Written submission from Aberdeenshire Council

1. Does your authority have arrangements in place to hold some or all local authority assets in a separate land holding?

   No.

2. When disposing of, or transferring assets how are those assets valued. To what degree is this purely a financial valuation?

   To comply with the disposal of land regulations, the market value of the asset is established in the first instance. The Council then attributes a value to the anticipated social, community and economic development benefits that will derive from the transfer to establish a discounted transfer price that is still considered to achieve best value.

3. What is the attitude of the authority to the disposal of assets? Does your authority have a policy to encourage the disposal of assets to community groups?

   The Council has both a Surplus Property Policy and a Community Asset Transfer Policy. Together these policies encourage the disposal of appropriate assets to Community Groups. The Council has published guidance to Community Groups to guide them through the applications process and to clarify the criteria against which applications will be considered and the information Community Groups are expected to provide at each stage.

4. What is your experience of disposal and what difficulties has the authority encountered?

   It is acknowledged there is, at times, a tension between the need to ensure the Council obtains capital receipts to fund future investment and meeting the aspirations of communities. The Council has been proactive in Community Asset Transfer and has transferred a number of assets over recent years.

   The Council is going through a period of significant investment in new assets at this stage, which follows on to disinvestment in redundant assets. There is a need to be mindful that given the financial position the Council needs to ensure there is an optimum number of assets for both public and community use whether this is delivered through the Council, other public bodies or community groups. There are also occasions whereby the representation by the community is by an individual group which does not contain a high number of members and may not always be representative of the whole community. That being said, the Council fully recognise that there are benefits from transferring assets to the community and I can provide some examples where this has worked well in Aberdeenshire.