

## AGENDA ITEM NO 9

REPORT NO 172/24

### ANGUS COUNCIL

#### POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 4 JUNE 2024

#### ANGUS ALIVE INVESTMENT PROPOSAL: ARBROATH LIBRARY BUILDING

#### REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE & CHANGE

### 1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals relating to the upgrading of Arbroath Library to improve the delivery of face-to-face Library/ ACCESS services; along with changes to the use of the first floor of Arbroath Library to support and improve the storage and public access arrangements for the Council's Archives. The report seeks to share the proposals with elected members and progress the consultation which will inform a final decision in due course.

### 2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

- 2.1 This report principally aligns to the key priorities of 'Caring for our Place' and 'Angus Council is Efficient and Effective'. In particular to:

- reduce our energy use through a reduction in our property estate coupled with good management to reduce wasting energy;
- support Angus Alive and Tayside Contracts to transform their businesses to ensure a sustainable service offering;
- continue to support face to face appointments wherever possible, with greater focus on those with specific needs; and
- continue to develop and deliver our change programme.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee:

- (i) Note the proposals for Arbroath Library, including the Library/ ACCESS services integration and the Archives design proposals (**Appendix 1** refers), along with the implications for the Community Learning Shop, wedding ceremonies, and the Art Galleries;
- (ii) Note the decant proposals, including the use of the Community and General-Purpose spaces at Saltire Sports Centre to accommodate the delivery of Library/ ACCESS services, for the period during which the improvement works are being carried out in the Arbroath Library building;
- (iii) Agree to carry out a consultation in relation to the proposals outlined in recommendations (i) and (ii) of this report, with the exception of the Library/ ACCESS merger which has already been agreed (section 6.7.2 refers) and will not therefore form part of the proposed consultation exercise;
- (iv) Note that a further report will be brought back to this committee once the consultation exercise has been completed to consider the outcome and agree the next steps;
- (v) Note the estimated total cost of £0.290m for the proposals would be funded from part of the £2.028m allowance in the General Fund Capital Programme for the Angus Alive Transformation Project – Library/ Facilities Investment (Angus wide), subject to the outcome from the consultation and the further committee report; and

- (vi) Note the various property and financial implications as a result of the above detailed proposals, subject to the outcome from the consultation and the further committee report.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 This report sets out a proposal to invest in the Arbroath Library building which will benefit front-line Library/ ACCESS service delivery; support Angus Alive to deliver changes proposed in its latest Business Plan; and support the Council to progress its Agile Working and Estates Review programme, along with the other strategic priorities set out in section 2 above.
- 4.2 The permanent integration of Arbroath Library/ Access Services in the existing Arbroath Library building was agreed at the Council meeting on 3 November 2022 ([Report 364/22](#) refers). That report referenced that designs to support integrated library and ACCESS services would be developed to support the varying needs of customers, with improvements likely reflecting some of the successful solutions at Carnoustie and Montrose Libraries.
- 4.3 The Council also has a long-standing strategic action to address the storage arrangements for its Archives and Collections. These are currently managed by Angus Alive as part of the service agreement with the Council and are currently stored across a number of locations, including: The Yard, Forfar; The 'Bull-ring' at the Mart, Forfar; and the Hunter Library, Restenneth Priory by Forfar.
- 4.4 The existing lease at the Hunter Library is due to expire in February 2025. This property was leased by the Council in 2005 from the Graham Hunter Foundation Inc. The Council lease covers an initial period of 20 years (i.e. from 2005 to 2025) with the potential to extend for a further 10 years. An initial capital investment in the property was made to carry out necessary refurbishment work and to separate the public area from the residential accommodation. Angus Alive have been operating the facility since December 2015 and service staff are located on site to accommodate public access (by appointment). The Council is responsible for maintenance and running costs (i.e. £9,469 in 2023/24 for annual water, electricity, fuel oil and building servicing; plus future planned and unplanned building maintenance cost liabilities) for the public part of the property it currently occupies.
- 4.5 Angus Alive have identified a business priority that they no longer consider it to be viable to continue to operate from the Hunter Library – this has been identified as part of the response to achieving a sustainable service model that delivers the savings requested by the Council through its Change Programme. This priority, along with a further two related priorities are included in [Angus Alive's Business Plan](#), agreed at the Council meeting on 29 February 2024. These three priorities are as follows:
- *Develop proposal and secure allocation of funding to refurbish Arbroath Library to fully integrate ACCESS service provision, modernise and future proof the customer offering.*
  - *Complete colocation of Archives with another service by no later than the lease end date for Restenneth in early 2025.*
  - *Advance the Angus Heritage & Resource Centre (AHRC) proposal to ensure we can care for and manage the Collections of Angus Council for the people of Angus in appropriate conditions (releases venues in support of Council's Agile Programme).*
- 4.6 Accordingly, this proposal has been developed to address both the Council and Angus Alive strategic priorities. This will require a commitment to invest the Council's capital funds, along with making changes to the scope and use of the current property estate, while also changing the location of part of Angus Alive's service which facilitates public access to the Council's Archives.

