

Asset Transfer Request
Reporting Template 2022/23 for Relevant Authorities

Section 95 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires relevant authorities to produce an annual report on Asset Transfer Request activity and publish this no later than 30 June each year.

Following stakeholder feedback and in response to asset transfer evaluations, this template has been created to help gather asset transfer data for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Information provided will help inform policy and practice at local and national level as the data will be collated and shared by the Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Team. However, it will be for each relevant authority to make their own annual report publicly available by 30 June 2023, whether using this template or not.

Please provide information in sections below and email completed template by 30 June 2023 to community.empowerment@gov.scot

Section One – Relevant Authority Information

Organisation: RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL	Address: RENFREWSHIRE HOUSE, COTTON STREET PAISLEY, PA1 1WB
Completed by: SANDRA INRIG	Role: PROGRAMME MANAGER COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER and REGENERATION
Email: Sandra.inrig@renfrewshire.gov.uk	Telephone: 0141 487 1447 or 07974 071238
Date of completion: 24 May 2023	
Are you the Asset Transfer Lead Contact for the organisation: YES	
If not please provide the name, job title and email address for the lead contact for any queries: N/A	

Section 2: Asset Transfer Data in 2022/23

2.1 Please complete the following table for the 2022/23 reporting period :

Total Applications Received¹	Number of successful applications determined²	Number of unsuccessful applications Determined²	Number received -and yet to be determined³	Number received prior to 2022/23 and yet to be determined
4	3	1	1	None

2.2 Please provide details of Asset Transfer Requests received which resulted in transfer of ownership, lease, or rights from your relevant authority to a community transfer body in 2022/23:

None in period⁴

2.3 Please provide details of Asset Transfer Requests that went to a relevant authority appeal or review which were concluded in 2022/23:

Name of Community Transfer Body	Was the Asset Transfer Appeal/Review accepted? (Y/N)	Why was the Appeal/Review accepted/refused? <i>Please provide details of the asset transfer request and reasons for your decision.</i>
Kelburne Hockey and Community Sports Club	No	The CAT request was refused on the basis of uncertainty of funding and the impact of significant opposition to the transfer on community cohesion. The CAT request was for a 50-year lease of a community sports centre at the sum of £1 per annum, if asked. The purpose of the transfer request was to build a competition level hockey pitch, increase opening hours of the centre and the range of sports activity available. The Review was heard by the Council CAT Review Subcommittee. After asking for additional information and clarification of funding, the Review Panel upheld the original decision.

2.4 Please use this space to provide any further comments relating to the above data:

¹ The number reported at 2.1 above represents only full applications that have been validated in 2022/23. The Community Transfer Bodies and assets counted are:

- Woodlands Community Bowling Club – Woodlands Bowling Club, Linwood
- Kelburne Hockey and Community Sports Club – Ralston Community Sports Centre, Paisley
- The Western Desert Recce Group – Whitehaugh Barracks, Paisley
- Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust – Site at Lochhead Avenue, Lochwinnoch

² Number reported represents all applications determined in the period including those validated prior to 2022/23. The Community Transfer Bodies and assets counted are:

- Inchinnan Development Trust – India Tyres Playing Fields, Inchinnan – Approved
- Woodlands Community Bowling Club – Woodlands Bowling Club, Linwood - Approved
- Kelburne Hockey and Community Sports Club – Ralston Community Sports Centre, Paisley - Refused
- The Western Desert Recce Group – Whitehaugh Barracks, Paisley – Approved

³ Number reported represents full applications received and validated in the period but yet to be determined. The Community Transfer Bodies and assets counted are:

- Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust – Site at Lochhead Avenue, Lochwinnoch

⁴ At 2.2 above, we have reported ZERO transfers of ownership, lease, or rights to a community transfer body in 2022/23. We have FIVE asset transfer requests that were determined in the period and prior to 2022/23 but which have not yet resulted in the transfer of the asset to the community transfer body. These are:

