West Lothian Council’s position is as follows:

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

   All West Lothian Council’s property assets remain in the ownership of the Council.

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

   All disposals of assets, by sale or lease, are at market value, unless covered by the council’s policy for Asset Transfer, in which case the disposal may be subject to a reduction in value in accordance with the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010. Only in these circumstances are the terms for disposal not on a financial basis.

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?**

   Property assets may be sold or leased once they have been declared surplus to the council’s requirements. The approved procedures for surplus properties include an options appraisal that will consider the potential interest in Asset Transfer to Community Groups, in which event an asset may be pro-actively offered for transfer. The council is also open to requests for asset transfer, if they are in accordance with council policy. Full details of the Asset Transfer policy can be found on our website at [http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/4429/Community-Asset-Transfer](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/4429/Community-Asset-Transfer).

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

   I assume this question refers to asset transfer and not to mainstream sale or lease. Our experience of asset transfer is limited. However, a number of difficulties are apparent.

   1. The absence of a suitable and proportionate mechanism for calculating community benefit, to enable a reduction in the market value in accordance with the Disposal of Land Regulations. Social Return on Investment is the most relevant model but is over-complicated.

   2. The capacity of local voluntary organisations. Many appear to be willing to consider transfer, but do not have the skills to take forward the process.

   3. Resource availability for community groups – both to develop a proposal for transfer, and to carry through any proposals for conversion or redevelopment of an asset.