#### **5. CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 The outline design proposal for the permanent integration of Arbroath Library/ Access Services in the existing Arbroath Library building has been progressed since being agreed by Council in November 2022.
- 5.2 This has been carried out in conjunction with an options appraisal relating to the future storage arrangements for the Council's entire Archives and Collections as it was considered that Arbroath Library could form part of the overall solution.

- 5.3 A shortlist of property options has been identified. However, one of the options relates to the future use of Angus House. A decision relating to the entire relocation of Archives and Collections has therefore not been brought to members at this time, as this is dependent upon the property strategy emerging from the 18-month market testing proposal which was approved by the Council at its meeting on 9 May 2024 (Report 150/24 refers).
- 5.4 The options appraisal exercise has however identified the potential for making greater use of the first-floor gallery spaces in the Arbroath Library building to accommodate the Archives currently located in the Hunter Library – the most time-pressing aspect of relocating the Archives. For the avoidance of doubt, these proposals do not relate to re-location of any of the archives/records currently located at The Yard, Forfar or The ‘Bull-ring’ at the Mart, Forfar.
- 5.5 Relocating those Archives to the Arbroath Library building would make them more accessible to the general public – with Arbroath Library being a fully accessible building, located near the town centre and on public transport links by bus and train. This may also encourage more visitors to the area. It would also address Angus Alive’s priority for the “*colocation of Archives with another service by no later than the lease end date for Restenneth in early 2025*” and continue to downsize and optimise the use of the Council’s overall property portfolio.
- 5.6 However, members will be aware that Arbroath Library also currently hosts the Community Learning Shop operated by the Council’s Vibrant Communities team; supports wedding ceremonies by the Council’s Registrars service; and has an upstairs Art Gallery (Corsar and Brothock Galleries) which include the display of two Council owned paintings by Pieter Brueghel the Younger which have significant cultural value. The impact on those current uses has also been considered as far as possible at this stage.

## **6. PROPOSALS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

6.1.1 The proposals have therefore been developed to include:

- Improvements to Arbroath Library/ ACCESS facilities – ground floor alterations;
- Relocating Archives to the Arbroath Library building (first-floor gallery spaces); and
- Temporary decant arrangements while the above improvements and changes are delivered on-site.

### **6.2 Improvements to Arbroath Library/ ACCESS Facilities: Design Proposals**

6.2.1 Design proposals have been developed for improvements to Arbroath Library/ ACCESS facilities (**Appendix 1** refers), including upgrading of the existing reception, adding a private meeting room and relocation of the existing IT training suite into the main library area where the local history section is currently located. The local history section is to be moved to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor as part of the Archive proposals.

### **6.3 Relocating Archives to the Arbroath Library building: Design Proposals**

6.3.1 The Archive materials currently located at the Hunter Library will be relocated to the first floor of the library building, utilising parts of the current Art Gallery spaces (**Appendix 1** refers). The move is proposed to take place in January 2025 to align with the expiry of the current lease for the Hunter Library. At this time, works will be in progress to improve the ground floor Library/ ACCESS facilities and this may limit access to the first floor area. However, interim measures will be put in place for the service to continue with as little disruption as possible to service users.

