

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	14
Report No	HP/27/26

Committee: **Housing and Property**

Date: **12 August 2026**

Report Title: **Annual Community Asset Transfer Report 2025/26**

Report By: **Assistant Chief Executive - Place**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Community Empowerment Act introduces a right for community bodies to request to own, lease or use public sector assets at a discount on market value through a process known as Community Asset Transfer (CAT). Community ownership of assets has an important role in supporting people to create local opportunities and transform their communities, responding to local challenges by taking control of land and buildings where they live. It is therefore a key priority for the Council to support greater community ownership.
- 1.2 The Act places a requirement on relevant authorities, including local authorities, to publish an annual report on community asset transfer activity for each financial year for the Scottish Government. This report summarises community asset transfer activity in Highland from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. Key messages include:-
- **3** requests received this year that were also determined this year
 - **1** request received in previous years that was determined this year
 - **6** requests received during the year that have yet to be determined
 - **2** requests received in previous years that have not yet been determined
 - **11** requests agreed in prior years but where the legal process has not yet concluded
 - **5** requests legally concluded this year, which were agreed in previous years
 - Since the asset transfer legislation came into force in 2017, the Council has approved over 60 requests.
- 1.3 The community asset transfer annual report for submission to the Scottish Government is summarised in Appendix 1. This year, the Scottish Government introduced a new and highly detailed template for reporting, which includes coverage of all CAT requests since the mechanism came into force under the Community Empowerment Act in 2017. The Scottish Government has acknowledged the return may include only partial details of CATs handled prior to introduction of the new template, as records transition to this new system of reporting. As the reporting template is too large to present in a publishable form, a summary extract has been included in the appendix to this report. A full version is circulated separately as an Excel file.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to **consider** and **agree** the annual report on Community Asset Transfer as detailed in the report, summarised at Appendix 1 and a full version is circulated separately as an Excel file, for submission to the Scottish Government.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource implications:** the report outlines that the total value of discount on assets legally agreed for transfer during 2025/26 was £217,000 in capital value. There were no discounts applied on market rental value properties. This highlights the strong support the Council continues to demonstrate for enabling and encouraging community ownership.
- 3.2 **Legal implications:** Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is a legislative process set out in the Community Empowerment Act. Public bodies have the right to refuse a CAT application on the grounds that greater community benefit will arise from current or alternative use. However, community bodies have the right of review, first to the public body and then to appeal to Scottish Ministers.
- 3.3 **Risk implications:** A key consideration in the assessment of any asset transfer is the sustainability of the proposal. This is both to protect the public asset and ensure ongoing benefit to the community from effective use of the asset. There are however risks that any group could fail in the future or choose to dispose of the transferred asset. Economic development burdens and at times rights of pre-emption contained within the terms of transfers of ownership, can help protect the Council and public money against this and the Community Empowerment Act provides a clause which stipulates how dissolution must be dealt with to ensure any transferred asset remains in community hands, for the benefit of the community, in the event of an organisation ceasing to exist.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety:** there are no specific health and safety implications because of the report.
- 3.5 **Gaelic:** there are no specific Gaelic implications because of the report.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an annual monitoring report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Community Empowerment Act introduces a right for community bodies to request to own, lease or use public sector assets at a discount on market value through a process known as Community Asset Transfer (CAT). This mechanism came into force in January 2017. Once a completed request is submitted from an eligible community group, the Empowerment Act stipulates that Local Authorities have six months to assess the application against a range of potential community benefits and determine whether to grant the request.
- 5.2 Community ownership of assets has an important role in supporting people to create local opportunities and transform their communities, responding to local challenges by taking control of land and buildings where they live. It can also support bringing surplus or underutilised assets back into improved use, for the benefit of the community. It is therefore a key priority for the Council to support greater community ownership.
- 5.3 In Highland, one of the Council's key priorities over many years has been to support communities to develop their own capacity and deliver their own priorities. The CAT programme contributes towards this. The CAT process in Highland continues to support community led regeneration, social enterprise, projects to increase local participation and engagement, health and wellbeing, redeveloped facilities and delivery of new and improved local services, including visitor management facilities. Since the asset transfer legislation came into force in 2017, the Council has agreed over 60 requests
- 5.4 The Community Empowerment Act places a requirement on relevant authorities including local authorities to publish an annual report on community asset transfer activity each financial year and to submit this to the Scottish Government. For 2025/26, a new and detailed template has been developed by the Scottish Government that encompasses all CATs undertaken since 2017. The full report can be found at www.highland.gov.uk/cat and a summary version is attached as Appendix 1. Members are asked to consider and agree the report for submission to the Scottish Government.

