Benefit of utilising BIM software:

- Effective management of all project or estates data when utilising a digital storage system typically known as a Common Data Data Environment
- Easily digitally manage estates and / or facilities utilising Computer Aided Facilities Management software
- View your building / project / estates and easily understand it with 3D model viewing software
- More efficient and effective management and design using BIK software
- Enabling collaboration across the board with BIM softwares / tools / systems
- Potentially save time and cost on build and save operational costs for the building operator (client or other)

Introduction to BIM software:

Digital software or BIM software is not something that is new, however since the Government mandate it is an area that is rapidly developing to help improve project management, delivery & end user use. The implementation of BIM software is something that requires careful consideration to ensure the ones you utilise are fit for purpose and ideally communicate with other softwares / systems. It is integral that the right BIM softwares are identified and utilised correctly to gain maximum benefits and efficiency.

Detailed Description:

Technology is transforming the way that buildings and infrastructure are designed, constructed and operated.
BIM is a process that involves the generation and management of digital representations of what will be physical assets using both graphical and none graphical information, and is therefore very much rooted in this technological transformation.

The term BIM or the 'M' (modelling) often leads to a misconception that BIM is a piece of software. However that is not the case as there is no catch all, magic piece of software for BIM.
There are many applications that can be used to underpin the delivery of, or indeed manage the BIM process. When used effectively and collectively, technology can drive efficient modelling, data management and project collaboration.

Choosing the right software

Choosing the right software can be a daunting task as different platforms offer different tools and you need to decide which one/ones are the most appropriate for your business. As already mentioned and despite what advertisements, software vendors and popular opinion may say, there is NO BIM industry software standard. No vendor provides everything you need.

When you are making decisions around your BIM software consider your anticipated level of BIM involvement. In its simplest form you could start by asking yourself – What is my business to a BIM project; are we a Client, BIM Manager, BIM Coordinator, BIM Modeller or none of these things?

Depending on which of these (you can be more than one) groups you sit in will dictate on the type/types of software you need. For example the principle design elements need to produce models and their associated information, validate that information and coordinate changes to ensure it can be built/manufactured, priced, detailed and amended to reflect a project as it evolves; and this would entail the use of various software platforms; including model authoring tools and validation checking software; whilst a sub-contractor responsible for glass screens could potentially get by with the use of traditional 2D data and a free model viewer.

What do I need as a Client?

As a client your requirements for BIM software fall predominantly into the 'Operate' phase of a project, examples of operation and facilities management software can be seen below.

The ability to simply view information as a client can be achieved through the use of free viewers. Examples of free 3D model viewers include but are not exclusive to:

Solibri Model Viewer

Navisworks Freedom

Tekla BIM sight

Autodesk A360

The CDE (Common Data Environment)

An element that all project teams will be exposed to during a project is a CDE. It is intended to be a platform used to collect, manage and disseminate documentation, the graphical model and non-graphical data for the whole project team.

Typically this would be owned and managed by the Tier 1 contractor and can take many forms dependent on size or type of project. It could be dedicated project server, an extranet or a cloud based system.
What is important is that this space is digital and that everybody has open and unhindered access to it. It can be subdivided and categorised and is a collaborative working environment. Worth noting is that these platforms can also come with built in software to allow for the viewing of models without the need for the downloading third party viewers.

An effectively used and managed CDE will build an accurate data set over the course of a project and once verified and the data can be used for asset management allowing for useful data to be pushed into and used by software designed for the 'Operate' phase.