#### Community Learning Shop Implications

6.3.2 Following design reviews and input from the Vibrant Communities & Sustainable Growth Directorate, the existing Community Learning Shop would be relocated to the ground floor on completion of the works and continue to support citizens who currently use the facilities. Options in relation to improving current opening arrangements for this service are also being explored.

#### Wedding Ceremony Implications

6.3.3 Wedding ceremonies are currently held in the Corsar Art Gallery. This would no longer be possible due to the proposals outlined above. As an alternative in Arbroath, Angus Alive could

support this type of booking at their Webster Theatre venue or Signal Tower Museum. The Rose Room in Montrose Library would also continue to be available.

#### 6.3.4 Art Gallery Implications

Using the current Art Gallery spaces in the manner set out in the design proposals, would continue to allow the display of artwork on the perimeter walls of the two gallery spaces. This means that the two Brueghel paintings will continue to be displayed.

### 6.4 Temporary Decant Arrangements

6.4.1 The improvements and changes to the Library building would require the decanting of the current Library/ ACCESS services while the works are undertaken. It is proposed to utilise the Community and General-Purpose spaces at Saltire Sports Centre. These are located close to the main entrance and reception areas.

6.4.2 The improvements in relation to the first-floor areas to be used for the Archives can be accommodated without the need for a decant, albeit there may be some disruption during the building works. That will include no access to the passenger lift which is located in the library space. Citizens and staff using those first-floor spaces will be kept fully informed of any changes required to accommodate the works and any interim measures to suit staff and citizen needs and safety.

6.4.3 The Community Learning Shop will decant from the first floor to an alternative location for the duration of the works before relocating to the ground-floor on the completion of works. Citizens will be advised of the temporary location once a suitable space has been identified.

### 6.5 Estimated Total Cost

6.5.1 The overall total estimated costs of the proposals are as follows:

Description	Estimated Cost £
Arbroath Library Improvements; ground floor and first floor	£265,000
Removals, IT and decant	£25,000
<b>Total Estimated Costs (Excluding VAT)</b>	<b>£290,000</b>

6.5.2 The estimated cost of dilapidation survey related works in relation to exiting the lease at the Hunter Library are not included in the above estimated costs.

### 6.6 Change Request

6.6.1 The Service Agreement between the Council and Angus Alive requires changes to be managed through a Change Request process. The proposals set out in this report will therefore be captured in a formal Change Request between the parties. Final approval to agree that Change Request will be pending the outcome from consultation and a further committee report.

### 6.7 Consultation

6.7.1 As the proposals outlined in this report relate to (i) changes to the existing use of the Arbroath Library building; (ii) a change to the location of service delivery (i.e. Hunter Library Archives moving from Forfar to the first floor of the Arbroath Library building); and (iii) design changes to the Library/ ACCESS facilities, it is considered appropriate to consult with members of the public, along with staff, trade unions and others potentially affected by the proposals, to seek their views on the overall proposals. This will support a fuller equalities impact assessment and enable the final decision to be made by elected members.

6.7.2 The Arbroath Library/ ACCESS integration has already been agreed ([Report 364/22](#) refers) and will therefore not form part of this consultation exercise, albeit the details of the proposed layout improvements to the Library/ face-to-face ACCESS services and relocation within the Library of the Community Learning Shop will be included so that citizens using the facilities can comment on the design proposals.

6.7.3 The proposed consultation will utilise the Council's new 'Engage Angus' platform. Angus Alive will also support the process by displaying information at the Hunter Library and the Arbroath

Library building. A communications/ engagement plan will be prepared to ensure that all those affected by the proposals will have the opportunity to contribute.

- 6.7.4 A further committee report will be brought back to this committee once the consultation has been completed to consider the outcome from that exercise and the next steps.