6 Scottish Government Annual Community Asset Transfer Report

- 6.1 The report in Appendix 1 contains a summary of Community Asset Transfer activity in Highland from January 2017 to March 2026.
- 6.2 For the last financial year, the report highlights:-
- The Council received a total of **9** new asset transfer requests in 2025/26.
 - All were requests to be considered under the Community Empowerment Act
 - **8** of the requests were for ownership and **1** for lease of land or buildings
 - The Council agreed to **4** asset transfer requests (3 from applications submitted in 2025/26 and 1 submitted in a previous years) and refused **no** requests during the year 2025/26. All 4 agreed requests were for ownership. Discounts given across CATs ranged from 36% to 100% of the asset's market value.

- The transfers agreed in 2025/26 were:-
 - Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry SCIO - former Roy Bridge Primary Buildings and grounds for housing
 - Fort Augustus Community Company - former Janitor's House to develop local housing.
 - Torridon District Community Association - Play Park to develop a new play area.
 - Portree and Braes Community Trust - former Swimming Pool, to develop a play area.

6.3 **11** asset transfers agreed prior to 2025/26 have not yet been concluded legally. The legal process is often complex and whilst the transfer has been agreed, suspensive conditions may apply and terms must be agreed between legal teams representing the Council and community group. This complexity is reflected in the number of requests waiting to be concluded.

6.4 The purpose of Community Asset Transfer within community empowerment legislation is to enhance and increase community benefit outcomes in local communities through improved use of publicly owned assets. This can involve public bodies foregoing some or all financial value of assets to support delivery of the community benefit arising from transfer (awarding discounts on market value or market rental value).

The four asset transfers agreed in 2025/26 present a positive picture of the Council supporting communities and agreeing to transfer ownership of land and buildings to a community organisation to deliver wider benefits to the local community. In the case of two of the transfers, these are also specifically supporting deliver on the Highland Housing Challenge.

For all four of the transfers agreed in 2025/26, it was assessed that the level of wider community benefit that would be derived because of the transfers significantly outweighed the Council retaining ownership and use of the assets.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Place

Date: 10 July 2026

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Appendix 1: Scottish Government Annual Community Asset Transfer Report

Summary extract from Scottish Government Annual Community Asset Transfer Report 2025/26