- Renfrew Victoria Youth Football Club – approved on 20/03/2019. 25-year lease of Kirklandneuk Playing Fields & Pavilion, Renfrew, approved in 2019 but never concluded due to complicated issues to separate services from adjoining community centre delayed as a result of the pandemic. Works are underway and the lease is expected to be concluded in 2023.
- Friends of Howwood Park – approved on 27/01/2021. 10-year lease of Howwood Park Pavilion; no offer received within the 6-month timeframe. Heads of Terms now agreed and lease expected to be concluded in 2023.
- Inchinnan Development Trust – approved on 15/06/2022. 50-year lease of India Tyres Playing Fields, Inchinnan; Heads of Terms agreed and lease expected to be concluded in 2023.
- Woodlands Community Bowling Club – approved on 02/08/2022. Full transfer of ownership of Woodlands Bowling Club, Linwood; missives agreed and transfer expected to be completed in 2023/24.
- Western Desert Recce Group – approved on 15/03/2023. Full transfer of ownership of Whitehaugh Barracks, Paisley; awaiting formal offer.

2.4 Continued:

In addition to the full and determined applications reported above, we have

- 9 applications in the final stages awaiting validation;
- 7 full expressions of interests currently working on their full CAT request; and
- 15 live enquiries where we are working with groups to identify appropriate assets and the most appropriate approach.

Section Three – Promotion and Equality

3.1 Please provide information on any action you have taken to promote the benefits of asset transfer or any support provided for communities to engage with the Asset Transfer Request process.

We have a closer working relationship with Engage Renfrewshire who are our local Third Sector Interface. By ensuring Engage staff are educated in the CAT process, they are able to better promote CAT as an appropriate solution for groups and support them in the process.

The Council has a number of funds both revenue and capital which are targeted at groups considering community asset transfer. The funds are focussed on empowerment and can support the costs of feasibility studies, options appraisals, designs, capacity building, business planning and surveys. These funds are managed separately from the CAT application process but over the past 12 months staff have worked closer together in order to be more strategic in the allocation of funds and to promote the CAT process. The Council has agreed to merge funds creating a larger and more strategic Sustainable Communities Fund and making it easier for communities to navigate. Over the course of the next 24 months this fund will be further enhanced with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Communities and Place and will have a tiered application process to support larger projects going through community asset transfer.

Over the next 12 months we plan to improve our website making it easier for community groups to access information. We also plan to introduce a series of targeted workshops and to create user groups offering peer support.

3.2 In particular, what action has been taken to support disadvantaged communities to engage with the asset transfer process?

We have had or have CAT applications from across all Renfrewshire communities including those from SIMD areas. Additional support is provided to all groups who require it but especially to those that lack capacity. Support available includes support to write and submit funding applications, design community consultation and to identify benefits from community asset transfer.

Our planned workshops will target areas where there are fewer CAT applications, where there are opportunities and where there is disadvantage that may deter community asset transfer requests.

The Council has also recently created a new communities team whose role it is to support communities including in community asset transfer.

Section Four – Additional Information

4.1 Please use this space to provide any further feedback not covered in the above sections.

Over the last 12 months, the Council has made significant changes to its processes for Community Asset Transfer. A new Community Asset Transfer policy and procedures have been approved by the Council and the Council's Scheme of Delegation has been updated. A dedicated Community Asset Transfer Subcommittee has been created to hear and make decisions on applications and any future reviews will be heard by the Council's Appeals Committee.

A review of all CAT requests and enquiries back to 2017 has been undertaken and where action has been required this has been undertaken.

We have introduced a new 2-stage application process which allows for eligibility and asset availability to be checked early on in the process and for groups to be directed to other sources of support within the Council and outwith where that is appropriate.

We have received an increase in applications for small pieces of land that communities wish to develop as gardens or growing spaces. These tend to be from smaller, unincorporated organisations who are put off by the complexity or responsibility of full asset transfer. Previously the Council has allowed a number of informal arrangements with such groups but is now seeking to formalise these under the CAT process. We are currently exploring the option of transferring Management Rights to such groups specifically for small pieces of land and hope to develop a less onerous process that meets the requirements of the Act but better meets the needs of communities.

