



Community Empowerment – Annual Reports 2018/19 (Covering April 2018– March 2019)

Community Asset Transfer

	Number
Groups approaching the Council about an asset	20
Groups withdrawn before an expression of interest submitted	6
Expressions of interest received	11
Groups withdrawn after an expression of interest submitted	4
Number of live cases	10
Groups who researched an alternative outcome	2
Asset Transfers requests received	0
Asset Transfer requests agreed to	0 (0%)
Asset Transfer requests refused	0 (0%)
Asset Transfer decisions appealed	0 (0%)
Asset Transfer decisions appealed successfully	0 (0%)

Key Highlights 2018/19

At present the Council has not received a formal Community Asset Transfer (CAT) request during this period, however we continue to support groups to explore the options open to them to achieve their ambitions for the group and their community. Two groups who approached the Council about CAT were supported to find other an alternative solution:

- Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust approached the Council about acquiring the Lower City Mills on Mill Street. However, due to the legal structure of PKHT, a CAT was not feasible and a separate long term lease was agreed. This asset is also a Common Good asset and a Grade A listed building, both of which bring additional considerations.
 - **NB.** Common Good assets are strictly eligible for Community Asset Transfer, but further rigour is required, including additional community consultation before any asset is transferred. A petition to the Sheriff Court may also be required if the land or building is listed as being part of the inalienable Common Good.
- The Polish Scout Group in Perth approached the Council to identify options for CAT. Following discussions, the Scout Group were supported to find suitable premises for weeknight meetings and weekend outdoor activity, without the need for CAT.

Our Approach

The Council is committed to working with community organisations to explore the options open to them. Groups are encouraged and supported to have initial

discussions and submit an expression of interest before they formally start the CAT process. This is intended to ensure groups are eligible and understand the process that would need to be followed to submit a full CAT request. This approach allows us to identify whether the option of a conventional disposal, whether through a sale or lease, could better suit the needs of the group

We take a customer centred approach to CAT requests. Community Transfer Bodies are allocated a member of Community Learning and Development staff as a single point of contact, who will co-ordinate with staff across the Council to identify information about assets and feedback to the community group. Once community groups have a clear plan in place and feel confident that asset transfer is the right option for them they can start the CAT process, and representatives of the relevant Council services meet as a Community Asset Transfer Team to advise the applicant and progress the application. A full description of the approach can be found in the [Perth & Kinross Council Community Asset Transfer Policy and Guidance](#).

Promotion

CAT is promoted to the public via the [Council website](#). Staff throughout our organisation, particularly the Communities Team, continue to share information and raise awareness about CAT when appropriate. A [database](#) of all Council owned properties is on our website, along with a [case study video](#) about a successful asset transfer in our area.

CAT is one key part of the Community Empowerment agenda and a Communications Plan for this was agreed in January 2019. This has resulted in the Council producing infographics to raise awareness of the CAT process, which is shared via social media and in hard copy. These infographics will be supplemented by additional media activity in 2019/20, including the production of animated videos to explain the processes in more detail. Additional improvements in how the Council promotes and supports CAT is outlined in the Improvement Actions at the end of this section of the report.

Training and Support

Community Groups in Perth and Kinross were offered a day's training by DTAS Community Ownership Support Service in February 2019. The training covered the process of a CAT, managing a community asset and advice on applying for funding.

Community groups are given details of the Community Ownership Support Service and are encouraged to discuss their application with them at any stage. In addition, community groups are encouraged to contact PKAVS (Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Services) for advice on becoming appropriately constituted for asset transfer, and Just Enterprise who can offer business planning support.

Interest so far

At 31 March 2019, staff are working with six Community Transfer Bodies who have submitted an Expression of Interest in CAT, and have had initial enquiries from an additional four other community groups. None have yet progressed to a full CAT application, but we would expect some of these to be progressed in 2019/20.

10 groups have approached the Council with an interest in an asset but, following discussions with Council staff have chosen not to progress with a full CAT request. Reasons for initial enquiries not being progressed have included:

- The asset being needed by the Council to deliver essential services;
- The asset not meeting the requirements of the community group;
- The applicant not being eligible to apply under the provisions of the Act;
- Shared concerns over the capacity of the potential applicant to deliver a successful CAT;
- Legal technicalities which would prevent any future transfer; and
- Assets being temporarily brought back into use by the Council.

