

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Social Wellbeing Committee

15 June 2022

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ANNUAL REPORT

**Report by Head of Cultural and Community Services
(Report No. 22/135)**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the Community Empowerment Annual Report for 2021/22. The Annual Report provides an overview of the work done to promote and respond to interest in Community Asset Transfer and Participation Requests, as set out in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 1.2 Each year, Perth and Kinross Council report on activities relating to Community Asset Transfer and Participation Requests to Scottish Government as well as the Housing and Social Wellbeing Committee. The period that this report covers is April 2021 to March 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1 It is recommended that Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• approves the Community Empowerment Annual Report 2021/22.

3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

- 3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:
- Section 4: Summary
 - Section 5: Improvement Actions
 - Section 6: Conclusion
 - Appendix

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out rights for communities to have more significant influence or control over decisions and services which are most important to them. The Council has a statutory duty to report on the number of both Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Requests and Participation Requests it receives every year and the Council's activity to promote these rights. These rights are summarised as follows:

- Part 3 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 enables communities to request to participate in processes to improve outcomes in their local community.
 - Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives community groups the right to request ownership, lease, or access assets owned by the Council.
- 4.2 The Annual Report in **Appendix 1** outlines the Community Asset Transfer Requests and Participation Requests the Council has received from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The report sets out the outcome of each of these requests and the work done to promote CAT and Participation Requests to communities.
- 4.3 The Scottish Government is proposing a full review of the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 during the current parliamentary term. This review started in 2021/22 with a working group led by the Scottish Community Development Centre. Perth and Kinross Council is represented on the group.

Community Asset Transfer

- 4.4 Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is one option for community groups to consider when looking to take on a public asset. The alternatives to CAT include a standard purchase, a lease or disposal through the Disposal of Land (Scotland) Regulations 2010, or some other form of a management agreement. The Council works with each community group to find the solution that best suits their needs, through the virtual CAT Team.
- 4.5 The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Team provides oversight of all enquiries and full CAT requests. Led by the Community Planning Team, the CAT Team brings together representatives from key services including Communities, Finance, Legal, Estates, Property and Asset Management.
- 4.6 In 2021/22, six Expressions of Interest (Eols) were received from community organisations. It is anticipated that up to three of the Eols will develop into full CAT requests in 2022/23. The Eol stage is non-statutory and was introduced to allow community groups to give a short overview of their interest in an asset and allow the CAT Team to work with them to find the best outcome.
- 4.7 All information on the CAT process in Perth and Kinross Council is available online at <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/19819/Community-Asset-Transfer>. This includes:
- a short [animated video](#) of the process using an example of a library building
 - a Community Group Self-Assessment Toolkit which community groups are encouraged to work through to assess their own capacity and if a CAT is right for them.
 - the Expression of Interest and full CAT request forms
 - a copy of the Scoring Matrix used by council officers from the CAT Team.

- A [podcast](#) explaining the CAT Process for elected members has also been created.

4.8 Our approach to making information for communities on CATs has been highlighted as an example of best practice by the Community Ownership Support Service (COSS), the national body which is funded by SG to support increased community ownership of public assets.

Participation Requests

4.9 No Participation Requests were received in 2021/22. Across Scotland as a whole, there have been small numbers of Participation Requests. They are one of many ways in which community groups can engage with the Council on local public service design and delivery, and it is considered that other initiatives like consultation on the Perth and Kinross Offer, tenant participation and specific service consultations is how communities are choosing to engage with the Council.

4.10 All information on Participation Requests in Perth and Kinross Council is available online at <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/19968/Participation-Requests>.

4.11 This includes:

- a short [animated video](#) of the process using an example of accessibility in communities
- the Participation Request Form and Guidance, as well as a flowchart showing how Requests are dealt with.

5. IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

5.1 Improvement Actions are considered in more detail in the Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 and are summarised below.

Community Asset Transfer

5.2 Our process for CAT has been well established over the last six years. Examples of our process has been highlighted in local authority training sessions delivered by the Community Ownership Support Service. (COSS) and we will discuss further with COSS where further improvements can be made. We will continue to improve our communications and engagement with local communities on CAT.

Participation Requests

5.3 As part of the improvement actions over 2022/23, the Council's online Consultation Hub will be promoted as an opportunity for community groups to get involved in shaping outcomes and services at the earliest possible stage. The Consultation Hub is the Council's online portal for community engagement and is used by different council services to gather the views of

local residents. The hub also provides feedback to the community based on what they have told the Council when responding to a survey or consultation.

- 5.4 In addition to this, further guidance, and information about the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 will be developed for PKC staff. These are being developed in order to support staff to be increasingly proactive, imaginative, and inclusive when undertaking consultation and engagement work and reflect the PK Offer in action.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires the Council to produce an Annual Report, setting out the work done to promote and respond to Community Asset Transfer Requests and Participation Requests. In 2021/22, seven enquiries were received for Community Asset Transfer, and no Participation Requests were received.

Author

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Communities)	2 June 2022

- Appendix 1 - The Community Asset Transfer and Participation Requests Annual Report 2021/22.

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You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	None
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan

- 1.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places several additional duties on local authorities and other public agencies. Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and Participation Requests give community groups greater rights and opportunities to influence or control decisions that affect them. The Improvement Actions identified in the report may impact all of the strategic objectives but are likely to be most relevant to:

- (ii) *Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens*
- (iii) *Promoting a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable economy*
- (v) *Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations*

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places several additional duties on local authorities and other public agencies. Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and Participation Requests give community groups greater rights and opportunities to influence or control decisions that affect them. The Improvement Actions identified in the report may impact all of the strategic objectives but are likely to be most relevant to:

- (ii) *Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;*
- (iii) *Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;*
- (v) *Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.*

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 Not Applicable.

Workforce

2.2 Not Applicable.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 Not Applicable.

3. Assessments

3.1 Proposals that have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) are assessed as **not relevant** for EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 Not Applicable.

Sustainability

3.3 Not Applicable.

Legal and Governance

3.4 Not Applicable.

Risk

3.5 Not Applicable.

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 Not required.

External

4.2 Not required.