

Community Right to Bid - Your views on the transfer of listed assets

* 1. Which Local Authority are you based in?

South Somerset District Council

* 2. How many assets of community value have been listed by your local authority since the asset register was opened?

25

* 3. How many of these assets have triggered the initial 6 week moratorium?

9

* 4. How many of these assets have triggered the full 6 month moratorium?

5

* 5. What happened to those assets once the 6 month moratorium was complete?
(For example were they sold to the community/parish who listed them? Was the use of the asset changed?) We have provided space for five moratorium examples from your register in response boxes below

Asset 1 RECREATIONAL SPACE - Town council is in discussion with site owner (the Environment Agency) to acquire asset.

Asset 2 WORKING MEN'S CLUB - No community bid was submitted within the 6 month moratorium period. Site has been sold and planning consent given for conversion to residential.

Asset 3 CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB - Asset exempt due to being in receivership. Agent appealed against listing and obstructed local interest. Now under new ownership and seeking consent to convert to residential.

Asset 4 PUB - A fully worked up community bid was unsuccessful despite a robust and fully funded offer at the market price. Pub was sold as a going concern and is due to reopen as a pub following refurbishment.

Asset 5 PUB - A fully worked up community bid was bid was unsuccessful. Community's bid deemed unacceptable by owner who accepted a higher offer from buyer who intends to reopen as a pub.

* 6. For assets of community value which were sold to the community after the 6 month moratorium, what factors contributed to the sale going through? Please feel free to mention specific factors for particular assets - mentioned in response to the previous question.

Two assets (a school and school field) that were registered by the Parish Council were not put on the open market, but one was sold and the other leased to the community utilising the County Council's Asset Transfer policy.

- * 7. For assets which were not sold to the community after the 6 month moratorium was triggered, what factors contributed to the sale not going through? Please feel free to mention specific issues for particular assets.

Owners initially resented the registration. This resulted in the Community's bids being treated unfavourably (two pubs).

- * 8. Based on your experience of Community Right to Bid, would any of the following factors enable communities to acquire assets they have nominated - if they were put up for sale?

Extending the moratorium period to more than 6 months)

Providing better sign posting to groups to help and advice available

Providing support or advice to groups on how to engage with the vendors of the property

Providing more support or advice on securing the necessary finance

Setting a clear reserve price for buyers to meet ✓

Other (please specify) **The most important factor would be offering the community First Refusal against a clear reserve price.**

- * 9. Could you tell us about any successful bids which could be seen as examples of good practice in your area?

N/A

- * 10. Do you have any other comments on how the Community Right to Bid could be made more effective?

The council's Executive has concerns about the costs and benefits of this Right which currently appears not to be achieving the outcomes that the Government had intended.

A number of communities have found it difficult and frustrating to hold meaningful discussions about community property acquisition with owners and agents when these are put onto the market.

In some instances work has gone into developing a strong community business case and finance, but ultimately the community option has been unsuccessful.

The pub chains and proprietors haven't really embraced the spirit of this legislation. We appreciate that this is a "Community Right to Bid" not a "Community Right to Buy", as enshrined in the legislation.

The lack of teeth for the community i.e. no first right of refusal on the property concerned, seems to us to be a weakness in the legislation.