



<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Cabinet	<u>Public</u>
19 October 2022	

Community Asset Transfer Policy Update 2022

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1. Synopsis

- 1.1. The Community Asset Transfer Policy "(CAT Policy)" has been updated to provide greater clarity on requirements and remove information not required in the policy document. Cabinet is requested to adopt the refreshed policy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The CAT Policy was approved by Cabinet in October 2012 and minor amendments were approved in June 2017. It is part of the Council's approach to working with local communities, and the voluntary and community sector, in strengthening the sustainability and resilience of communities and organisations through asset transfer.
- 2.2. The policy explains the circumstances in which an asset may be transferred for the benefit of the local community and the process to be followed by both the community and Council in achieving the transfer. Any transfer proposals are assessed against criteria including how the transfer will benefit the community, safeguard or create new opportunities for local services or activities and support the Council's objectives.
- 2.3. The update comprises of:

Reducing the number of pages from 36 to 16 plus a glossary of terms by

 - Removing details of the internal assessment process – this is an officer process.

- Removing the Appendix containing organisational requirements – these are already within the body of the policy and therefore a duplication.
- Removing the application forms and assessment tools, these are separate documents and removing them from the policy will enable minor tweaks to them as we improve our process without the need to ask for Cabinet approval each time.
- Removing the list of organisations able to offer further support. We have no control over changes to their web addresses and consider links are better placed on our website.

And inserting:

- more detail on who cannot apply for a CAT.
- more clarity on the financial evidence required to demonstrate the organisation is not for profit.
- a clearer definition around the basis of a transfer including defined section covering lease length rent and key clauses.
- reinforcement of the importance of transparency to ensure CATs are not subsidising commercial operations.
- an expansion of the application process.
- a new paragraph to explain post transfer requirements and monitoring.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet approves the proposed update to the Community Asset Transfer policy as laid out in the appendix.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. There are no perceived risks in making the proposed amendments to the CAT policy, which do not make significant changes to the policy, but rather streamline the document and add clarity to key areas as listed in 2.3
- 4.2. The proposed updates have been developed following officer review of the current policy.
- 4.3. The policy supports the Council's organisational principles to
- Put Shropshire back into the Community
 - Focus on our customers

- Provide Value for Money
- Empower effective collaborations for positive change
- Engage and empower talented people
- Make decisions based on current data and intelligence

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no financial implications associated with the proposed update.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The transfer of community assets may provide opportunities for recipient organisations to:
- improve the energy and carbon performance of buildings
 - install renewable energy generation equipment
 - capture and store carbon through tree planting or landscaping improvements
 - improve the resilience of assets to the effects of extreme weather conditions associated with climate change
- 6.2. Application of the policy therefore provides the opportunity to make a positive contribution to climate change and carbon management.

7. Background

- 7.1. As part of the Council's core objective to strengthen our local towns and villages, the Asset Management team are working with the voluntary sector to enable the transfer of suitable land and buildings to community groups and organisations. The CAT policy provides a framework and guidance to assess which transfers are viable and how the transfer will be implemented .
- 7.2. The policy contributes to the Council's objectives as set out in The Shropshire Plan – to work with partners and support communities to prosper, and the Asset Management Strategy Section 5: *Commission and work in partnership to empower communities*. The policy is to release where appropriate non-core assets, through leasehold, or by exception freehold, transfer to communities thus reducing revenue or maintenance burdens.
- 7.3. The policy seeks to ensure that the proposed transfer of the asset is for the benefit of the community and that the organisation taking the transfer is sustainable. Successful organisations can

often access to sources of funding which may be denied to the Council.

- 7.4. The policy also seeks to ensure that the organisation applying to take the transfer has suitable experience and capacity to take on the asset and as part of the application process the organisation is required to demonstrate its organisational and governance, financial and partnership arrangements, together with the support from within the community.
- 7.5. The Strategic Asset Manager is responsible for the administration of requests for Community Asset Transfers and manages the process, including evaluation of proposals and enabling the transfers of assets.
- 7.6. The CAT policy is publicised on the Council's website with access to the policy, expression of interest documents and links to other sources of information.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. Since the policy's implementation 60 initial expressions of interest have been received. Of these
 - 7 have successfully transferred to community organisations
 - 44 have not proceeded or been withdrawn
 - 9 are currently working their way through the process

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The policy refresh will make the process clearer to applicants and reinforce the importance of transparency

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Paper : Community Asset Transfer Policy 17 October 2012

Cabinet Paper : Community Asset Transfer Policy 21 June 2017

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Dean Carroll – Portfolio Holder Highways & Assets

Cecilia Motley – Portfolio Holder for Communities

Local Member

n/a

Appendices

Shropshire Council Community Asset Transfer Policy [SC CAT policy Mar22 FINAL L.pdf](#)