



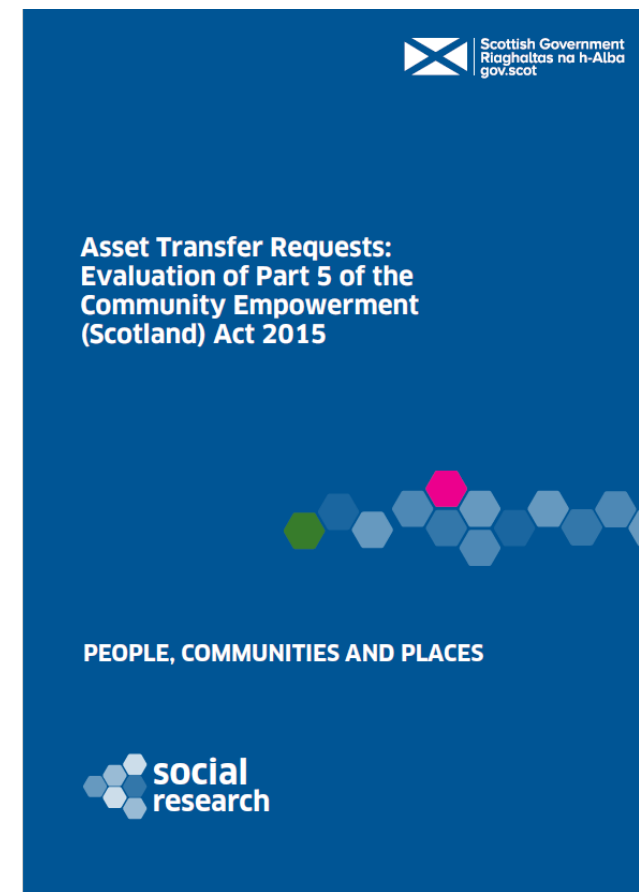
Asset Transfer Requests

Community perspectives and related recommendations: Results of an evaluation

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Asset Transfer Request - Evaluation

1. Whether, how, and to what extent, is Part 5 of the Act being **implemented as intended** in the legislation and guidance?
2. To what extent does implementation of Part 5 of the Act result in **more asset transfers being initiated and assets being transferred** to community ownership, control and use, and with what potential **contribution to improved access to transferred services and facilities**?
3. What is **the pattern of take up** and use of Part 5 of the Act among different community groups? What are the potential implications of these patterns for local **inequalities of outcomes**?
4. Whether, how, and to what extent do communities feel **more empowered** as a result of the availability, take up and use of Part 5 of the Act?



Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Resource allocation
- Culture
- Process and time
- Process and capacity
- Obligations

Opportunities

- Cohesion and capacity
- Autonomy to drive change (community needs/ response)
- Obligations

Challenges: resources/ resource allocations

- Lack of sufficient resources
 - To raise awareness of ATRs
 - To ensure understanding of Part 5
 - To effectively support the process
- Not consistent across RAs
 - Commitment to supporting community groups/ ‘shadow of their former selves’

“We were the ones that were telling (RA) how the Act operated. We had to bring to their attention that there was a process it was laying down. If we just worked our way through the process, everything would be alright. So, they didn’t even know... the officials’ ignorance of the Act was unbelievable. They were just making things up or omitting.” (CTB 2)

Challenges: culture

- Shifting balance of power, on paper
 - Duty placed on RAs to agree, unless 'reasonable grounds'
- Resistance, in practice
 - Culture as a barrier to effective implementation of legislation

*“The way the Act is written around asset transfer, it’s quite a useful tool in changing that power dynamic between agencies and communities.”
(RA 9)*

“I’m not knocking the council but, at times, they can be so obstructive.” (CTB 6)

Challenges: process and time

- Community momentum can be curtailed by process
- Processes taking longer than anticipated
- Acknowledged by RAs and CTBs

(The process) “took three years and by that time it was hard to keep the momentum of the local community up.” (CTB 7)

