

Community Asset Transfer Case Study

Organisation Name: John Haines

Please give a brief introduction your organisation and its work/purpose:

Projekts MCR is a not-for-profit, Community Benefit Society aiming to help people through the use of skateboarding and other skatepark-type activities. We operate the Pumpcage Skatepark under the Mancunian Way flyover on London Road and we deliver over 25 schools sessions a week in and around Manchester. The work Projekts does is having a high impact on increasing female participation in sport and developing community, both around the activity itself and within the local area. Our ambition over the next 12 months is to expand our facility in order to generate new growth and widen our reach.

Name the MCC asset transferred to your organisation and the area it is located in:

Pumpcage (Projekts/Mancunian Way/City Centre) Skatepark under the Mancunian Way flyover on London Road. M1 2PG. Based on the border of Ardwick and City Centre wards.

State the approximate start date of the asset transfer process:

c. Jan 2015

State the date of the actual asset transfer:

15 Aug 2018

***Estimated number of hours/cost of asset transfer process to your organisation? *If known:**

In terms of direct costs, excluding Projekts' staff time, the CAT incurred a minimum of £6,000, which includes road closure and legal fees. Time spent in meetings directly related to the CAT were relatively minimal, perhaps an hour or two a month at most. Work on developing the business plan was significantly higher, partly due to regular updates and amendments as the financial circumstances changed over time or that more information was available, which altered the work we planned to do. But it's difficult to put a figure on exactly how much staff time has been spent on the CAT without going back through the records in details.

Why was asset transfer necessary and important for your organisation?

A 25 year lease on the land was essential for gaining financial investment from funders, banks and other loan providers, which we needed in order to develop the facility. Within three months of securing the 25-year lease, Projekts has secured over £500k investment through a combination of grants and loans, all of which required the 25-year lease.

What was your experience of the asset transfer process?

Think about:

-What went well? There were no objections to our application from MCC, which was a wonderful start to the process. Steve Higgins was very supportive and had an excellent knowledge of the process, which gave us a good sense of what we needed to do and when. The most positive result is that we were granted a lease that meets our requirements well, allowing us to draw down funding and loans and to deliver the project as described in our business plan.

-What could have been better? The process could have moved significantly quicker, particularly agreeing the terms of the lease. Communication between the lawyers and other parties was frustratingly slow and at times it felt as though the process had completely stagnated. The letters from lawyers were often opaque to any unfamiliar with legal jargon, which was why it was so helpful to have a lawyer on our board to translate for us.

-What support did you receive and from whom? We had a variety of support from a number of sources. We received funding for the prefeasibility process from Locality and had some support from Can Do Communities. We received advice from Gateley Solicitors, from Sport England and a great deal of support from Steve Higgins (MCC), we also recruited a solicitor to our Board of Directors during this process, who was an invaluable asset.

-What difference (if any) did the support make to your experience of the asset transfer process? Without the support I can't imagine how we would have completed the lease by now.

-How could the process of asset transfer be improved further?

I think there are at least three ways that the process can be improved:

- 1) Create of process drawing with estimated dates showing what the process involves and how long each stage might take and why.
- 2) As CATs are usually for the purposes of creating a sustainable business/organisation and that these businesses are often reliant on the lease/ownership in order to remain in operation and that these business will often have a significant benefit to the community, speeding up the lease negotiations by having a round table discussion fairly early on in the process (e.g. once the business plan is agreed and the prefeasibility is finalised) would expedite the process significantly and help to form a relationship between the individuals involved and thus reduce potential the likelihood of misunderstandings or conflict.
- 3) Avoid sending out template draft leases to CAT applicants until the business plan has been read and understood by the person writing the lease. Anything that restricts the applicant from delivering their business plan should be removed from the draft lease before being sent to the applicant.

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Our board of directors, staff team and the skateboard community are enormously grateful to Manchester City Council for granting us this lease. It has opened countless opportunities for growth and development, created jobs, built community and enhanced a facility that helps make up the unique fingerprint of Manchester.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Steven Higgins for the tireless work he has invested into our organisation throughout the CAT process. He is an asset to the not-for-profit community of Manchester and to everyone who benefits from that community.

Case study provided by: Group Name: Projekts MCR

Name: John Haines

Date: 11 Sep 2018