Appendix 1

Community Transfer Body Name	Asset Name	Basis	Purpose of Transfer	Validated	Asset Value	Decision	Decision Date	Price	Lease Period (months)	Date Transferred
Dornoch Beach Wheelchairs	Dornoch Links	Lease	To site a Changing Places modular unit and storage shed	29/06/2026		Not yet decided				
Ross Sutherland Rugby Club	Naval Grounds	Ownership	Sports and recreational use - rugby mainly - expansion and securing existing provision on the site	05/06/2026		Not yet decided				
Island Park Community Field SCIO	Picnic site and Car Park, Leven Road Kinlochleven	Ownership	Improve Picnic site for Community use. Restore Car park and generate income for community from parking fees	24/04/2026	£9,500.00	Granted	11/06/2026	£1		
Struan Community Company Limited	Struan Primary School and Associated Grounds	Ownership	Development of Community Hub	21/04/2026	£149,999	Not yet decided				
Invergordon Development Trust	Invergordon Town Hall	Lease	Community venue - civic space, social enterprise community café, lettable space for social, cultural activities	27/03/2026	£60,000	Not yet decided				
Altnaharra Community Trust	Former Altnaharra Primary School and Grounds	Ownership	demolition and rebuild community housing and /or lettable business units	25/03/2026	£70,000	Not yet decided				
Beaully Shinty Club	shinty playing area of Braeview Park, Beaully, IV4 7ED and the small parking area adjacent to the Paterson Pavilion changing rooms.	Ownership	Security of tenure.	20/11/2025		Not yet decided				
Torridon District Community Association	Old Play Park, Torridon,	Ownership	Development of new Play Area	30/09/2025	£19,999	Granted	19/01/2026	£1		
Hi Skills CIC	Former Torvean Quarry	Ownership	New Highland Training Skills Academy	09/09/2025	£500,000	Refused (subject to Review)	24/06/2026			
Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry SCIO	Former Roy Bridge Primary Budlings and grounds	Ownership	Housing	24/06/2025	£160,000	Granted	19/08/2025	£75,000		30/10/2025
Dingwall Community Development Company	Sir Hector's Tower Monument	Management Rights	Guided tours for visitors	21/05/2025		Granted				21/05/2026
Fort Augustus Community Company	Former Janitors House	Ownership	Development of Housing	06/05/2025	£110,000	Granted	19/01/2026	£70,000		
Portree & Braes Community Trust	Old Swimming Pool Site, near Camanachd square Portree	Ownership	Redevelopment of area	10/01/2025	£2,000	Granted	27/01/2025	£1		
Fort William Men's Shed	Unit 9A2 Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William	Lease	Economic sustainability of established Men's Shed	20/12/2024	£5,500	Granted	27/01/2025	£2,750	60	27/01/2025
Spean Bridge Roy Bridge and Achnacarry SCIO	Land (circa 2.3 acres) adjacent to Spean Bridge Community Centre	Ownership	Community Garden with allotments, polytunnel, sensory garden and open amenity space and a riverside walk	11/12/2024	£22,999	Granted	27/01/2025	£1		04/08/2025
The Place Youth Club	Site 4, River Drive, Teaninich Industrial Estate Alness	Lease	Continuation of current use	21/02/2024		Granted	05/09/2024		1188	
Carrbridge Ahead	Parcel of land next to Community Fire Station, Carrbridge	Ownership	Community Orchard	04/09/2023	£1,999	Granted	30/11/2023	£1		27/03/2025
Elphin, Ledmore & Knockan Community Association	Elphin Hall	Ownership	Improvement of facilities, Continuation of current use	01/07/2023		Granted	04/02/2025			
Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company	Memorial Hall, Oich Road, Fort Augustus	Ownership	Maintain and improve memorial hall for community use	29/03/2023	£40,000	Granted	05/09/2024	£1		25/03/2026