Section 5 – Community Empowerment Act Review

The following questions relate to the Scottish Government review of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. We would value your feedback as a relevant authority concerned with part 5 (asset transfers) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Please note, any feedback offered in Section 5 would only be used for the purposes of the review, and all comments would be anonymised.

5.1 Has the legislation made things easier or more difficult to work with communities on asset transfers? Please provide some comments on your experiences as a relevant authority engaging with this legislation.

I was not involved in asset transfer pre the legislation and have only been involved in the last 18 months. I suspect our Council did not do much asset transfer before the legislation so from that perspective the legislation provides a framework for discussion with groups. Over the last year I think as a Council we have begun to embrace the possibilities of asset transfer through the act although I think we still struggle with the process. On a more negative side, the legislation has been conceived negatively by some groups who are put off by the process or think it is too complicated; others see the legislation as a right and struggle to see the need to evidence benefits and other aspects of the process.

Despite being 8 years old now, we still have staff and elected members who do not understand the principles, either being over cautious about the transfer process and almost paralysing projects or not understanding the need for due process.

Overall, I would say that the legislation makes it easier to work with communities.

5.2 Where can things be further improved, and what needs to change?

I think that communication is key to improve perceptions and to maximising the potential of the legislation. This is something that I think needs to be tackled nationally as well as within individual relevant authorities and with communities.

I think the existing guidance documents are great and revert to them almost daily but know that others consider them too complicated and are put off by the size of the guidance documents themselves. I have begun to break this down into individual chapters appropriate to the stage community groups are at or to brief managers and elected members on aspects of the process. I think the guidance documents could be improved to be more intuitive and to provide more examples/case studies/etc. I also think the guidance would benefit from a self-assessment tool which community groups could use to assess their readiness for asset transfer. I have developed a tool locally which is pretty basic but a national tool would help to improve consistency. A similar tool for relevant authorities would also be helpful in helping to break down misconceptions about asset transfer and how it can be used strategically.

Another area for improvement perhaps related to potential benefits. I have found that groups struggle with identifying benefits particularly to correspond to those identified in the legislation and guidance documents. A wider range of benefits and tools for identifying and measuring these would be a useful addition to the guidance. Relevant authorities must also be more open to different forms of benefit and how to interpret or measure these in comparison to the more tangible economic and social benefits that they are used to assessing projects on.

5.3 Are you aware of what support is available to you when engaging with this legislation, and how you can access this? Please provide comments where possible.

We use COSS on a regular basis and work side by side in supporting organisations in their CAT journey.

5.4 What would you like to see now, to further empower Scotland's communities?

In Renfrewshire we have seen a 10-fold increase in the number of CAT enquiries and first stage applications, however, many of these are never fully developed. My take on this is that groups are put off by what they see as a complicated process. I would like to see processes simplified perhaps on a sliding scale appropriate to the type of asset transfer or activity being sought. A group looking for a small piece of land to create a community garden or a youth football club looking to take over and manage playing fields are wildly different in terms of what we need to see from them and both are also wildly different to groups who want to own, build and develop property or to take over existing operational assets. We have been toying with use of management rights where appropriate over land as opposed to full asset transfer. I think that the legislation and guidance would benefit from a review of this option as well as increased promotion and examples of use.

There are other elements of the Community Empowerment Act that sit alongside asset transfer and which, if better promoted, would further empower Scotland's communities when asset transfer is not the best option.

In all, to further empower Scotland's communities, I would like to see increased promotion of all options available under the legislation and greater flexibility for relevant authorities to identify and match opportunities to need.

Please email the completed template by 30 June 2023 to community.empowerment@gov.scot

If you have any queries please contact Malcolm Cowie, Asset Transfer Policy Manager at Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot