

**Asset Transfer Request
Reporting Template 2020/21 for Relevant Authorities**

Section 95 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires relevant authorities to produce an annual report on Asset Transfer Request activity and publish this no later than 30 June each year.

Following stakeholder feedback and in response to asset transfer evaluations, this template has been created to help gather asset transfer data for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. Information provided will help inform policy and practice at local and national level as the data will be collated and shared by the Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Team. However, it will be for each relevant authority to make their own annual report publicly available by 30 June 2021, whether using this template or not.

Please provide information in the four sections below and email the completed template by 30 June 2021 to community.empowerment@gov.scot.

Section One – Relevant Authority Information

Organisation:

Scottish Borders Council

Address:

Council Headquarters

Newtown St Boswells

Melrose TD6 0SA

Completed by:

Clare Malster

Role:

Locality Development Co-ordinator

Email:

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Telephone:

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Date of completion:

15/06/2021

Are you the Asset Transfer Lead Contact for the organisation: Yes

If not please provide the name, job title and email address for the lead contact for any queries:

Section 2: Asset Transfer Data in 2020/21

2.1 Please complete the following table for the 2020/21 reporting period :

Total new applications received in 2020/21	Total applications received prior to 1 April 2020 which were still to be determined at 1 April 2020	Number of successful applications agreed in 2020/21	Number of unsuccessful applications refused in 2020/21	Total applications (received in any year) still to be determined as at 31 March 2021.
1	1*	1	0	0

* Asset transfer request withdrawn by applicant

2.2 Please provide details of Asset Transfer Requests received which resulted in transfer of ownership, lease, or rights from your relevant authority to a community transfer body in 2020/21:

Name of Community Transfer Body, or community group that will take ownership, lease, or management of the asset.	Date request was accepted	Date decision was agreed to transfer the asset	Date transfer completed	Please provide further details, such as: description of the asset / area transferred / amount paid / discount given/ type of ownership / purpose of the transfer.
Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company	05/04/2018	03/04/2021		Sale of former Ettrick Primary School, garden and carpark, Ettrick Valley, Selkirk, TD7 5JA. Process was extended by mutual agreement while appeal to Scottish Ministers for a separate piece of land, linked to the project, was heard.

2.3 Please provide details of Asset Transfer Requests that went to a relevant authority appeal (internal) and/or review (Scottish Government) which were concluded in 2020/21:

Name of Community Transfer Body	Was the Asset Transfer Appeal/Review accepted? (Y/N)	Why was the Appeal/Review accepted/refused? <i>Please provide details of the asset transfer request and reasons for your decision.</i>

2.4 How many assets in total have been transferred to community ownership, lease or management by your organisation since the asset transfer legislation came into force in January 2017?

Two assets have been transferred to community ownership under the Act.

- Ettrick Primary School as associated land as detailed above (sale in the progress)
- Site 2, Mayfield Gardens Kelso (lease)

2.5 Please provide information on any assets transferred to community ownership *outwith* the Asset Transfer legislative process since January 2017.

East Station Office, Peebles - lease

Land at Lower Green, West Linton - use

Space at Former Duns High School - lease

Argus Centre Annexe, Selkirk - lease

West Linton Village Centre - lease

Ability Centre and garden ground, Galashiels – lease

Village Hall, Heriot – extended (long term) lease

Recreation ground, Eyemouth – lease

Hawick Tennis Courts – conversion to Pump Track - lease

2.6 Considering asset transfers that have completed since 2017, what do you consider to be the outcomes (benefits/challenges) for the communities that have taken ownership of the assets? Please give examples if you can.

Benefits of community ownership (including lease and use) are:

- Stability provided that enables the development of their project/service to meet ongoing and newly identified needs/wishes of the community
- Capacity built through the application process leading to the communities becoming more ambitious within ongoing plans
- Ownership/responsibility can create a greater feeling of permanency
- Transfer of local authority assets at no/low cost has enabled groups to establish a service for their community that may not have happened otherwise
- Increased community resilience

Challenges:

- Can create tension within communities if not everyone is supportive of the transfer

Section Three – Promotion and Equality

3.1 Please provide information on any action you have taken to promote the benefits of asset transfer or any support provided for communities to engage with the Asset Transfer Request process during 2020/21.

During the past year asset transfer opportunities were promoted through the SBC website with support provided to groups that wished to explore potential asset transfer requests. However, as elsewhere across Scotland, enquiries were low due to the ongoing pandemic.

As of November 2020 we were able to recommence our Area Partnership meetings which involve the promotion of asset transfer, both under and outwith the Act. We have also been planning to showcase asset transfers within each of our five localities.

3.2 In particular what action has been taken to support disadvantaged communities to engage with the asset transfer process during 2020/21?

During 2020/21, it would seem that disadvantaged communities were among those most affected by the pandemic. Our experience was that communities across the Borders focussed their resources on supporting the vulnerable in their towns and villages rather than community led activities such as asset transfer and participation requests.

Support for disadvantaged communities is largely provided by CLD staff who in turn work closely with Locality Development Co-ordinators (LDC). Previously there had been discussions in relation to the Community Empowerment Act and asset transfer at Learning Community Partnership meetings, which are primarily aimed at disadvantaged communities. The role of LDCs includes direct support to groups wishing to pursue and asset transfer either under, or outwith, the Act. CLD staff and LDCs also lead our Community Assistance Hubs which have provided a vital link between individuals, organisations and community volunteers during the pandemic.

As our services and communities start to 'open up' again we are working harder to engage with our hard to reach groups and actively go and meet with them.

3.3 Please provide any details of the inclusiveness and involvement of local organisations when determining asset transfer applications.

Local organisations are not involved directly in the determination of asset transfer requests.

Section Four – Additional Information

4.1 Please use this space to provide any further feedback not covered in the above sections.

For example, we are interested in your reflections about what has gone well and what has gone less well in relation to Asset Transfers during 2020/21?

Is there any aspect of the process that you intend to adapt or change in the year ahead?

Have you identified any needs for guidance or support that would support the ATR process?

If you have developed any case study material or published new information about Asset Transfer Requests please share links to those with us here.

The progress of asset transfer requests was slowed down in 2020/21 due to communities and local authorities responding to the pandemic. This was frustrating but acknowledged as unavoidable. The pandemic also led Community Transfer Bodies to explore and utilise digital tools in order to consult with their communities. Although most people were still able to engage with the process, those digitally disadvantaged, who would rely on face to face discussion/public events, could have been excluded. With non-essential shops and community venues closed, public notices may not have been seen by all. However more people did become digitally active during 2020/21, many supported through initiatives such as Connecting Scotland, and online communication tools proved an effective way of circulating information within local communities.

We are amending our process to take account of asset transfers made in respect of Common Good assets and will share this once it has been finalised.

We value the independent support/advice that is provided to groups by Community Ownership Support Service.

As a result of the pandemic, and the way in which groups and individuals came together to respond to the needs of their local communities, there is more awareness around community empowerment and involvement. Communities appear to be more open on the process of involvement and asset transfer and while some groups may have previously talked about asset transfer there is a feeling now that they have the ability to act and are more empowered.

Subject to the pressures of responding during Covid, if possible please email the completed template by 30 June 2021 to community.empowerment@gov.scot

If you have any queries please contact Malcolm Cowie, Asset Transfer Policy Manager at Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot

Thank you!

Community Empowerment Team
Scottish Government