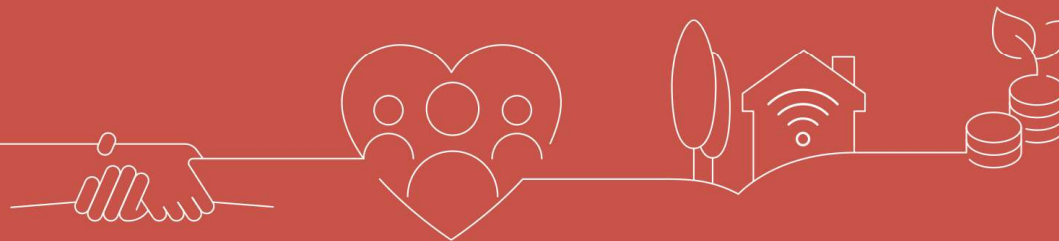


Community Asset Transfer

St Helens Borough Council 2024



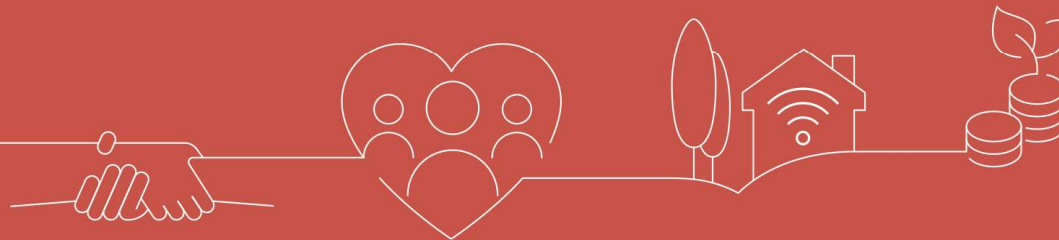
What is CAT? An Overview

- Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is a process that allows a community organisation to take over publicly-owned land or buildings
- CAT can be achieved in a number of different ways:
 - Transfer of asset for outright ownership
 - the use of a long-term lease
 - management agreements
- Aims to directly strengthen organisational confidence and be able to plan for longer-term delivery and confidence
- Important and significant step for organisations



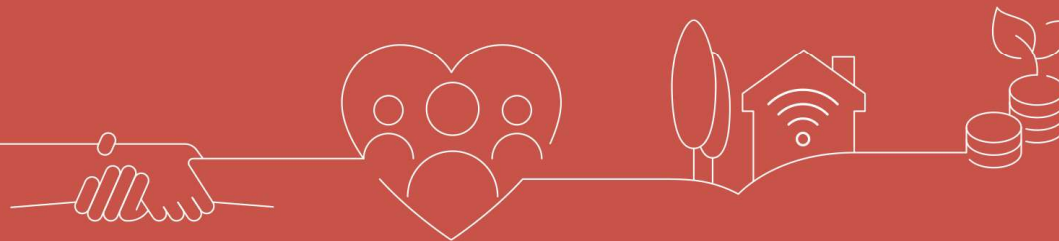
Why CAT? St Helens Council

- St Helens Borough Strategy sets out a clear vision to empower and enable community organisations to play a more active role in helping deliver a better borough.
- We want residents to get the best possible use of the buildings, green spaces, and land that the Council owns
- Part of the wider #StHelensTogether approach – formed throughout the pandemic that saw Council and third sector working closely to deliver services
- Committed to using our assets to form long-term partnerships with organisations - supports Social Value Framework and Inclusive Growth Strategy
- Transparent, open and honest pathway to taking on Council assets for community value



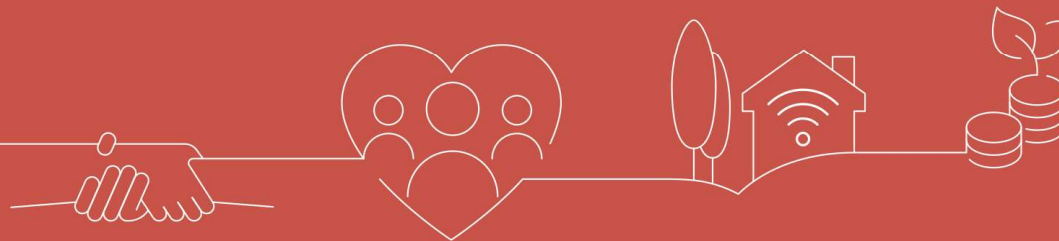
Why CAT? Third Sector

- Key Potential Benefits for third sector organisations:
 - Strengthening organisational confidence - longer-term planning through asset occupancy
 - Strengthening ties with the community through asset development
 - Strengthening the organisational ability to raise and generate income
 - Opportunity to connect and build relationships with organisations across the Borough
 - Community 'anchor institutions'