## **6.8 Outline Timescale**

- 6.8.1 The broad timeline is as follows:

- Consultation: June/ July 2024 (6 weeks)
- Committee Report with consultation feedback and next steps: September 2024 (Policy & Resources Committee)
- \*Design/ Procurement/ Contract Award: September to December 2024 (4 months)
- \*Decant/ Works Period: January 2025 to June 2025 (6 months)
- \*Move Archives from Hunter Library to first floor areas in Arbroath Library: during January 2025 (1 month)
- \*New Arrangements in Place: from July 2025

\* Subject to the outcome of the consultation exercise and members agreeing next steps in the September 2024 Committee Report.

## **7. PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The following summarises the key property changes related to the proposals, which would be progressed taking account of any legal commitments and logistics to make the transition, subject to the outcome of the consultation:

- Terminate the lease of the Hunter Library, Restenneth Priory by Forfar.
- Invest in Arbroath Library, as described in this report.
- Temporary use of Community and General Purposes spaces at Saltire Sports Centre, Arbroath for Library/ ACCESS decant during the works period.

- 7.2 Confirmation of the Council's intentions regarding the Hunter Library lease will require to be declared to the landlords at the appropriate time in advance of the expiry date. The current lease contains a clause requiring the building to be returned in the same conditions as it was originally leased out. This would require a dilapidations survey to be agreed with the Graham Hunter Foundation Inc. should the Council decide not to renew the lease. The cost of dilapidation works can be met from Property budgets.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The termination of the lease and relocation from the Hunter Library, Restenneth Priory by Forfar would save the annual running cost budget of £9,469 (2023/24 full year value). It will also avoid future planned and unplanned building maintenance cost liabilities which the Council is responsible for as part of the lease. For example, flat roof maintenance, boiler replacement, window and door replacements.
- 8.2 The estimated cost of dilapidation survey works at the Hunter Library can be met from the Property revenue budget provision of £45k.
- 8.3 Members may also recall from Report 364/22 that property related revenue savings from agreeing to the Library/ ACCESS integration in the Arbroath Library building amounted to £57k overall (£30k Angus Council and £27k Angus Alive), albeit these savings are already accounted for.
- 8.4 The project proposals amounting to £0.290m, can be funded from part of the allowance of £2.028m in the General Fund Capital Programme for the Angus Alive Transformation Project – Library/ Facilities Investment (Angus wide). This would require to be re-profiled in line with the estimated timing of the spend.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 9.1 The proposals will involve changes to: current facilities and building users at Arbroath Library, the location of Archive services from Restenneth, by Forfar to Arbroath; and also the current Library/ ACCESS facilities. Although the proposals are aimed at providing improvements and

benefits overall, there is also a potential risk there may be an adverse impact by the changes for some. Accordingly, it is proposed to undertake a consultation on the proposals so that a final decision can be taken to include the consultation feedback.

## **10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no significant environmental implications arising directly from this report. Should the decision be made to implement the proposals in due course, following the outcome of the consultation, the Council's overall property portfolio would reduce and this would likely assist to reduce CO2 emissions. There may also be a benefit in reducing CO2 emissions with the Archives being more accessible in Arbroath Library through public transport.

## **11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY**

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix 2.

## **12. CONSULTATION**

- 12.1 The Chief Executive and all Council Directors, along with the interim Chief Executives of Angus Alive have been consulted in the preparation of this report and its Appendices.

**NOTE:** The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Report 150/24 – Agile Working and Estates Review
- [Report 62/24](#), [Annex 1](#), [Annex 2](#), [Annex 3](#) - ANGUSalve Charges Review and Budget Settlement 2024/25 (Council, 29 February 2024)
- [Report 364/22](#), [Appendix 1](#), [Appendix 2](#), [Appendix 3](#), [Appendix 4](#), [Appendix 5](#), [Appendix 6](#) and [Appendix 7](#) – ANGUSalve: Transformation Programme Update (Council, 3 November 2022)

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1: Arbroath Library Plans

Appendix 2: Equalities Impact Assessment