



Community Management of Assets

Policy

2014-2018

1. Summary

Calderdale has strong, vibrant communities with active citizens who are ready and able to get involved and make a difference to their local area. We wish to encourage anyone with an interest in taking forward community management of relevant buildings or land through Community Management of Assets to promote local social, economic, and or environmental objectives.

Community Management of Assets may take place through:

- a management agreement;
- a licence to occupy;
- a short lease or tenancy;
- a long lease; or
- freehold transfer.

This policy complements the Councils Assets Management / Facilities Management Transformation Programme. This aims to ensure that Calderdale Council's land and property assets are fit for purpose, deliver value for money and enhance service delivery by:

- ensuring a coherent organisational approach to the management of the Council's land and property assets;
- optimising the estate to meet current and future service requirements;
- taking a more holistic approach to managing the estate, through appropriate delivery arrangements; and
- enabling communities to design and deliver services that meet local need and aspirations.

This policy does not in any way affect the process for dealing with Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value) nominations or other Localism Act provisions.

Community Management of Assets must be balanced against other Council priorities and ensure that the resource required is proportionate compared to the benefits received.

The Community Management of Assets Policy is a discretionary policy and will be secondary to the Council's Asset Management Strategy.

2. Aims and Objectives of Community Management of Assets

The aims and objectives of Community Management of Assets are:

- strengthening communities by contributing to the ongoing development of high impact, sustainable community organisations;
- ensuring effective use of public assets;
- encouraging and supporting more community management of public assets where this is deemed in the best interests of the local community and the Council; and
- improving and extend access to services within different localities, whether delivered by the Council, other public sector agencies or by the third sector.

3. Principles of the Community Management of Assets Policy

There are three key principles underpinning the Community Management of Assets Policy (the “Policy”):

- **a proactive and positive approach;**
- **a strategic response to asset management; and**
- **a clear, transparent, effective and fair process.**

A proactive and positive approach – Public assets owned by the Council and the community are a major strength and resource for the Borough. They can be an important tool in helping to meet the Council’s overall objectives and in meeting local need. The Council is committed to involving residents in the planning, shaping and delivery of services and is committed to ensuring that residents can take responsibility for developing their own solutions to the challenges faced. The Council will raise awareness through outreach, support and appropriate publicity to encourage groups to consider managing an asset, where appropriate and link them in to the ongoing programmes of support available.

Strategic approach to asset management – The Council takes a strategic approach to asset management through regular reviews of the asset register. This is especially important in times of financial constraint and changing service needs. Community Management of Assets will be considered as an option within the Council’s overall aim to improve assets and facilities management and the Council will consider proposals and agree contractual terms on a case by case basis.

A clear, transparent, effective and fair process - All information relating to the Community Management of Assets will be available for all to access with ease. This policy links to a set of clear procedures for managing applications to manage community assets. This includes a clear first point of contact and clear stages and timescales.

4. The Process

Improved Process- The process will be fair and robust with clear timescales for the submission of information at different stages. Information will be available from the outset to allow Community Groups to understand the level of responsibility being taken on. The Council welcomes applications from all community groups and organisations that are able to proactively take the lead in the application and management process and are not for profit.

Appropriate support- Throughout the process groups can access support from organisations such as Locality, or, North Bank Forum or any other organisation offering advice to the third sector. The Council’s Communities directorate of the Council, via the Neighbourhoods Teams can offer honest, experienced, knowledgeable advice. Meetings will be held with groups to allow them the opportunity to discuss their proposal with Council officers.

Clear, robust and proportionate assessments- Members of CAMG (Community Asset Management Group, comprising of officers from Corporate Asset Facilities Management, Legal, Finance, Communities) will assess applications and if satisfied, make a recommendation to

Cabinet to accept a proposal. Groups will be notified in writing if their applications have been successful and informed of the next stage of the process if applicable.

A spectrum of operating models - Due to the distinct nature of each asset and proposal there will be different arrangements relating to finance, maintenance, lease / licence and an appropriate Joint Working Agreement in place. Each case will be assessed on individual merit and an appropriate way forward agreed. This may include:

- a management agreement;
- a licence to occupy;
- a short lease or tenancy;
- a long lease; or
- a freehold transfer.

Care will need to be taken to ensure there is no breach of State Aid rules especially when groups take on Council assets on a nil or reduced rent basis.

Ongoing monitoring – implementing a Joint Working Agreement will allow for the monitoring of performance and outcomes in line with the original proposal and will also ensure that groups requiring further support are able to receive it.

5. Evaluation Assessment

All applications will be assessed against five criteria, which will result in a red, amber or green (RAG) rating based on the professional knowledge and experience of the completing officer.

The five criteria are:

- A. The Community Group – capacity, skills and knowledge
- B. Impact on wider community and Council objectives
- C. The asset – building or land appropriateness and viability
- D. Risk – can this be managed?
- E. Financial assessment – are plans financially viable and well researched?