Improvement Actions for 2019/20

The Council will continue to support community groups to explore opportunities in owning, leasing or having access to Council Property. Reflecting on performance in 2018/19 and what needs to happen to build on this in 2019/20, the following improvement actions have been identified:

Identified Issue	Action	Lead Service	Timescale
The number of requests and enquiries received to date suggests that levels of awareness of CAT, its opportunities and responsibilities remains mixed	Deliver Communications Plan for Community Empowerment (including CAT), specifically the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional infographics • a social media campaign • animated videos 	Community Planning Corporate Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional infographics and publicity material (April 2019) • Production of animated videos (May 2019)
The original PKC policy was produced some years ago and requires to be updated to reflect current context	Review and update PKC Policy and Guidance on CAT ensuring this is user friendly, has appropriate messaging and is as accessible as possible.	Community Planning	December 2019
Live Active Leisure have confirmed that some community assets are not sustainable in the long term under current management arrangements	Undertake specific work in partnership with LAL about opportunities for CAT around identified community halls	Community Planning Communications	December 2019
A list of all Council assets is available on-line, but is difficult to screen and filter	Improve information provision so that those properties which are most suitable for CAT are easier to identify.	PKC Corporate Improvement (Corporate Property Asset Management Group)	March 2020

Participation Requests

	Number
Participation Requests received	3
Participation Requests that did not qualify	2
Participation Requests that qualified	1
Participation Requests rejected	0
Participation Requests which resulted in a change	1

Three requests were received by the Council in this period. Two participation requests were requests for information, not a request to participate in an outcome improvement process.

Blackford Community Council put in a request to be involved in any future improvements to the paths and access networks around Blackford, as opposed to having a specific proposal to improve outcomes associated with outdoor access and activities. There are no immediate plans to change the path network in the area at present so the request cannot be granted at this stage. The Council has agreed to involve this group when there is planned work on the paths in the future.

Blackford Community Council put in a request for information on planned roadworks in the area. This did not qualify as a participation request as it was a request for information and not to participate in an outcome improvement process. The Council already makes this information publicly available on [Tellmesotland](#) and in local newspapers.

One request came from groups in Braco wanting to be involved in discussions to improve the Community Hall in Braco, which is managed by the Council. Officers met with representatives of the Hall Committee and agreed to add in new storage facilities and improve disabled access to the Hall.

Promoting Participation Requests

Information about participation requests is [on the Council website](#). If communities approach the Council about a specific issue we are able to advise communities about the participation request process, as well as other ways to get involved in influencing outcomes and shaping services.

Promotion and Awareness

PKAVS hosted an event run by Scottish Community Development Centre on 21 May 2018. This was designed to give third sector organisations more information about how to make participation request and how they can be used to improve outcomes.

Participation requests are part of the broader Community Empowerment agenda and a Communications Plan for this was agreed in January 2019. This has resulted in The Council producing infographics to raise awareness of participation requests, which is shared via social media and in hard copy. These infographics will be supplemented by additional media activity in 2019/20, including the production of animated videos to explain the processes in more detail.

Improvement Actions

The Council will continue to support communities who want to get involved in improving outcomes for their community. Reflecting on performance in 2018/19 and what needs to happen to build on this in 2019/20, the following improvement actions have been identified:

Identified Issue	Improvement Action	Lead Service	Timescale
The number and content of requests received so far suggests that levels of awareness is low	Deliver Communications Plan for Community Empowerment (including participation requests), specifically the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• additional infographics• a social media campaign• animated videos	Community Planning Corporate Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional infographics and publicity material (April 2019)• Production of animated videos (May 2019)
Current PKC policy and process needs updating, with clearer guidance provided	Review and update PKC Policy and Guidance on participation requests, ensuring that this is user friendly, has appropriate messaging and is as accessible as possible.	Community Planning	September 2019
	Produce guidance for staff in handling participation requests to ensure consistency of approach across the Council	Community Planning	September 2019