

Town and Parish Council Asset Transfer Policy

Introduction

Shropshire Council is committed to empowering local communities by devolving suitable assets, land and buildings to Town and Parish Councils. This policy is tailored for Town and Parish Councils as democratically elected local bodies. This Asset Transfer Policy provides a robust framework for structured decision-making, applicant support, and governance oversight. This document provides the process for an asset transfer.

Policy Statement

Shropshire Council recognises the value of transferring assets to Town and Parish Councils to strengthen local decision-making, enhance service delivery, and foster sustainable communities. Asset transfers will be considered where it delivers clear benefits to residents, aligns with strategic objectives, and ensures effective stewardship of public assets. The policy will be reviewed annually, reflecting Shropshire Council's commitment to continuous improvement.

Scope

This policy applies exclusively to the transfer of council-owned assets to Town and Parish Councils. Transfers to other community groups are governed by the broader Community Asset transfer policy. The process covers all types of assets, including land, buildings, and facilities, except those required for core statutory services or identified as strategic to the Council's operations.

Principles

- **Transparency:** All stages of the process are open and documented.
- **Community Benefit:** Transfers must demonstrate clear, ongoing benefit to the local community.
- **Sustainability:** Town and Parish Councils must show capacity and resources to manage the asset.
- **Accountability:** Governance arrangements must ensure responsible management and reporting.
- **Alignment with Strategic Objectives:** Transfers must support the Council's corporate priorities and local plans.
- **Structured Decision-Making:** A formal Asset transfer Board with officer and member representation, to oversee requests and ensures consistency. Reporting monthly to Shropshire Council Cabinet to ensure transparency.
- **Leasehold/Freehold Transfers:** Leasehold is the preferred option, 99 years unless otherwise agreed. Freehold transfers are restricted to exceptional cases, requiring Cabinet sign-off.
- **Applicant Support:** Named contact assigned to support applicants throughout the process.
- **Terms of Reference:** agreed at EOI stage to aid business case development.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Clearly defined reporting requirements in agreements.
- **Online Guidance and Templates:** Provision of online guidance and EOI on Shropshire Council website and can also be emailed.

Eligibility

- Be a legally constituted Town or Parish Council within Shropshire.
- Demonstrate community need and benefit.
- Show capacity for asset management, including financial and operational resources.
- Commit to ongoing monitoring and reporting as required by the Council.

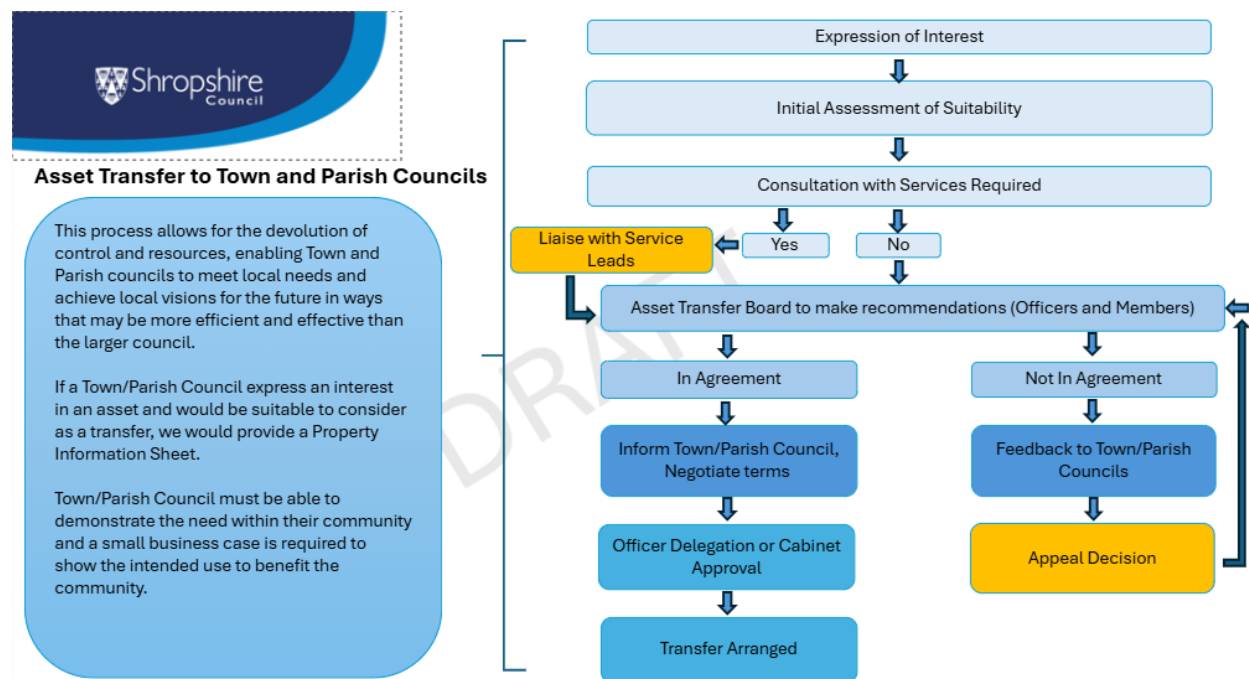
The Transfer Process

| Step | Description |
|--|---|
| Step 1 Pre-Application Support & Expression of Interest (EOI) | Online guidance, named contact, submit EOI, property info sheet and draft Terms of reference |
| Step 2 Suitability Assessment | Review, liaise, stakeholder involvement, eligibility check, local member views. Other service involvement |
| Step 3 Decision & Approval | Head of Property & Development in consultation with Portfolio Holders/Asset Transfer Board review, Cabinet for information, early Heads of Terms. |
| Step 4 Finalisation & Monitoring | Legal transfer, annual reporting |
| Step 5 Appeals & Resubmission | Clear route for appeals and resubmissions. |

Governance

The Asset Transfer Board provides oversight, ensures consistency, and monitors delivery. Governance arrangements are in place, including a formal Devolution Board comprising Cabinet Members and senior officers from relevant departments (Policy, Property, Legal, Finance, and service leads), in which will support the wider services devolution.

Process Flowchart



Appendix 1: - Process presentation