Which Assets? Key Principles

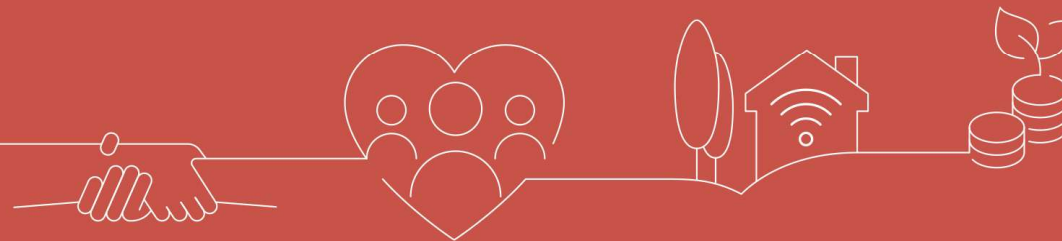
- Any proposed asset transfer must support the aims and priorities of the Council as set out in Our Borough Strategy
- **Assets will only be considered for community asset transfer when they are deemed surplus to requirements**
- Adoption of transparent process for asset transfer: clear point of contact and clear stages for each part of the process
- Council maintains dual but independent and impartial roles – supportive of the third sector but also as a steward of publicly owned assets – impartiality is key
- All Council departments will endorse and assist in the delivery of the Community Asset Transfer agenda



Process

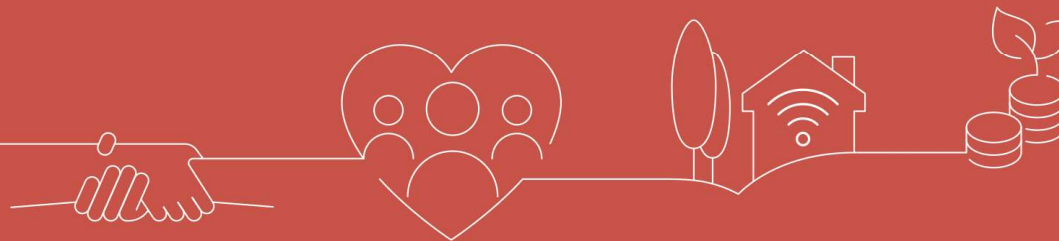
Once the Council has identified a property or land that it considers suitable for asset transfer, there will be four key stages in the application process:

- **Stage 1** – Expression of Interest
- **Stage 2** – Full Application and Business Case
- **Stage 3** – Assessment and Decision
- **Stage 4** – Agree Legal Terms



Stage 1 - Expression of Interest

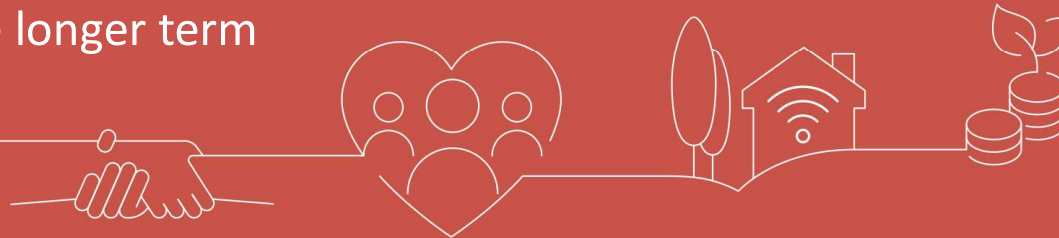
- Community Asset Transfer process will be commenced by the Council if an asset becomes surplus to requirements
- Council will seek Expressions of Interest via several sources including:
 - Local Press
 - St Helens Borough Council communications channels
 - Community Networks/Partners
 - Other websites and advertising agencies
- Applicable criteria and information specific to the asset will be outlined within the marketing documentation including asset information and operating to costs



Stage 2 - Full Application & Business Case

Once EOI has been received and acknowledged, applicants will be invited to submit a full business case - **Key criteria for business case is as follows:**

- A summary of the proposal outlining how the asset will be used
- Details of the outcomes to be delivered/how the use of the asset will support the Council's corporate objectives and benefit the community.
- Details of capital funds available for investment in the asset or how it proposes to secure capital or revenue grant funding to support the project **inc.** cash flow and budgeting details.
- The capacity of the organisation to manage the assets.
- The experience and skills of the Organisations Board or Managing Group **inc** group's legal structure and how it will hold the asset.
- Succession planning to ensure the organisation maintains the right skills and knowledge to manage the asset in the longer term