Community Transfer Body Name	Asset Name	Basis	Purpose of Transfer	Validated	Asset Value	Decision	Decision Date	Price	Lease Period (months)	Date Transferred
Green Hive	Land adjacent to Seamans Hall	Ownership	Building extension	08/03/2023	£0	Withdrawn by applicant	07/08/2023	£0		
Raddery House Limited	Former Black Isle Education Centre and Raddery Woodland	Ownership	Develop land for community activities	03/03/2023	£465,000	Granted	29/01/2025	£325,000		
Thrumster Community Development Association	Thrumster Swing Park	Ownership	Building of a new village hall	30/11/2022	£24,999	Granted	29/05/2023			
Waternish Community Garden	Land at rear of Waternish Hall	Lease	Community Garden	29/11/2022		Granted	29/03/2023	£10	60	
Balvonie Park Association	Land adjacent to Braes of Balvonie	Ownership	Create a community woodland/orchard	18/11/2022		Granted		£1		12/09/2025
Melvich Community SCIO	Portskerra Play Park	Ownership	Ownership of play park	15/11/2022	£3,500	Granted	30/11/23	£1		11/04/2025
Inverness Caledonian Thistle Community Development Trust	Playing fields adjacent to Inverness Royal Academy	Lease	Regenerate and upgrade the playing fields and facilities	29/07/2022	£624,975.00	Granted	25/11/2022	£1	300	30/06/2023
Melvich Community SCIO	Melvich public toilets	Ownership	Demolition & replacement	04/07/2022	£5,000	Granted	23/08/2023	£1		
Groam House Museum	Mill Cottage, Rosemarkie	Ownership	ownership of museum	21/12/2021		Withdrawn by applicant				
Lochcarron Leisure Centre	Former nursery Portacabin	Ownership	Redevelopment as a fitness facility	21/12/2021	£14,000	Granted	29/03/2022	£1,000		16/01/2023
St Fergus Bowling Club	Garage site at Loch Street	Ownership	Develop indoor bowling facilities	19/11/2021	£19,999	Granted	29/05/2023	£1		
Dunbeath & District Centre	Land south west of Neil Gunn Road	Ownership	Developing a new health and wellbeing centre	06/10/2021	£100,000	Granted	30/03/2022			
Lairg & District Community Initiatives Company	Land at Ferrycroft, Lairg	Ownership	new facilities for campervans and motorhomes	10/09/2021		Withdrawn by applicant				
Bonar Bridge Football Club	Migdale Playing Fields	Ownership	Pitch improvement	07/09/2021	£24,850	Granted	30/08/2022	£1		24/10/2024
Kingussie Camanachd Club	Market Stance Playing Field	Lease	Upgrade Facility	14/06/2021		Granted	29/09/2021	£1	300	10/02/2023
Thurso Community Development Trust	Thurso Greenhouse Complex	Lease	renovate the greenhouses to grow food as a social enterprise	14/06/2021		Granted	09/11/2021	£1	1188	
Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland	Stac Pollaidh Car Park	Lease	Improve and extend parking	01/04/2021	£2,000	Granted	14/06/2021	£1		06/03/2023
Road to the Isle Facilities Group	Tougal Car Park and Toilets	Lease	Improve and extend parking	26/03/2021		Granted	20/10/2021	£1	1188	
Raasay Development Trust	Raasay New Ferry Terminal	Lease	Redevelopment as a part of community pontoon project	21/03/2021		Granted	30/08/2021	£1	1,188	
Broadford and Strath Community Company	Elgol PCs	Ownership	to replace the current public conveniences with updated toilet facilities and disabled parking at the site	01/03/2021	£5,000	Granted	31/05/2021	£0		

Community Transfer Body Name	Asset Name	Basis	Purpose of Transfer	Validated	Asset Value	Decision	Decision Date	Price	Lease Period (months)	Date Transferred
Lochaber Rugby Football Club	Banavie Pitch, Fort William	Ownership	Improved maintenance and development of sport	11/01/2021	£105,000	Granted	18/12/2023	£1		
Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust	South Bonar Public Toilets, Picnic Area & Car Park, IV24 3AQ	Ownership	tourist infrastructure	22/12/2020		Withdrawn by applicant				
Grantown Initiative	Burnfield Public Toilets	Ownership	Reinstate the public conveniences	27/11/2020	£7,000	Granted	23/03/2022	£1		
Maryburgh Men's Shed	Maryburgh Former Primary School and grounds	Ownership	Redevelopment as men's shed	18/09/2020		Granted	01/04/2021			
ARC (Kingussie) Ltd	MacRobert House, Museum Store & Workshops (formerly, the Old Telephone Exchange), Duke Street, Kingussie, PH21 1JG	Ownership		24/06/2020	£65,000	Refused	29/09/2020			
Assynt Development Trust	Mission, Lochinver	Ownership		09/03/2020		Granted	25/01/2021	£1		
Inverness Rowing Club	Land at former Torvean Golf Club	Ownership	Clubhouse Development	07/01/2020	£50,000	Granted	17/09/2020	£1		06/10/2022
Acharacle Community Company	Acharacle Community Centre	Ownership	Security of tenure	02/12/2019		Granted		£40,000		
Wick Community Hub	Rosebank Playing Fields & Pavilion	Ownership	Community Hub	29/11/2019		Granted				
Kyle of Sutherland Hub	Land at South Bonar Industrial Estate	Ownership	Hub parking	20/11/2019		Granted				
Community Out West Trust	Public Toilets, Picnic Area and Car Park, Kinlochewe	Ownership	Retention of toilet	12/11/2019		Granted				
Dingwall Men's Shed	Land at former skate park, Jubilee Park Road, Dingwall	Lease		18/09/2019		Granted		£300	360	
Kilmallie Community Centre Ltd	Car Park at Station Rd, Corpach, PH33 7JH	Ownership	Improvement to parking	23/07/2019		Granted		£5,000		
Cromarty Community Development Trust	wooded area immediately surrounding the industrial units 1, 2 and 3 at the Whitedykes Industrial Estate, Cromarty, Ross-shire, IV11 8YB	Ownership	Camping and campervan facilities	19/06/2019				£1		
Dingwall Men's Shed	Unit 4b Docharty Rd, Dingwall	Lease		17/06/2019		Refused			360	
Strathnaver Museum	Land at Clachan graveyard extension, Bettyhill	Ownership	Museum expansion	04/06/2019		Granted	14/12/2019	£1		
Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust	Land to the east of the public conveniences at Falls of Foyers public car park	Lease		26/03/2019		Granted		£1	360	
Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Steering Group	Pump house and gardens surrounding the pavilion.	Ownership	Operate as a community and commercial venue	28/02/2019		Granted		£1		
Ormlie Community Association Ltd	Ormlie Community Centre	Lease	Security of tenure to sustain and expand community facility	16/02/2019		Granted	27/08/2019			
East Sutherland Rescue Association	Dornoch Links	Lease	Building extension	11/01/2019		Granted	07/01/2020			03/03/2020

