



# Community Ownership Support Service

COSS is a Scottish government funded programme, adviser-led across Scotland, set up to :

- ✓ Support communities in the sustainable transfer of primarily public assets into community ownership
- ✓ Support local authorities and other public agencies (relevant authorities) in the transfer of assets into community ownership
- ✓ Deliver a post-acquisition Facilities Management service
- ✓ Provide a church acquisition support service

<https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/>



# Community Ownership in Scotland



- 2024 marked 100 years of Community Ownership in Scotland
- Over 500 assets now in Community Ownership across the country
- Over 300 Community Asset Transfers (CAT) have been approved since 2017

# Community Ownership – Changing Context

- Rationalisation of public estate
  - Community and Sports Facilities
  - Operational premises
- Vacant commercial premises and shops in key town centre locations
- Extensive rationalisation of the Church of Scotland estate (+ other denominations)  
40% (c.800 churches over next 5 years)



# The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

## The aims of the Act:

- Aims to change the balance of power between communities and the public sector
- Introduces many more rights for community bodies
- Strengthens their voices in the decisions that matter to them
- Encourages partnership working between service providers and communities, cementing the focus on achieving outcomes and tackling inequalities
- Enables communities to make requests not just to local authorities but to a wide-ranging list of public bodies (relevant authorities), for any land or buildings they feel they could use in a better way to deliver services and benefits





# What is Asset Transfer?

Sometimes Asset Transfer (AT) is referred to as CAT (Community Asset Transfer).

CAT is a process to allow a community organisation to take over **publicly owned land or buildings**, in a way that recognises the public benefits that the community use will bring.

This transfer can be facilitated in different ways e.g the transfer of title for outright **ownership**, the use of a long-term **lease**.

This **may be at a discounted price**, with a grant or other support.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP: ASSETS FOR PEOPLE AND PLACE

 Community  
Ownership  
Support Service  
Development Trusts Association Scotland

# Asset Transfer Rights

The Community Empowerment Act introduces key Community Rights for **communities of place (geographic)** or **interest (united by a common interest)**, and **places requirements on public agencies (Relevant Authorities)**. This includes the **right to:**



Request information on any publicly owned asset that the community believes they can make better use of for community benefit.



Request the transfer of a public asset **(and it doesn't have to be surplus)**.



Acquire that asset if the public body cannot offer a good reason why this shouldn't happen (ie there is a presumption in favour of transfer).

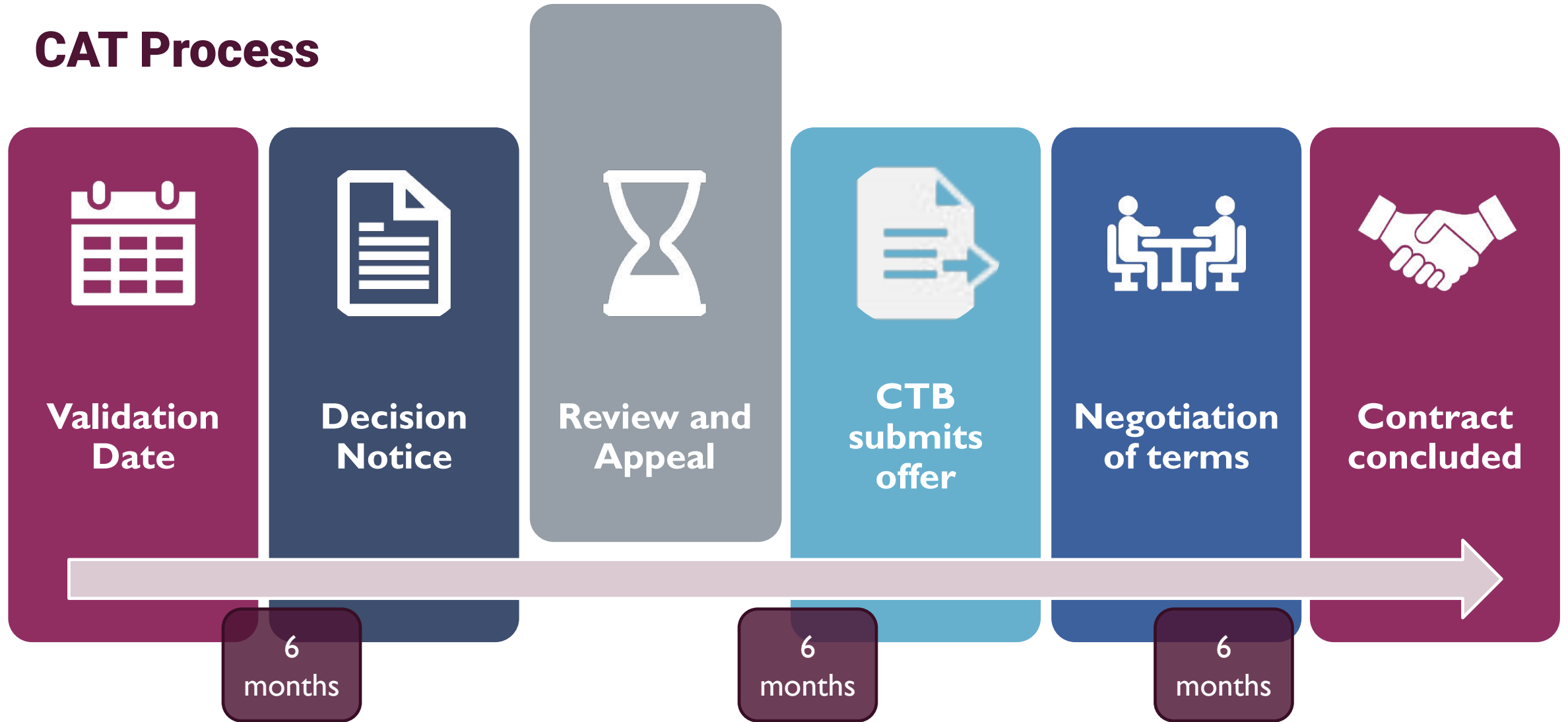


To decide on the price it wishes to offer, based on the economic, social, health or environmental benefits it will add, and the condition of the asset.



