

## Case Study - Multiple Community Asset Transfer: Feasibility Study

### Client: Unitary Council

This large unitary council wanted to understand the range of opportunities that existed for changing the way community assets were operated, but more importantly, the opportunities for changing the way the services were being delivered from those properties to improve service efficiency and effectiveness.

At the request of the Leader, the Chief Executive and Resources Director asked Keith to undertake a high-level review of potential opportunities for transferring community services and assets into the hands of charitable and voluntary organisations – empowering individuals and communities to take responsibility for community development.

While the primary objective for the authority was to see how the quality of the services could be improved by working in partnership with the third sector to move the delivery of these community services much closer to the local community, the programme should also deliver ongoing tangible cost savings for the Council.

#### Our Role

Keith has been responsible for all aspects of the study including:

- planning the whole study
- capturing and collating cost, income, staffing data for community services and assets
- identifying existing local third sector organisations that may have the inclination, capability and capacity to take over the running of community services
- analysing high level running costs, income and staff information for both community services and for the community assets involved
- identifying different service delivery options for each type of community service/asset
- obtaining examples where these alternative service delivery models have been employed
- outlining potential solutions for the client: community benefits, service improvements, cost savings
- developing a high level implementation plan
- preparing a feasibility study report and presenting the findings to senior officer group

The study identified almost 100 community services and assets being operated by the Council which showed some potential for being operated by external voluntary and community organisations. The range of services included Community Centres/Community Halls; Youth Centres; Children's Centres; Libraries; Museums & Galleries; Public Open Spaces; Sports & Leisure Centres; other community buildings and land. The cost of running these services and assets amounted to around £10 million and the total asset value was around £70 million.

If the right community organisation could be found to operate each of these services and appropriate arrangements could be agreed, the potential for improvements in these services was great and the opportunity for significant cost savings over time was also high.

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#### Outcome

The client's Placemaking Members Group received the study well and has now set up a Member Steering Group. They will be meeting soon to start developing a new policy and strategy for improving community services and the assets they operate out of which will include a framework for engaging with communities.

If services and assets are transferred into the hands of charitable and voluntary organisations, communities will benefit by having more local say in how community services and facilities are run and what services are provided from the facilities – run by the community, for the community.

This has the added benefit for the Council that the local community will have more empathy for the buildings and look after them, as well as using the buildings to look after members of the community themselves – this will reduce the call on other Council services.