

CA 13

Ymgynghoriad ar asedau cymunedol

Consultation on community assets

Ymateb gan: The Green Valleys

Response from: The Green Valleys

The Green Valleys' evidence to the consultation on Community Assets

Alternatives to ownership

Ownership of assets, both land and buildings, can provide significant advantages to communities. However, full title transfer is not always either possible or desirable for either the community or the public authority.

A sole focus on title transfer can miss result on missed opportunities to support communities.

[Project Skyline](#) has built up significant evidence that social, economic, and environmental benefits can be delivered in situations where asset transfer is not possible for either political or practical reasons.

The Rhondda Skyline project has involved a close working relationship between NRW and the community in the Upper Rhondda (centred on Treherbert). Asset transfer to the community was neither politically possible nor attractive to the community due to the long-term liabilities from historic mining.

Consequently NRW, Welsh Government Woodland Estate policy team, and the local community have delivered:

- The co-design of the future forest (Future Forest Vision) for the next 100 years. A film about the co-design process can be found [here](#).
- Developed a pathway towards full community stewardship of the forest retaining WG ownership and NRW overall management responsibility.

The co-design has been a very engaging and successful process that has built community involvement and participation. Stewardship will eventually lead to full economic and social benefits to the community without a change of ownership.

This has been an exemplary project in community participation, within the spirit of the Wellbeing Act, that can deliver long-term benefits for Government and community.

Based on this experience we believe. in situations where asset transfer is not possible, the Welsh Government should support public bodies to co-produce, with communities as equal partners, **future asset management plans** that reflect community values and vision but also reflect the legal and professional requirements of asset management.

The transfer of assets to the community is a successful way to give communities a say in the management of their local community and its environment. Where that is not possible, supporting the

co-production of future management plans and giving **communities long-term rights under a stewardship agreement** can provide many of the community benefits of asset transfer.

We recommend that:

- the Welsh Government immediately undertake a process of mapping community assets, be they in the public, private, or voluntary sectors.
- Develop a white paper on supporting community groups' ability to acquire private assets which are at risk of loss to the community. The specific mechanism for this should be informed by the systems in England and Scotland, but tailored for Welsh circumstances. This should also include alternatives to ownership such as long-term leasing.
- Continued access to flexible funding to support acquisition and development of community assets.

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