To request a review or appeal for any adverse decision, or where the timescales have not been adhered to

# CAT Process



# Preparing your Community Ownership Proposal

- Governance and capacity – right structure and the skills within the group to deliver
- Community - evidence of community support and meaningful impact to be delivered
- Sustainability - a viable business plan with financial projections for 5 years

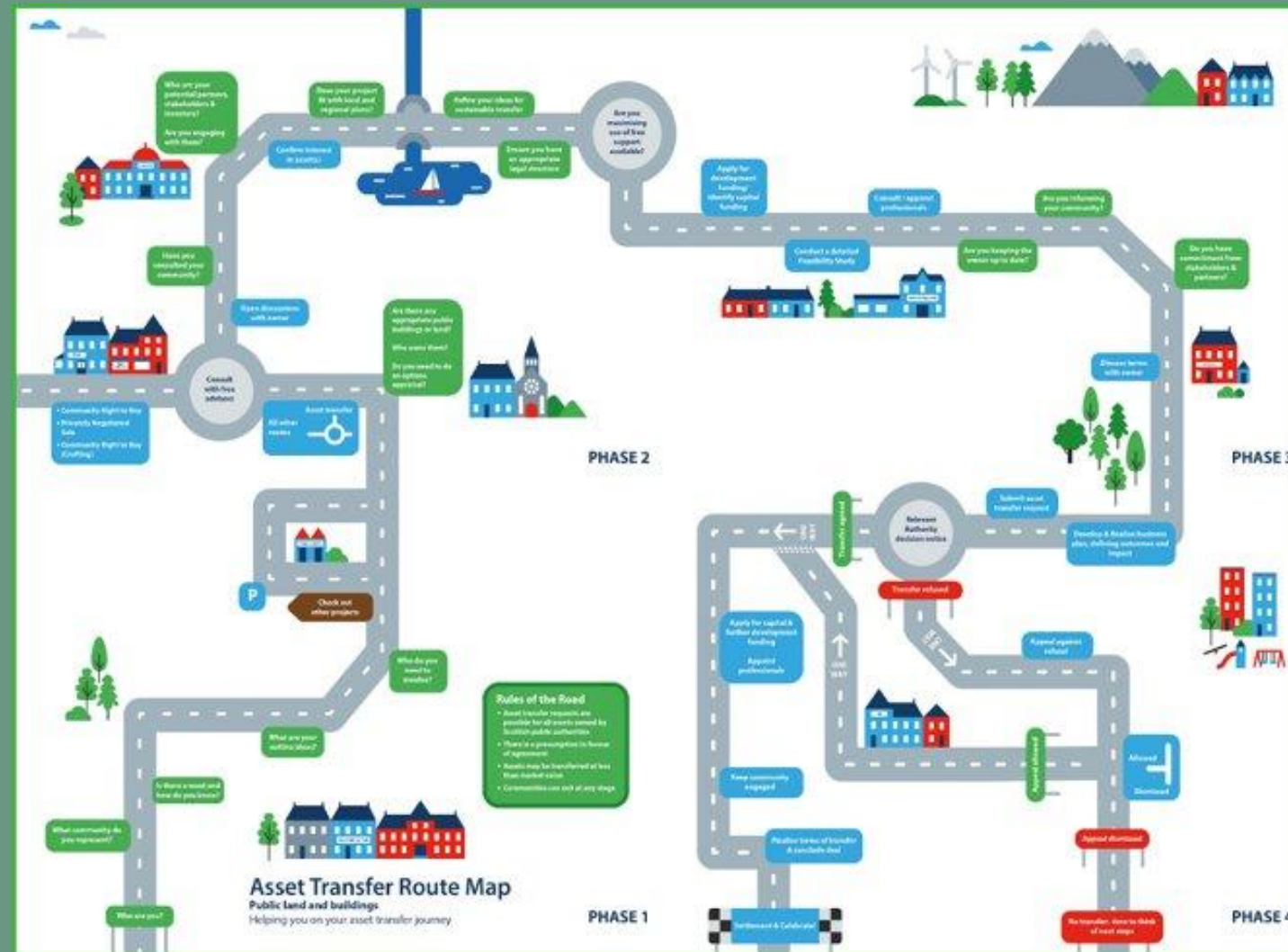




# Multiple Requests for same asset

- Prohibition of disposal applies to each application and transfer can't be completed until each application has finalised
- If one request is approved, it will be conditional on the other applicant's prohibition being lifted





# Support Services

## COSS SUPPORT

One-to-one Adviser Support

- Mentoring through the asset transfer /Acquisition process
- Early-stage
- Ideas generation
- Governance Structure

Comprehensive web resource

Assets for People and Place

Training Sessions

Networking opportunities

Access to Expert Help



## Support Agencies/ Programmes

TSLs - Business Gateway -  
Community Enterprise – Accelerate  
- Just Enterprise - SCA Knowledge  
Exchange Programme – SES Training  
Programme



## Funders

SLF (Scottish Land Fund) has  
Advisors who will offer support to  
eligible organisations







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