

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
16th July 2014**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Barry Thomas, Leader

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe

Can the leader please update the council on the programme for public consultation for transfer of assets to town and community councils? The council has stated they will be looking to transfer assets such as public conveniences and sports buildings such as changing rooms to town councils or sports groups. At the last meeting the portfolio holder for Public conveniences stated "I have instructed officers that we need to engage with Town and Community Councils beginning end of May – June and I am awaiting dates and times of those meetings and with whom." To date Hay Town Council have not been contacted and with the town council not meeting to September due to the summer break this does not leave suitable time for the council to set budgets and consult with their community.

The Authority has a policy that outlines our approach to Community Asset Transfers (CAT). A CAT can be instigated by Powys County Council or any community group, including Town and Community Councils, on properties where PCC is willing to consider this avenue. The process includes the completion by the Group of an Expression of Interest and if approved, a full Business Case. This is required to demonstrate that the community venture is required and sustainable. All CAT applications where the Business Case is recommended for approval, go via Cabinet. There is no separate programme for Town or Community Council transfers, with each Service considering this option as part of their modernisation agenda, using the Corporate Asset Policy and Corporate Property to guide and advise them.

With regard to the situation on public conveniences the Portfolio Holder is due to bring an update report to Cabinet shortly. This will enable us to consider how best to move forward having regard to the recent consultation by Welsh Government on a public health bill and the potential for wider collaborative working with town and community councils.

Sport buildings and pitches are being dealt with by the Recreation Service and discussions are ongoing where these facilities have been highlighted for transfer. A spreadsheet is attached showing the current position with regards successful or recommended CAT applications.

In relation to seeking asset transfers of outdoor sports areas and associated buildings, letters were sent out to related Town Councils on 9th December 2013 and 6th March 2014 following earlier letters in 2013. Outdoor Recreation Officers are continuing to seek meetings with Town Councils, and are encouraging Clubs to do the same, so as to ensure dialogue.

Meetings have taken place with Talgarth Town Council on 28th February 2014 and Ystradgynlais Town Council on 3rd July 2014, and a meeting with Hay-on-Wye Town Council is planned on 7th July 2014. The local member also invited the Crickhowell Town Council to attend a meeting with local sports clubs on 14th May 2014. A number of meetings have also taken place with Newtown Town Council and associated sports clubs, with another meeting on 7th July 2014.

Sue Simpson, the Partnership and Policy Manager, is taking the lead for Community Delivery; and Town and Community Council Liaison. Part of the role will be identify the blockages which communities experience when aspiring to take over facilities/services.