



## PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

**Our vision is a Perth and Kinross where everyone can live life well, free from poverty and inequalities**

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<b>Committee or Board:</b>	<b>Housing and Social Wellbeing Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>11 June 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Community Empowerment Annual Report</b>
<b>Report Number:</b>	
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### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the Community Empowerment Annual Report for 2024/25. The Annual Report provides an overview of the work done to promote and respond to interest in Community Asset Transfer and Participation Requests.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council:

Approves the Community Empowerment Annual Report 2024/25

### **3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT**

- 3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:

- Section 4: Background/Main Issues
- Section 5: Summary of Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Activity Over Financial Year 2024-25
- Section 6: Related Community Empowerment Work by Other Council Services
- Section 7: Participation Requests
- Section 8: Conclusion
- Section 9: Impact Value Assessment
- Section 10: Appendix: Community Empowerment Annual Report

#### **4. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out rights for communities to have more significant influence or control over decisions and services which are most important to them. These rights are summarised as follows:
- Part 3 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 enables communities to request to participate in processes to improve outcomes in their local community.
  - Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives community groups the right to request ownership, lease, or access assets owned by the Council and other public bodies.
- 4.2 The Council has a statutory duty to report on the number of both Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Requests and Participation Requests it receives every year and the Council's activity to promote these rights.
- 4.3 This Annual Report outlines the Community Asset Transfer interest and Participation Requests the Council has received from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The Report sets out some of the outcomes from these requests and the full report in Appendix one details the pro-active work done to promote CAT and Participation Requests to communities as well as the support given to groups. This work reflects the corporate priority of working in partnership with communities.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER (CAT) ACTIVITY OVER FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025**

- 5.1 Since April 2024, Perth and Kinross Council has supported thirty-four community organisations who have expressed interest in the Community Asset Transfer process in Perth and Kinross. This report summarises some of the key activities that have taken place, and how Perth and Kinross Council has supported these community organisations with their Expressions of Interest (EOI) in a Community Asset Transfer. The full report is provided as Appendix 1.
- 5.2 This report also includes a summary of the activities that have been undertaken in partnership with the Estates team to support community organisations who have been looking towards community ownership out with official Community Asset Transfer route. The Community Learning and Development Team work closely with Estates to support groups to find the most appropriate route to ownership or access.

##### **Cloichard Depot, Pitlochry**

- 5.3 Sprout are a Pitlochry based group looking to create an upcycling centre and climate café. They work closely with the local Men's Shed. Following the initial interest in Burnside Toilets, Sprout submitted an EOI in December 2023 for

the Cloichard Depot. They hope to house their upcycling centre, climate café, and a workshop for the Men's Shed. Initial feedback has been provided by the CAT team and the group will continue to be supported to submit a full CAT application. Over the last year the group have had support to engage with architects to begin feasibility work which will be carried out during 2025.

#### **Pitlochry Town Hall, West Moulin Road, Pitlochry**

- 5.4 Following initial interest resulting from the Pitlochry Asset Review, the Pitlochry Town Hall group have made progress since their initial EOI. They are now a registered charity and have secured funding to begin feasibility work. They have recently received funding from the PKC Advancing Community Assets Fund towards staffing costs. As well as having the support of a Development Officer, this funding will now allow the group to be able to hire an Operations Manager for the Hall. Following discussions with local Elected Members a proposed Management Agreement with PKC has been agreed and it is expected that this experience will help to inform their CAT application.

#### **Dewars Centre, Perth**

- 5.5 Following discussion on the future of the Dewars Centre, Scottish Curling is exploring the possibility of a community-led ice facility. The initial goal would be to take the building on through a long-term lease. Scottish Curling have secured funding from PKC to carry out a feasibility study during the first quarter of 2025/26.

#### **Alyth Museum**

- 5.6 Following the closure of the museum in Alyth, Alyth Youth Partnership approached PKC about using the building as a youth hub. The group have started community consultation, and the young people are actively involved in a steering group for this. They have commitment from local trades people to help with much of the capital works and are working on a business plan with the aim of submitting a proposal in Summer 2025.

