



Transforming Local Infrastructure Asset Transfer Cluster

How to... prepare for asset transfer

Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is a shift in management and / or ownership of land or buildings from the public sector (usually the local authority) to communities and / or voluntary sector organisations. Unfortunately, there isn't a 'one size fits all' guide to asset transfer; every asset and every group is different and needs to be considered in its own right. There is, however, plenty of information and support available.

Assets can be transferred on a short term or long term lease or freehold transfer, and local authorities can transfer assets below market value (known as 'less than best consideration').

Local authorities act as the steward for land and buildings to ensure that it benefits the community. CAT is seen as a way to bring even greater benefits to the local area.

The benefits of asset transfer

- Enables communities to shape their local area
- Involves communities in co-designing places and services to better suit their needs
- Can help develop community enterprises
- Can help communities to enable local government reach their aims and objectives
- Can deliver long-term social, economic and environmental benefits to an area
- Attracts new investment into an area, bringing in wider regeneration activities
- Builds the skills and capacity of an organisation or community with the potential to create jobs
- Can increase the value of housing in the surrounding area and bring in other investment.

What to think about before you start

There are plenty of benefits to CAT but there are some drawbacks too. These include:

- Developing, maintaining and managing a physical asset can be a drain on time
- Many skills are required as well as significant financial resources.

These need to be weighed up carefully as they pose risks for your organisation that will need to be managed. Part of this process will include developing your rationale for taking on assets and ensuring your organisation is robust enough by undertaking a feasibility study to consider all the risks and liabilities. You will also need a business plan which incorporates CAT as part of your business model.



How to get going

Build local support | Once you've decided that CAT is for you start building support from businesses, people living locally and councillors.

Site selection and appraisal | Consider all the options. Visit the city council's website and see what assets they have currently available for transfer:

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/2882/Community-Asset-Transfer>

Learn from others' experience | Visit similar projects to look at how maintenance and management issues can be handled and make sure you understand the process and the skills required at each stage.

Do an internal capacity and skills audit | An audit will help you to be clear about the resources and skills gaps you need to fill.

Identify a group of core stakeholders | Secure commitment and agree roles and responsibilities.

Identify asset transfer champions | Your champions need to be from both sides i.e. buyer and vendor. They'll play an important role in promoting your venture.

Source professional advisors | You'll need different professional advice during the process. Make sure you're happy with your advisor's approach and that they understand your needs.

Don't forget to plan!

Planning is an essential part of the process. The following planning suggestions will help you keep on track and provide progress updates more easily:

- Define project objectives. These should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound.
- Create a timetable for transfer
- Agree communications strategy
- Create your business case
- Flag up any potential issues
- Create briefing documents for advisors
- Gather information on costs.

Sources of support

In addition to the wealth of support available in your local community you can get information and support from the following places:

- Specialist umbrella bodies such as
 - Locality www.locality.org.uk
 - The asset transfer unit www.locality.org.uk/our-work/assets
 - Community Matters www.communityrights.org.uk
- Other voluntary organisations with experience
- Wolverhampton City Council <http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/2882/Community-Asset-Transfer>

