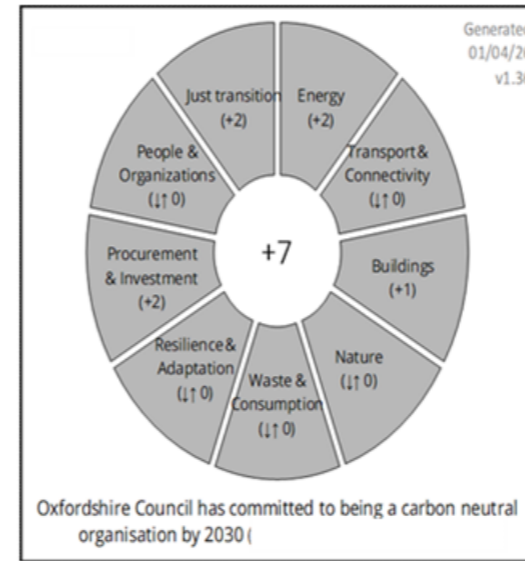


# Climate Impact Assessment

## Summary

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Properties and Assets
<b>What is being assessed</b>	Community Asset Transfer and Community Leasing policies
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	They are a rework and extension of the current Community Asset Transfer policy.
<b>Summary of assessment</b>	<p>These policies have the objective of providing community assets for providing public benefit by either transferring ownership or leasing "at least than best consideration", that is less than their full market value. OCC has established in its Climate Action Framework that all properties in which it operates should achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, in addition all properties that are leased by the council should achieve net zero as soon as possible in the 2040's, since the county has decided to be ahead of the national 2050 net zero target. Transferring ownership of properties to community groups also transfers the responsibility for decarbonising these properties to community groups. Community groups are known to be financially constrained but will have access to sources of decarbonisation funds that the council does not have access. Whilst the policies establish that properties that require capital investment are not eligible for CAT and Community Leasing, the council may still provide revenue funded support for decarbonisation provided resources and funds are available (subject also to LGR) after prioritising the council own's operational property and leased property decarbonisation. There is one untapped opportunity that the proposed policies should explore further: linking the community asset transfer programme to the councils's community energy strategies, so community properties can also benefit from renewable energy generation.</p>
<b>Completed by</b>	James Cater, National Management Trainee, revised and amended by Franco Gonzalez, Carbon Analyst
<b>Climate action sign off by</b>	Franco Gonzalez, Carbon Analyst
<b>Director sign off by</b>	
<b>Assessment date</b>	31/03/2026



## Detail of proposal

<p><b>Context / Background</b></p>	<p>These policies dictate how we can devolve OCC properties or assets to community groups at less than “best consideration” – that is market rate – in recognition of the social value and public benefit that these groups provide. Community Asset Transfer (CAT) refers to the transferral of ownership of a property, whilst Community Leasing refers to leasing out a property for less than best consideration.</p> <p>This policy is being updated for a few reasons. Firstly, there are currently a selection of VCS groups that are on “rent concessions”, which are largely legacies from concessions made during the COVID pandemic. Updating and expanding these policy means that these groups can apply for a Community Lease. This both means that they have long term security (rather than having to come back and ask for an extension every year, which is time costly both for them and for county council officers), and also means that the system is made uniform and fair, and that other groups (who don’t currently enjoy rent concessions) can also apply for a Community Lease. Making this process uniform and accountable also protects the Council from accusations of unfairness. Secondly, separating them out into CAT and Community Leasing clearly distinguishes between the two and makes the process simpler.</p>
<p><b>Proposal</b></p>	<p>Firstly, we decided to separate the policies into two: CAT to deal with transferral of ownership, Community Leasing for the leasing of properties. Whilst these policies are very similar, it means we know exactly what we’re talking about.</p> <p>We will establish a Community Asset Transfer and Community Leasing Working Group. This group will have the role of assessing applications, as well as maintaining a list of properties that are available for CAT and Community Leasing. This list will be published online. This means that we are being proactive in looking to do them where we can, but also prudent and only offering them when we know it won’t pose financial risk to the council.</p> <p>The policies will set out when we will do CAT or Community Leasing, the eligibility criteria for organisations who wish to apply, and the criteria by which we will assess them. The assessment criteria used to judge full applications look for how well the proposals support our Social Value Local Priorities (as set out in the 2026 Social Value Policy) and Marmot Place principles / projects, if they propose to invest into the property, their financial sustainability and benefit provided to local residents.</p>
<p><b>Evidence / Intelligence</b></p>	<p>In updating the CAT policy, research was done checking against local and national best practice from where CAT policies have been successfully implemented in other local authorities. These policies were designed with input from throughout the Council. Procurement colleagues assisted with designing the scoring mechanism, and we are tying the Assessment Criteria to their Social Value Local Priorities. Workshops were ran on the policies which had representation from Properties and Assets, Economy and Place, Policy, Legal and Procurement. From 9th February to 9th March, we ran a period of VCS engagement through a Let’s Talk Oxfordshire survey. We also ran a webinar on 5th March in which we got feedback in person. None of the feedback on these policies related to environmental concerns. The feedback included widening how we were measuring the social value of applications, adding clarity on how rent level is calculated, and expanding how VCS groups could provide yearly reporting.</p>
<p><b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b></p>	<p>Although we currently do have a CAT policy, it is not well known and is extremely rarely used. The alternatives to updating the policies, was doing nothing. Doing nothing would mean continuing the practice by which a handful of VCS tenants have ad hoc rent concessions. This is bad for them, as it means that they cannot properly financial plan for the future, and it is bad for us, as these concessions are difficulty to budget for and are inherently unfair (as there is no process by which they were chosen to not pay rent whilst other VCS tenants do), possibly opening OCC up to risk of accusations of unfairness. Now is also a particularly prudent time to update these policies, as with LGR approaching, there is the possibility that the properties portfolio will greatly increase - in the case of a successful One Oxfordshire bid, for example. Having a policy that is embedded in the council, and has been tested already, means that it will be far easier to replicate it as the opportunities for CAT or Community Leasing increases with the enlarged properties portfolio.</p>

