

North Lanarkshire Council submission of 18 February 2022

PE1912/G - Funding for Council Venues

North Lanarkshire Council fully supports the position on the importance of culture and sport provision to local communities. It is understood and accepted that culture and sport have a significant impact on society with four key impacts on improved health, reduced crime, increased social capital and improved education outcomes.

In support of the Culture Strategy for Scotland and sportscotland's Sport for Life programme, North Lanarkshire Council has a strategic framework which places culture and sport at the heart of plans for community support and the overall Plan for North Lanarkshire. Overall, the framework delivers support to:

- Health and wellbeing
- The local economy
- Education
- Reducing inequality
- And supporting our commitment to working with local communities.

Since returning from ALEO status to North Lanarkshire Council, significant progress has been made in each of these key areas. Working with NHS partners, direct support has been provided to those with physical and mental wellbeing conditions with life changing results. Within the council, we work with colleagues to provide direct support to those most vulnerable residents, ensuring we listen to our community and provide the services they really need in a way that suits them.

Overall, we understand that services must respond to changes in society and in keeping with our overall direction as set out within the Plan for North Lanarkshire and our Delivering for Communities model, we are working to ensure our delivery model for the future aligns with plans for the forthcoming Town and Community Hub model and takes services to the heart of our communities. This may mean delivering services in a different way or from different locations.

While this ongoing review will seek to ensure that culture and sport services operate as efficiently as possible, we recognise the importance

of ensuring proper investment to maximise community benefit. However, the competitive and volatile market faced by local government operated venues and facilities makes existing income targets challenging and investment options limited.

As COSLA's '[Live Well Locally](#)' campaign highlights, local government is 'key to creating the conditions for improved health and wellbeing' with local government services critical to addressing the social determinants of health (including leisure and recreation). With rising cost pressures linked to increasing demand for services, general inflation and challenging financial settlements from the Scottish Government it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain current levels of service provision across all areas of local government activity.

To ensure councils can achieve balanced budgets and to continue to comply with Scottish Government directions on implementation of national policies, savings have to be taken from areas that have elements of non-statutory or discretionary service provision. Unfortunately, that includes areas such as the provision of culture, sport and leisure services.

While no local authority wants to make savings in these areas, the continuing lack of fair funding for all council services as highlighted in COSLA's '[Live Well Locally](#)' campaign requires difficult and often unpalatable decisions to be made about the level of services provided within local communities.