It should be clear, aligned to your educational principles and be able to define how your estate will evolve to meet future demands, such as increased capacity.

Strategy

The purpose of a strategy is to expand on your vision and inform how it will be achieved over the next 3 to 5 years. In order to be able to do this, a series of audits, assessments and feasibility studies will be necessary. Additionally a strategic review of your existing assets and current management plans and procedures will help in targeting your budgets and resources appropriately.

Checklist

- ✓ Defined vision
- ✓ Clear strategy
- ✓ Documented
- ✓ Agreed by board

How S2e can help

- Strategic review workshops
- Area analysis and spatial planning
- H&S compliance audit
- Condition survey(s)
- Feasibility studies
- Energy and utilities audit(s)

Asset Management & Development Plans

What are they and what do they entail?

Once the vision and strategy are set, each school or academy should also complete an Asset Management Plan. This is a plan to set out the actions and processes required to achieve your strategy.

Asset Management Plan (AMP)

The data used previously to set your strategy can also be used to further help create short to medium term asset management plans, focused on prioritising key actions.

A key aspect of the AMP will be estate maintenance. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy advice is to focus on preventative maintenance. Furthermore it is seen as good practice to assign a ratio budget split of 70:30 in favour of preventative to reactive maintenance. That said, it is important to note that there is not one set template to complete the AMP - it will largely depend on your estates own individual factors and situation.

Estate Development Plan (EDP)

This is only required if there is a substantial amount of work to be carried out. If the scope of works is small, this will not be required. The EDP is a single document that will provide a visual representation of the programmes of works to be carried out across the estate.

Checklist

- ✓ Asset Management Plan
- ✓ Estate Development Plan
- ✓ Preventative Maintenance Plan

How S2e can help

- Asset management planning
- Capital projects funding
- Estate development planning
- Technical due diligence
- Asset acquisition and disposal

Estate Management

What does it cover?

The buildings that make up the estate are a valuable long-term asset and as such they should be well maintained and looked after. They should be safe, warm, weatherproof and provide a suitable learning and teaching environment for pupils and teachers alike.

Land and buildings - Understand current land ownership, the condition of buildings within the estate as well as their suitability

Condition assessment - A series of surveys that fully assess the physical condition of the buildings within the estate. They will usually cover a period of 5 years and help identify the scope and cost of works. They are key in helping you prioritise work within your available budget and ultimately prepare a maintenance plan for the school. These should be carried out by a Chartered Building Surveyor.

Estate maintenance - A fully costed and comprehensive plan that clearly denotes responsibility for maintaining land, buildings and equipment is essential to help manage the estate and budget appropriately.

Energy and water usage - Reviewing rates on a regular basis can help maintain a consistent and challenging approach with dealing with incumbent suppliers. This can not only help save money but also minimise waste.

Checklist

- ✓ Understand ownership
- ✓ Assess building condition
- ✓ Prepare maintenance budget
- ✓ Review energy and water usage

How S2e can help

- Condition surveys
- Preventative maintenance programmes
- Property maintenance and helpdesk
- Cyclical maintenance surveys
- Energy efficiency surveys
- Building and project management

Capital Projects

What are they and what do they entail?

These are projects that help maintain or improve school or academy assets. They would usually meet one of the following criteria: a new construction, expansion, renovation or replacement of an existing building or buildings. If you are in need of a new classroom block, or you are looking to upgrade the sports facilities, then you will need to undertake a capital project.

How can you successfully deliver a capital project?

- Have a clear scope with clear targets and parameters which you are able to stick to.
- Assess existing data and where necessary commission new information gathering reports. This can be especially helpful in getting more accurate cost estimates of what work is actually required to complete your project.
- Invest time in going through an option appraisal thoroughly. This evidence based process will help you make sound investment decisions.
- Have a series of agreed milestones to be met by all relevant internal and external stakeholders. Good communication at all levels is key, especially when problems arise.
- Ultimately, the aim is to deliver the end project on time and with minimal cost and disruption.

Checklist

- ✓ Clear project scope
- ✓ Option appraisal
- ✓ Agreed project process
- ✓ Project deadline met

How S2e can help

- Architectural design
- Planning applications
- Feasibility studies
- Mechanical and electrical design
- Contractor selection
- Cost planning

Health & Safety Compliance

What does it cover?

All schools and academies need to ensure that they comply with current health and safety legislation as well as having a duty of care to their pupils and employees using the premises daily. A fundamental part of managing an estate is having policies and procedures in place that focus on safety and security. These need to be effectively documented and communicated, with accountability at board level clearly defined.

Compliance procedures will need to include how the school or academy is doing against current legal requirements and be supported with records that show current compliance.

The estate should be safe for everyone and the management team need to ensure that:

- All property related health and safety risks have been identified.
- Appropriate actions have been taken to minimise unavoidable risks.
- Statutory and regulatory standards are upheld.
- Responsibilities for health & safety within the estate are clearly defined and communicated.

Checklist

- ✓ Understand current legislation
- ✓ Meet current H&S criteria
- ✓ Assess compliance record

How S2e can help

- Safeguarding and security assessments
- Health and safety assessments
- Fire risk assessments

Budgeting, Procurement & Performance Management

How can these processes support you?

To support the management of the school or academy there will need to be a series of processes and procedures in place that cover the whole of the estate. This section will specifically focus on 3 key aspects: Budgeting, Procurement & Performance Management.

Budgeting - Sound budgeting is key in ensuring the effective management and use of available financial resources available. A 3 to 5 year budget plan is recommended, with particular focus on maintenance prioritisation and a cost-benefit analysis to establish the best value for money solutions available.

Procurement - It will sometimes be necessary to employ external contractors to help manage your estate and as such robust procurement policies should be in place. This is to ensure that there is a consistent approach in dealing with contractors to not only ensure economies of scale but to also minimise potential costly mistakes.

Performance management - In order to continually improve the efficiency of the estate there will need to be an agreed performance management and benchmarking system in place. A consistent approach to measuring performance will be key across the estate as well as clear and agreed processes in how information will be used to improve performance.

Checklist

- ✓ Governance process in place
- ✓ 3-5 year budget plan
- ✓ Agreed performance metrics
- ✓ Data management system
- ✓ Contractor selection plan
- ✓ Emergency planning policy

How S2e can help

- Tendering services
- Contract administration
- Cost management
- Project management
- Funding services

In summary

What next?

We hope that you have found this eBook guide useful in terms of navigating the guidelines provided by the Government surrounding Good Estate Management.

Understandably, GEM is a complex and far reaching subject but ensuring best practice is in place, will not only make the most of the resources that you have available, but also ensure a more secure future for your school or academy.

Having a professional help with certain aspects of this, can ease the burden and help your colleagues gain the knowledge and confidence to succeed in reaching your schools vision and strategy. It will also provide them with the support they need to continue operating at an effective level.

If you would like to discuss any of the information in this eBook or have any questions about what the Surveyors 2 Education team can offer your school or academy please contact us on the details below and we will gladly be of service.

The Surveyors to Education Team

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“S2e embraced the challenge of transforming a once unused courtyard into a multi-purpose music and fitness space.”

Mark Teesdale, Facilities Manager, Welland Park Academy