### **6. RELATED COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT WORK BY OTHER COUNCIL SERVICES**

- 6.1 Community groups and organisations are often referred directly to PKC's Estates Team who work with other Services to grant leases and sale of assets. Additionally, many groups who approach the Community Empowerment Team find solutions with Estates out with the typical Community Asset Transfer Route. This section of the report offers a summary of some of the activity since 1 April 2024.

#### **45 High Street, Perth - St Johnstone Community Trust**

- 6.2 Estates have agreed Heads of Terms and are progressing with a new lease of 45 High Street to St Johnstone Community Trust. The property has been

vacant since late last year when Visit Scotland moved out. The proposal is for a retail offering selling St Johnstone FC tickets, memorabilia, office space, St Johnstone Museum, and a space for community events, which will showcase the activities and programs available to the local community and increase footfall within Perth city centre.

#### **Primrose Park, Auchterarder - Auchterarder Community Sports + Recreation**

- 6.3 A new lease was completed in January 2025 with Auchterarder Community Sports + Recreation which will allow the community group to create an 'all wheeled pump track' along with a sperate 'mountain bike skills area', both located within Primrose Park. The pump track opened to the public at the end of March.

#### **South Inch Pavilion, Perth - Fair City Juniors Football Club**

- 6.4 Terms have been agreed with Fair City Juniors Football Club for a lease of the non-café parts of the South Inch Pavilion building, and the Club has received Building Warrant approval to convert the former public toilets into changing rooms. Fair City Juniors is entirely run by volunteers, and they coach around 500 children at the South Inch. The new lease will enable the Club to significantly improve the facilities available to home and away players.

#### **Former Slaughterhouse Site, Aberfeldy - Aberfeldy Development Trust**

- 6.5 Aberfeldy Development Trust have submitted an offer to purchase the former slaughterhouse site at the end of Appin Place, Aberfeldy, and the Council have issued a Qualified Acceptance. The Trust were awarded grant funding by the Scottish Land Fund in December 2024 to purchase this site and an adjacent area of ground for the purpose of developing a small affordable rural housing scheme to address the local community's concerns over housing availability and affordability. It is anticipated that the development will comprise six homes for sale and rent.

#### **Wellmeadow Public Toilets, Blairgowrie - Blairgowrie & Rattray Development Trust**

- 6.6 Following the Council's decision to close the Wellmeadow public toilets, the Blairgowrie & Rattray Development Trust (BRDT) submitted a proposal to take on the operation of the toilets. The Trust signed a lease, and the toilets were handed over by the Council in July 2024. BRDT are being supported by local businesses, organisations, and volunteers, and in 2025 were awarded Scottish Government funding to carry out a feasibility study for adding a gift shop and local information centre to the toilets building.

## **Wildwood, Stanley - West Stormont Woodland Group & Tayside Woodland Partnerships**

- 6.7 In 2024 the Council ran a community consultation on the future of a Council-owned half-acre woodland located in Stanley known as Wildwood or Rookery Wood. The consultation found a strong preference for the Council to explore the willingness of any suitable community groups for taking on responsibility for managing the woodland under a lease or sale. West Stormont Woodland Group (WSWG) and Tayside Woodland Partnerships (TWP) registered their interest, and the Council has engaged with these groups to facilitate a sale of the woodland to TWP, with WSWG taking on woodland management responsibilities.

## **7. PARTICIPATION REQUESTS**

- 7.1 PKC have received two participation requests in 2024/25.

### **Comrie Community Council**

- 7.2 Comrie Community Council submitted a valid participation request on 26 November 2024. This was accepted on 27 January 2025 and was a request to work with PKC and Culture Perth and Kinross around the future of Comrie Library.

