

Angus Council submission of 11 February 2022

PE1912/C: Funding for Council Venues

I refer to your request for a response from Angus Council in relation to the above petition.

Sports and cultural venues in Angus are operated by the ANGUSalive which is an arms-length organisation owned by the Council. The legal ownership of the facilities is retained by the Council and a license to occupy has been agreed with ANGUSalive. The portfolio of venues covers Libraries, Museums, Town Halls, Sports Centres and Country Parks, delivering a range of related services for our citizens and visitors to Angus.

Funding arrangements to local government have required substantial changes to ANGUSalive organisationally over recent years and the impact of the pandemic on income generation, along with projected future savings required in line with Council budgetary constraints, has led to a transformational change programme being initiated to address the medium to longer term sustainability of the organisation as a going concern.

The period of recovery since the initial lockdown has seen the return of most venues into operation, albeit this has been based on reduced opening hours on a temporary basis. This has been considered and agreed by the Council's elected members, taking cognisance of the exceptional circumstances and impact on the ANGUSalive business model. Two museum venues have not re-opened but are now planned to re-open in spring this year on a seasonal basis. Three other venues are currently being used as vaccination centres to support the national health service roll out of the vaccination programme across Angus, and alternative solutions are currently being investigated to return these to ANGUSalive operation when this is possible.

The funding situation for the Council generally is extremely challenging. This factor, compounded with the impact of the pandemic on citizens, has inevitably resulted in previous approaches to service delivery requiring transformation with new ways of working needed to meet changing societal demands, while being sustainable into the future. In Angus, that transformation is therefore looking at improved partnership arrangements

with healthcare services and sports/ outdoor adventure activities, promoting a shift towards a preventative culture focussed on improving health and wellbeing, while creating new opportunities for income growth.

The Council and ANGUSalife are working closely together to manage the situation which has been essential in the circumstances. I hope this provides a helpful overview regarding the position in Angus which will assist with your deliberations on this matter.