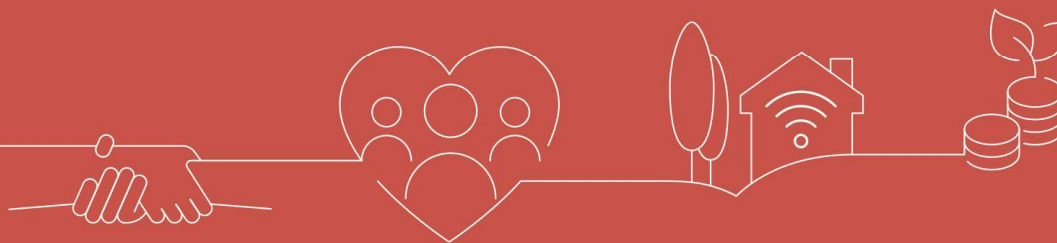


Stage 3 - The Assessment and Decision

- Application and business case will be assessed on the following areas and reflects second stage requirements:

An eligibility check	The robustness of the applicant organisation	The proposal and its impact on the Council's aims and objectives
Community and partnership impact	The asset sustainability and capacity to manage the asset	Financial sustainability

- Assessment Matrix will be used to record recommendations - the Council is looking for "Very Good" applications (qualitative scoring mechanism score of minimum 136)
- If successful, the decision will then be referred to the Strategic Property Group for final assessment with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning and ward Councillors being informed.



Stage 4 - Legal Terms

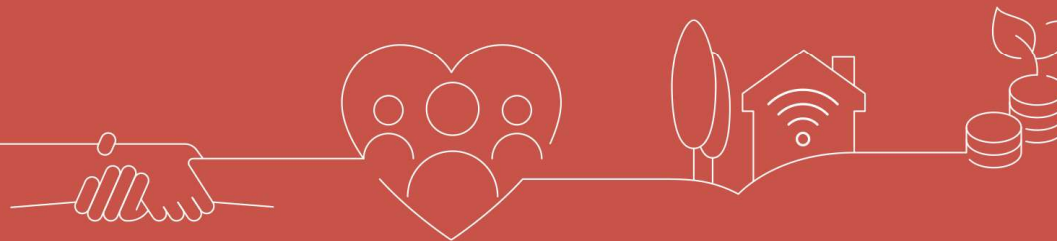
- The Council will normally only transfer assets by way of a lease or a management agreement
- Only consider transfer of a freehold by exception, and where there is a clear business case for doing so
- Leases of 25 years or longer there is an expectation the applicant to be responsible for all running costs and repair responsibilities for the property - consistent with the principle of asset transfers in creating independence and sustainability.
- The successful organisation(s) will have to submit an Annual Report to the Council's agreed representative, which will cover the agreed outcomes as per the lease.



Timescales – approximate

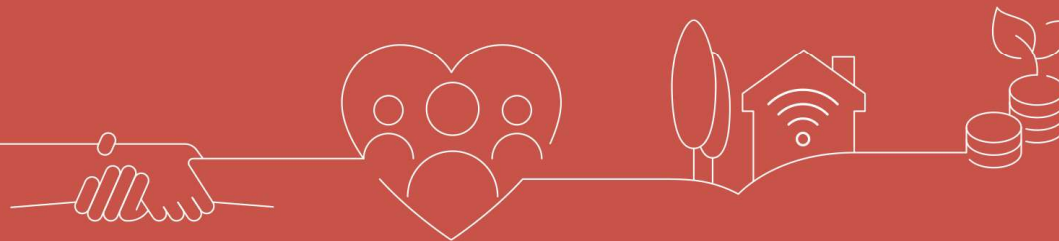


The following timescales run consecutively, and the Council will be prepared to consider reasonable requests for extensions of time to facilitate proposals.



What Support is Available?

- Whilst an exciting opportunity, we recognise CAT can be a daunting challenge
- Ensuring an open, equal, and transparent process - the Council is working alongside Halton & St Helens VCA
- Organisational and business support offer: advice and assistance to groups interested in applying and taking on Council assets.
- Halton & St Helens VCA will work independently with all organisations offering advice and guidance on the asset transfer process.
- St Helens Council want to work as an impartial partner during the process, enabling transparency and equal access to information and support.



Thanks for your time!

Get in touch: CAT@sthelens.gov.uk

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