

## **WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

### **1. Introduction**

This Community Asset Transfer Annual Report has been prepared in compliance with the mandatory requirements of Part 5 (Section 95) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The report has been prepared by the council's Asset Manager as the Lead Officer for Community Asset Transfer and it covers the reporting period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

### **2. Community Asset Transfer Requests Received**

West Lothian Council received no community asset transfer requests during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Accordingly, no community asset transfer requests were accepted or refused by the council during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

The council did not receive any community asset transfer requests during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 that resulted in the transfer of ownership or the lease of land, or resulted in other rights in respect of that land being conferred on a community transfer body.

The West Lothian Wolves Basketball Club submitted a community asset transfer request during the previous reporting period (2017/18). That request sought the transfer of ownership of the former Blackburn Community Education Centre, Ash Grove, Blackburn. The council agreed to support that request, subject to the club securing the external funding needed to deliver the project. Despite eighteen months of trying, the club were unable to secure that funding and their asset transfer request was formally refused by the Community Asset Transfer Committee at its meeting on 2 April 2019. The club did not request a review of that decision and nor did they appeal it. The council's decision to refuse that asset transfer request will be included in the Community Asset Transfer Annual Report for 2019/20.

### **3. Applications for Internal Reviews**

There were no applications for internal reviews in respect of a decision taken by the council in relation to an asset transfer request during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

### **4. Appeals of Decisions Taken**

There were no appeals to the Scottish Ministers in respect of a decision taken by the council in relation to an asset transfer request during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

### **5. Promotion of the use of Community Asset Transfer Requests**

The council's approved Community Asset Transfer Policy and its supporting governance arrangements are recognised as being both progressive and proactive. They encourage a corporate approach to the use of community asset transfer as a driver for positive change that has the potential to deliver benefits not only for our communities, but also for the council itself.

The council's Transforming Your Council agenda includes a dedicated work stream entitled "Empowering Communities". The aim of that work stream is to encourage community groups to use asset transfer as a means of acquiring and operating community assets, including community centres, village halls and sports pavilions. That work stream is supported by staff resources and a substantial, dedicated capital investment budget for community-led asset transfer projects.

Council officers from a range of key services have sought to actively promote community asset transfer during the reporting period by engaging directly with a wide range of community groups and by participating in various public information events, including a community asset transfer awareness raising event hosted by the West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway. Officers also attended the West Lothian Community Centre Management Association's annual forum and provided the group with a presentation on asset transfer.

Throughout the year, officers have also undertaken a series of one-to-one meetings with a wide range of community groups to provide an introduction to community asset transfer and its benefits.

Council representatives on the Scottish Heads of Property (SHOP) working group have discussed community asset transfer with a view to sharing information and learning from good practice across the thirty two local authorities.

## 6. Support for Community Transfer Bodies making an Asset Transfer Request

The council's Asset Manager along with colleagues from Customer Services, Economic Development and Community Regeneration have met with a wide range of community groups to explain the principles of asset transfer and to discuss the provisions of the council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Council officers have worked with these groups to understand their individual aspirations and to provide tailored advice as to how the groups might best take their respective projects forward, be it through asset transfer, participation requests or another model.

In some instances, this partnership working has led to arrangements being made without the submission of an asset transfer request (e.g. the granting of community benefit leases).

In other instances, officers have provided property-specific information (e.g. ownership plans, condition surveys or asbestos reports.), given expert advice on the preparation of business plans and worked as link-officers signposting groups to other sources of external support and funding. As a result of that practical support, there are a significant number of community groups currently preparing the ground and actively undertaking due diligence in advance of submitting an asset transfer request.

Table 1 below provides details of the community groups that officers have engaged with during the reporting period.

**Table 1: Record of Community Engagement 2018/19**

COMMUNITY GROUP	SUBJECT PROPERTY
<b>1. Empowering Communities (Community Centres)</b>	
West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway	Asset Transfer Promotional Event
The West Lothian Community Centres Management Association Forum	Asset Transfer Promotional Event
Uphall Station Community Centre Management Association	Uphall Station Community Centre
Uphall Community Centre Management Association	Uphall Community Centre
COMMUNITY GROUP	SUBJECT PROPERTY
<b>1. Empowering Communities (Community Centres - continued)</b>	
West Calder Community Centre Management Association	West Calder Community Centre

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC

Carmondean Community Centre Management Association	Carmondean Community Centre
Crofthead Community Centre Management Association	Crofthead Community Centre
Polbeth Community Centre Management Association	Polbeth Community Centre
Dechmont Community Centre Management Association	Dechmont Community Centre
<b>COMMUNITY GROUP</b>	<b>SUBJECT PROPERTY</b>
<b>2. Empowering Communities (Sports Pavilions)</b>	
Broxburn United Community Football Club	Sports pavilion at Station Road, Broxburn
Blackburn United Community Football Club	Sports facilities at Murrayfield Park, Blackburn
Watson Memorial Bowling Club	Sports pavilion at Watson Park, Armadale
Armadale Community Football Club	Sports facilities at Watson Park, Woods Park and Westrigg Park
Whitburn Community Football Club	Sports facilities at KGV Park & Blaeberry Park, Whitburn
West Lothian Football Club	Sports facilities at KGV Park, Uphall
<b>COMMUNITY GROUP</b>	<b>SUBJECT PROPERTY</b>
<b>3. General Community Asset Transfer</b>	
West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust	Former West Calder Workspace, Society Place, West Calder
Fauldhouse Community Development Trust	Former Eastfield Training Centre, Fauldhouse
Winchburgh Community Development Trust	General asset transfer opportunities in Winchburgh
Bathgate Community Council	Site of former Bathgate Community Centre, Bathgate
Pumpherstoun Community Council	Site for community garden at Uphall Station Road, Pumpherston
Livingston United Church	Carmondean Community Centre
<b>COMMUNITY GROUP</b>	<b>SUBJECT PROPERTY</b>
<b>3. General Community Asset Transfer (continued)</b>	
Simply Play	General asset transfer opportunities across West Lothian
Family and Community Development West Lothian	General asset transfer opportunities across West Lothian
The Larder	Land at Crofthead Community Centre, Dedridge
Mid Calder Community Council	The Wee School, School Lane, Mid Calder
Ladywell Good Neighbourhood Network	The former Ferns Public House, Ladywell
Craigshill Good Neighbourhood Network	General asset transfer opportunities in Craigshill

West Lothian Wolves Basketball Club	Former Blackburn Community Centre, Ash Grove, Blackburn
Mr. Andrew Ramsay	The Low Port Centre, Blackness Road, Linlithgow

## **7. Community Asset Transfer going forward**

Going forward into the 2019/20 financial year and beyond, the council will continue to promote community asset transfer as an important means of delivering positive change across our communities. We will continue to support our communities, building capacity and developing confidence amongst those groups with an interest in asset transfer.

In particular, we will continue to use our dedicated resources to take the Empowering Communities work stream forward. With this in mind, officers from a range of key services across the council (including Customer Services, Property Management and Development and Economic Development) have arranged a series of Community Asset Transfer Roadshows that will take place across West Lothian during August and September 2019.

Whilst no community asset transfer requests were received during 2018/19, officers have been heavily involved in a significant amount of “pre-application” enabling work across a range of community-led projects. That work has already resulted in one asset transfer request being lodged in April 2019 and a number of other community groups have indicated that they are close to submitting asset transfer requests.

In accordance with approved policy, all asset transfer requests received by the council will be evaluated by the Community Asset Transfer Officer Board and reported to the Community Asset Transfer Committee for determination.

(END)