

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	20 th November 2020
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Service Area	Corporate Property
Committee Date	1 st March 2021

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Trosglwyddo Asedau Cymunedol

Community Asset Transfer

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Councils current approach to Community Asset Transfers and its Community Organisation Rental Policy, in particular with focus on community engagement, leases to community groups and promoting bio diversity.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That the contents of this report be noted.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committee have requested a report in respect of the Councils Community Asset Transfer Strategy, with particular focus on community engagement, leases to community groups and promoting bio-diversity.
- 3.2 Community Asset Transfers (CAT's) are essentially the transfer of a property, by lease or freehold to a community organisation for community purposes, where the availability of the property has not been advertised on the open market.

- 3.3 The Council wishes to support community development and empowerment of communities to help them deliver their own solutions to local needs and demands. People are the strongest and most valuable asset that a community has and the transfer of fixed assets to well organised and supported groups will encourage greater community activity and responsiveness in local areas.

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

- 4.1 The Council approved adoption of the Community Asset Transfer Strategy in 2010 and a copy of the strategy is attached at *Appendix 1*.
- 4.2 The Council also approved the adoption of the Community Organisation Rental Policy in 2016, which supports the implementation of Community Asset Transfers. It provides a framework to ensure market rents are agreed for all potential Community Asset Transfers, with the ability for community organisations to obtain a grant to cover the rent agreed. A copy of this policy is attached at *Appendix 2*.

5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 5.1 Both the Community Asset Transfer Policy and the Community Organisation Rental Policy have been in place for some time and are fully embedded in to the Councils processes.
- 5.2 Any properties considered suitable for CAT go through a detailed consultation process, which includes all internal departments and Local Members.
- 5.3 The Local Members in particular are ideally placed within the community to identify all community organisations with the capacity and interest in taking projects forward. All organisations that express an interest in taking a CAT of a Council owned asset will be required to submit detailed proposals for consideration. Submissions are assessed and compared against competing organisations, if relevant, before being reported to Cabinet.
- 5.4 We currently have approximately 45 CAT's in place. Many are historic leases, but the more recent ones have been agreed in accordance with the current strategy and rental policy. A schedule of CAT's are attached at *Appendix 3*.
- 5.5 As part of the internal consultation exercise, advice is obtained from colleagues in respect of bio-diversity issues affecting the property and any opportunities that may arise as part of any potential CAT. These opportunities and/or requirements are built in to the lease agreement. For example the lease terms may require the retention of hedgerows or trees or require compliance with bio-diversity action plans that affect the property.

6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- 6.1 The Council are keen to continue to work with Community organisations to secure and promote community facilities for the future. There is a focus on ensuring that any agreements entered in to are aligned to the Councils strategic plans and the wellbeing objectives.

6.2 Continued support and feedback from elected Members in respect of this area of work is encouraged.

7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

7.1 The Community Asset Transfer Strategy and Community Organisation Rental Policy needs to be reviewed and if required, updated as part of the adoption of the new Corporate Asset Management Plan which is now due.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

8.1 The Community Asset Transfer Strategy aims to support community development and empowers communities to deliver their own solutions to local needs and demands thereby contributing to the wellbeing objectives.

JUDITH JONES
CHIEF OFFICER FOR PLANNING &
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

COUNCILLOR DAVID HUGHES
CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING &
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
List the Background documents which have been relied on in preparing the report. E.g. previous minutes of relevant committees		
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		