Community Transfer Body Name	Asset Name	Basis	Purpose of Transfer	Validated	Asset Value	Decision	Decision Date	Price	Lease Period (months)	Date Transferred
Glen Urquhart Rural Community Association	Drum TIC & Toilets	Ownership	Community hub and base for tourism business	20/12/2018	£75,000	Granted				
Inverness Men's Shed	Pavilion at Millburn Academy, Inverness	Lease		06/12/2018		Granted		£1	228	
Road to the Isles Facilities Group	Land to the South of West Bay Car Park, Mallaig			21/11/2018		Granted				
Nairn CAB	60-62 King Street, Nairn, IV12 4DN	Ownership	Redevelopment as premises	10/10/2018		Withdrawn by applicant				
Seaboard Community Polytunnel Group	Land at Balintore Harbour Green	Lease	Develop a community polytunnel	21/09/2018	£1,195	Granted	26/02/2019	£1	60	03/10/2023
Helmsdale and District Community Trust	Coupers yard	Ownership	Development of small industrial spaces; campervan 'aire'; glamping pods	18/09/2018	£30,000	Granted	16/02/2019	£1		04/07/2025
Ardnamurchan Lighthouse Trust	Ancillary Lighthouse buildings and grounds	Ownership	Consolidate local assets under local control to improve operation	18/09/2018	£275,000	Granted	27/07/2020			
Helmsdale & District Development Trust	Coupers Yard, Shore Street, Helmsdale, KW8 6JZ	Ownership	Campervan facilities	18/09/2018		Granted	18/03/2019			
Strathpeffer Resident's Association	Playpark/land adjacent to Ord Terrace	Ownership		05/05/2018		Granted		£0		
Gairloch Area Development Ltd	Church car park toilets	Ownership		15/03/2018		Granted	20/09/2018	£1,000		
Strathnaver Museum	Bettyhill Visitor Centre	Ownership	Development of café for museum visitors	01/03/2018	£70,000	Granted	12/06/2019	£1		
Highland Third Sector Interface	Former Assessor's Office, Ferry Road, Dingwall	Ownership		01/03/2018		Granted	05/06/2018	£1		
Seaboard Memorial Hall	Balintore Toilets	Ownership	Demolish and rebuild structure	17/11/2017	£9,500	Granted	18/09/2018	£1		30/05/2023
Wick MS Centre	Wick MS Centre HC03529	Ownership		25/07/2017		Granted	14/08/2018			14/08/2019
Staffin Community Trust	Storr Woodland HC 03464	Ownership		03/03/2017		Refused				
Tain and District Bike Track Association Community Interest Company	Tain Links	Lease	Bike pump track			Granted	24/05/2021	£1		13/11/2023
Cromarty Community Development Trust	East Church Hall	Lease	Community Hub			Granted	11/03/2026	£1,200		
Nairn Arts Society	Laing Hall	Lease	Arts Community Hall			Granted	09/01/2021			29/07/2021