



ANGUS COUNCIL



**REVIEW OF PICTAVIA – FINAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Executive Summary

1. Study Findings

1. We have reviewed the performance of Pictavia against a background of tourism trends in Scotland and in Angus
2. Pictavia has not achieved the visitor numbers or financial performance anticipated during development and which formed the basis of investment
3. Pictavia has not benefited from either the proposed management structure or the level of marketing resources recommended prior to development.
4. It continues to underperform and is costly to run.
5. The potential closure of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) at Pictavia may threaten the remaining visitor numbers.
6. Overall Pictavia offers a visitor experience of indifferent quality although the overall themes appear to be of interest to visitors
7. However it offers a valuable education asset which should be preserved in any future scenario
8. A key element of the attraction is the enthusiasm and knowledge of the staff both at the VIC and in the visitor centre itself
9. We have made recommendations on how the existing concept could be updated if modest to significant investment resources were available for Pictavia
10. However it is unlikely that the increased visitor numbers required to make Pictavia viable on the basis of current performance, around 9,300, are likely to be achieved
11. We therefore assessed four broad options for the future of Pictavia. These were:

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|-----------------|---|
| Option 1 | Do nothing
Continue to operate largely as current |
| Option 2 | Investment
Modest to substantial investment but with particular focus on a major upgrade |
| Option 3 | Diversify
Close Pictavia and use the building for other functions |
| Option 4 | Disposal
Close Pictavia and sell the building for alternative uses |

12. Stakeholders were consulted on their preferred option. The preferred option was broadly Option 2 – but with a new attraction concept. However acknowledging that this requires significant financial resources to implement, options 3 and 4 emerged as the next favoured options.
13. Overall, it was not considered feasible to continue with the current operation of Pictavia even if the existing facility was upgraded.

2. Conclusions

Pictavia is likely to continue to be a drain on Angus Council resources as there is little prospect of the current attraction witnessing a sufficient increase in visitor numbers to operate on a financially sustainable basis, even if modest investment is made in it.

Short term investment may create a short term bounce in visitor numbers but it is unlikely to be sustainable in the long term if nothing else changes – i.e. if the investment is not supported by significantly increased marketing resources and with a change in management. For the long term, there may be an opportunity to create another heritage themed attraction on the site but it is, as yet, not defined.

On the basis of available evidence we have formed the following principal conclusions:

- Pictavia has not achieved the impact set out for it and is unlikely to do so in the future
- Only significant reinvestment in a new visitor attraction concept is likely to achieve increased, sustainable levels of visitor numbers
- If that reinvestment is not available then options should be explored for lease or sale of the building or site to another operator
- However measures should be taken to ensure that the artefacts on display and the heritage interpretation and education activities undertaken at Pictavia can continue

In these scenarios Pictavia would close. We consider that there is little point in investing providing subsidy to a concept which may have some interest for a small number of visitors but has essentially not performed and is unlikely to be generating the tourism impact which was initially envisaged for it.

3. Recommendations

3.1. Pictavia

On the basis of the available evidence and the views of consultees it is recommended that Angus Council consider alternative options for the use of the Pictavia building as a visitor attraction. If that is not feasible then alternative uses through lease or sale of the building should be considered. The continued operation of Pictavia in its current form would continue to be a drain on Angus Council finances, with little evidence of any return or real tourism impact, and is therefore not considered to be a realistic option

3.2. Education Activities and Resources

In all scenarios, options should be considered for the preservation and continued presentation to the public of the Pictish heritage assets displayed at Pictavia, and their continued use as an education resource which benefits school groups from across the East and North East of Scotland.