### **Crieff Community Council**

- 7.3 Crieff Community Council submitted a valid participation request on 18 February 2025. This request was to be involved in wider community consultation around future development of the former Drummond Arms Hotel site. This request was refused on 4 April 2025. The refusal grounds explained that PKC were not able to support with community consultation at this time, as officers focused on the safety and demolition of the site. However, PKC have committed to community consultation in partnership with Crieff Community Council once demolition is underway at the site.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires the Council to produce an Annual Report, setting out the work done to promote and respond to Community Asset Transfer Requests and Participation Requests. In 2024/25, seven Expressions of Interest were received for Community Asset Transfer, and two Participation Requests were received.

## **9. IMPACT VALUE ASSESSMENT**

[Community Empowerment Annual Report 2024 25 - IVA Summary Report pdf.html.pdf](#)

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Full Community Empowerment Annual Report 24/25

**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2024/205**

**1. STRUCTURE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report is structured over the following sections:  
Section 2: Participation Requests  
Section 3: Community Asset Transfer  
Section 4: Our Approach  
Section 5: Promotion  
Section 6: Progress Made Over 24/25 and Improvement Actions for 25/26  
Section 7: Conclusion

**2. PARTICIPATION REQUESTS**

- 2.1 In the year 2024/25 PKC received two Participation requests.
- 2.2 A participation request from Comrie Community Council was accepted with the intended outcome that CCC, PKC, and CPK can work together to explore opportunities for sustainable library provision in the rural area.
- 2.3 A participation request from Crieff Community Council was refused, however, PKC have committed to exploring their outcome in partnership at a later date. The community in Crieff would like to explore options for the future development on the former Drummond Arms Hotel site.
- 2.4 The recent Scottish Government Review into Participation Requests has highlighted that more work is done nationally to highlight when Participation Requests should be used and provide a better understanding on the Outcome Improvement Process. PKC officer will continue to attend meetings and respond to consultations on this matter and keep others in PKC informed of any changes and updates.

**3. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER**

- 3.1 In 24/25 34 groups approached the council about an asset, 7 withdrew interest before an expression of interest was received, 4 withdrew after submitting an expression of interest, and 7 reached an alternative outcome. There are currently 16 live cases. Examples of some of these groups are detailed in the summary report.
- 3.2 Groups who have reached an alternative outcome typically discuss options with the Community Empowerment Officer and are then introduced to our Estates team who can co-ordinate a lease or negotiated sale. Not included in these figures are groups who are referred to Estates through other Services. An overview of some of the work co-ordinated by Estates was provided in the summary report.

## **4. OUR APPROACH**

- 4.1 The Council is committed to working with community organisations to explore the options for community ownership which are open to them. Groups will initially meet with the Community Empowerment Officer who will discuss which routes, support and funding streams may help them achieve their goal of community ownership. If CAT is considered an option the Community Empowerment Officer can explain this route to the group, as well as providing the group with the PKC CAT Toolkit and Toolkit Workbook. Groups will also be introduced to the Perth and Kinross advisor from the Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) which is part of the Development Trust Association Scotland. This service works closely with Local Authorities and with community groups to support the CAT process. We have held joint information evenings where communities have been able to learn from PKC and COSS about the process. Groups are also introduced to representatives from key funders, such as the Scottish Land Fund.
- 4.2 We take a customer-centred approach to CAT Requests. Community groups are allocated a dedicated officer to act as a single point of contact and coordinate with staff across the Council to find the relevant information before feeding back. Groups are supported by the Community Empowerment Officer to prepare the various documents and pieces of work needed to form a CAT application. Throughout this process the Community Empowerment Officer keeps other relevant officers updated including the CAT Team (including representatives from CLD, Estates, Property, Legal, and Finance), and via the Corporate Property Asset Management Group. Any feedback from these forums is provided to the group before they are encouraged to submit a formal CAT application. During this process officers can often support groups with alternative solutions and therefore not all groups will proceed to full CAT application. A full description of the PKC CAT approach can be found on our webpage at <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/19819/Community-Asset-Transfer>

