Written submission from South Ayrshire Council

I refer to your letter of 16 December 2014 and your call for evidence on Part 4 of the draft Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill.

In response to the queries raised, I respond as follows:

1. The Council has no arrangements in place to hold our assets in a separate land holding.

2. When disposing of assets they are valued internally or in certain cases externally by RICS registered valuer. Valuations are carried out in accordance with the RICS Valuation Standards and are based on the market value of the existing use, taking account of any higher alternative value. The valuation is financial although any community benefits will be considered within the Council’s process with regard to disposals.

3. The Council encourages community asset transfer, and a draft policy is currently being prepared. The Council’s Community Development team assist in building capacity within Community Groups.

4. The Council has no experience of disposing of land and property assets to the Community. Notwithstanding, the primary difficulties that we could envisage encountering would relate to a lack of awareness of legislative and statutory requirements for the property on the part of community groups, and also the need to provide a sustainable business plan to provide a sustainable future income stream. We could also imagine issues around needing to bring properties up to a certain standard prior to transfer, particularly if the Council is proposing to transfer the property below the market value. Please do let me know if there is anything further I can assist the Committee with in connection with the scrutiny of this Bill.