Category	Impact criteria	Score (-3 to +3)	Description of impact	Actions or mitigations to reduce negative impacts	Action owner	Timeline and monitoring arrangements
Energy	Increases energy efficiency		In the case of Community Leases, central government regulations require that Non-Domestic Privately Rented Properties (including those rented by local authorities) comply with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard Regulations such as achieving an EPC of C by 2027 and an EPC of B between 2030-25 (specific year to be confirmed by central government in 2026). The Council is aware of these regulations.	N/A		
Energy	Promotes a switch to low-carbon or renewable energy		There is an opportunity for promoting renewable energy generation in assets transferred to community groups (akin to Community Energy schemes). The Council can provide guidance and link community groups to community energy leaders in Oxfordshire (e.g. Low Carbon Hub). This opportunity is not explored in this proposal.	Explore missed opportunities for linking CAT policy with the council's community energy strategies.		
Energy	Promotes resilient, local, smart energy systems	N/A		N/A		
Transport & Connectivity	Reduces need to travel and/or the need for private car ownership	N/A		N/A		
Transport & Connectivity	Supports active travel	N/A		N/A		
Transport & Connectivity	Increases use of public transport	N/A		N/A		
Transport & Connectivity	Accelerates electrification of transport	N/A		N/A		
Buildings	Promotes net zero new builds and developments	N/A	Policies will not lead to any new building development.	N/A		
Buildings	Accelerates retrofitting of existing buildings		Subject to resource and funds availability (and subject to any changes resulting from Local Government Reorganisation), OCC may work with community groups to invest, maintain and repair including retrofitting in properties that are devolved through CAT or Community Leasing. Many community groups are anticipated to have limited resources however also have access to different funding streams closed to the authority, the Council can work with the community groups concerning the properties transferred or leased to ensure best outcomes for the community.	N/A		
Nature	Protects, restores or enhances biodiversity, landscape and ecosystems	N/A		N/A		
Nature	Develops blue and green infrastructure	N/A		N/A		
Nature	Improves access to nature and green spaces	N/A		N/A		
Waste & Consumption	Reduces overall consumption	N/A		N/A		
Waste & Consumption	Supports waste prevention and drive reuse and recycling	N/A		N/A		
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to flooding	N/A		N/A		
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to other extreme weather events (e.g., storms, cold snaps, heatwaves, droughts)	N/A		N/A		
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience of council services, communities, energy systems, transport infrastructure and/or supply chains	N/A		N/A		
Procurement & Investment	Procurement practices prioritise low-carbon options, circular economy and	N/A		N/A		

Procurement & Investment	Investment being considered supports climate action/ is consistent with path to net zero		Both leased assets (part of council's Scope 3 emissions) and properties whose ownership has been transferred to community groups need to achieve net zero as soon as possible in the 2040's following OCC's Climate Action Framework. Within this target, following the GHG protocol, the council has direct responsibility to decarbonise leased assets whereas in the case of transferred properties the responsibility will fall to community groups who acquire ownership of properties. Nevertheless, as stated above, subject to resource and funds availability (and subject to any changes resulting from Local Government Reorganisation), OCC may work with community groups to invest, maintain and repair including retrofitting in properties that are devolved through CAT or Community Leasing.	N/A
People & Organizations	Drives behavioural change to address the climate and ecological emergency	N/A		N/A
People & Organizations	Drives organizational and systemic change to address the climate and ecological emergency	N/A		N/A
Just transition	Promotes green innovation and job creation	N/A		N/A
Just transition	Promotes health and wellbeing	N/A		N/A
Just transition	Reduces poverty and inequality		Community asset transfer has the potential to address inequality, measures have been taken for local government assets sold under lower than market price are not resold to private for profit organisations and therefore lost to the community sector (section 3.2 Long Term Considerations).	N/A