## **5. PROMOTION**

- 5.1 Both CAT and Participation Requests are promoted to the public via dedicated web pages. Each page contains all the information a group would need to undertake either process, with an animated via example of a hypothetical example of both [CAT](#) and a [Participation Request](#).
- 5.2 As part of a proactive approach to make communities aware of Community Asset Transfer the Community Empowerment Officer has met with communities where assets which are being considered for closure by PKC and its ALEOs. Meetings have taken place regarding Live Active Leisure (LAL) venues including Tulloch Community Centre in Perth, Aytoun Hall in Auchterarder, and Scone Public Hall. There has been little community interest in pursuing CAT whilst LAL management is still seen as an option at these sites. A group has formed around Dunning Town Hall and it is expected that they will submit a request for lease by the end of the year. Groups taking ownership of such large-scale buildings requires considerable capacity

building work and funding for communities to make these successful and sustainable.

- 5.3 Following an invitation from Culture Perth and Kinross (CPK) to attend community meetings on the future of libraries, in January and February the Community Empowerment Officer attended meetings at four libraries to advertise the support available in relation to the Community Empowerment Act. These were held at the CPK libraries in Auchterarder, Scone, and Alyth to discuss CAT and Comrie to highlight Community Right to Buy. In March, an information evening was held in partnership with CPK and the Community Ownership Support Service covering community ownership of library services. Again, there was little interest in community-led solutions with community preference being for CPK services to continue.

## **6. PROGRESS MADE OVER 24/25 AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS FOR 25/26**

### **Funding**

- 6.1 A Meet the Funder event took place in November 2024 where groups were invited to come and speak with funders about their projects. This event was well attended by groups and funders and both reported that they found it useful. This is an event which can be repeated in future.
- 6.2 The Advancing Community Assets Fund was launched in February 2025 as a means of allocating PKC budget funding to groups to help them with their community ownership goals. To date three applications have been received and have been successful in securing funding towards costs associated with CAT, revenue costs, and small capital works. Other groups have indicated what they would like to apply to the fund for, and applications are expected to follow shortly.

### **Training and Support**

- 6.3 Discussion is currently underway with groups regarding the establishment of a Community Ownership Forum. This would provide a regular opportunity for learning, skills sharing, and collaboration. It is hoped that this additional learning opportunity for groups will support them to move their projects forward.
- 6.4 The Community Empowerment Officer is working with Community Learning and Development Workers to develop a standard initial training session which can be offered to interested community groups.
- 6.5 Officers are working towards updating PKCs internal e-learning module on Community Empowerment.
- 6.6 The Community Empowerment Officer attends the National Asset Transfer Action Group, where the work of PKC towards community ownership outwith the CAT process has been recognised. The recent Scottish Government

Review on Community Asset Transfer has identified that this group should be refreshed and reconsider its remit. Additionally, the review has highlighted that more needs to be done to support smaller and/or more disadvantaged communities to make the most out of the Act. PKC officers will continue to be involved as the next stage of the review occurs and will share information and updates.

### **Improvement Actions for 2025/26**

- 6.7 The Council will continue to support community groups to explore opportunities in owning, leasing, or accessing Council assets. Reflecting on performance in 2024/25 and the potential to build on this in 2025/26, the following improvement actions have been identified:

More support and learning opportunities are needed for groups to move projects forward at a steadier pace. A Community Ownership Forum will be established to provide a regular opportunity for collaboration and support. Community Learning and Development Staff will also look at developing further training and resources.

The new CLD Newsletter will contain a section on Community Ownership which can provide an update to interested parties on a regular basis. This will improve communication around CAT.

To improve understanding of the Community Empowerment Act across Council services, e-learning will be developed particularly around Participation Requests and Community Ownership.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires the Council to produce an Annual Report, setting out the work done to promote and respond to Community Asset Transfer Requests and Participation Requests. In 2024/25, seven Expressions of Interest were received for Community Asset Transfer, and two Participation Requests were received.

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