“There are still concerns from groups that it takes a long time and though we can try to streamline the process this does take time. I am certainly more adept at outlining realistic timescales and I do think this helps groups understand the issues.” (RA)

Challenges: process and capacity

- Trend for applications being submitted by ‘high capacity’ communities/ groups
 - ATR is accessible where there are sufficient levels of capacity, skills and knowledge
- ‘Low capacity’ groups/ communities
 - Access to individuals with skills and expertise

“We’ve got to be experts in absolutely everything. We would go to the leader of the Council, we would be studying for weeks on end about planning and legal and all the rest of it... He would sit down and he would bring all these people with him, fire us with questions and we would be frantically trying to answer them, we would be absolute nervous wrecks... why can’t communities have that bank [of experts]? We should have had the same bank of experts sitting at the side of the table with us during those negotiations. Maybe it wouldn’t have taken us ten years.” (CTB 2)

Opportunities: cohesion and capacity

- ATR process as capacity building
- ATRs as ‘transformational’ for a small community
 - stronger sense of community identity, cohesion and involvement

“Any time you learn anything from anybody else, you can bring it back to your own group, and they’ve said, ‘We’ll come and talk to you about how you can do this’. So, there’s been a lot of spin offs from different communities.” (CTB 7)

“What [the asset] will do is it will bring the community together more and that was the whole reason of doing it...Community spirit, the cohesion, that’s what it’s all about... so that... we’re all integrated as opposed to being divided.” (CTB 6)

Opportunities: autonomy to drive change

- Change based on community needs

“...rather than having to keep going to the council: ‘Can we do this, can we do that, can we do the other?’” (CTB 4)

“Sometimes you have to take things into your own hands and try and get on with it and if there’s a challenge ... you need to go to [relevant authority] and say, ‘Look, you’re not doing your job here, can we do it? Can you give us something towards it?’, even if it’s on a service level agreement or we come to an agreement with them that we’ll do it and they don’t interfere with us.” (CTB 3)

- Quicker response rate

“Putting assets in the community hands unlocks things that would take statutory bodies a very, very long time to get around to, if ever.” (CTB 5)

Opportunity/ Challenge?: obligations

- Increased responsibility as positive

“If we didn’t own it then we wouldn’t be as involved in caring about it.” (CTB 7)

- An obligation and a burden?

“It is a burden on the community but they are needed... I can’t say whether I feel at this point in time that the asset transfer of the [asset] is beneficial in one way or if it’s not beneficial. It’s beneficial in the fact that, yes, the [asset is] open for the community and the tourists, but then again at what cost to the community can we keep it open or are we now actually possibly going to have to close it down ourselves?” (CTB 3)

Recommendations for the Scottish Government

- Review of (and signposting to) **support services to overcome participation barriers for marginalised groups/ disadvantaged communities**
 - Funding across the ATR process
 - Support/ capacity services (e.g. finance, legal, admin, planning)

Recommendations for RAs

- The identification of **a key, internal contact person**.
- Wider promotion of asset transfer requests **to raise internal and external awareness of ATRs:**
 - Disseminating the policy intent of ATR
 - Ensuring that RA personnel understand the ATR process, can support communities and are able to minimise timescales
- **Ensure that ATRs have a transparent timeline**
- Take steps to address concerns surrounding assets as ‘burdens’
- Work to encourage wider participation (marginalised, disadvantaged)

**Asset Transfer Requests:
Evaluation of Part 5 of the
Community Empowerment
(Scotland) Act 2015**



PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES



Full report available on the
Scottish Government website:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/asset-transfer-requests-evaluation-part-5-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015/>

<https://bit.ly/3EMQt7U>

Conclusions

- Indications that ATRs **may support communities to deliver better and more appropriate services**
- ATRs may enable **increased community cohesion and capacity building**
- To achieve the desired longer-term changes in community empowerment envisaged by the Act, **further steps are needed to address the challenges faced, promote ATRs and improve engagement**