



**FORMER LOCHSIDE LEISURE CENTRE
INFORMATION PACK**

**Formal Consultation under Section 104 of the Community
Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**

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If you have any problems accessing this further information, please contact ACCESSLine on 03452 777 778 for detail, alternative formats or other community languages.



1. Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to help decide the future of the former Lochside Leisure Centre.

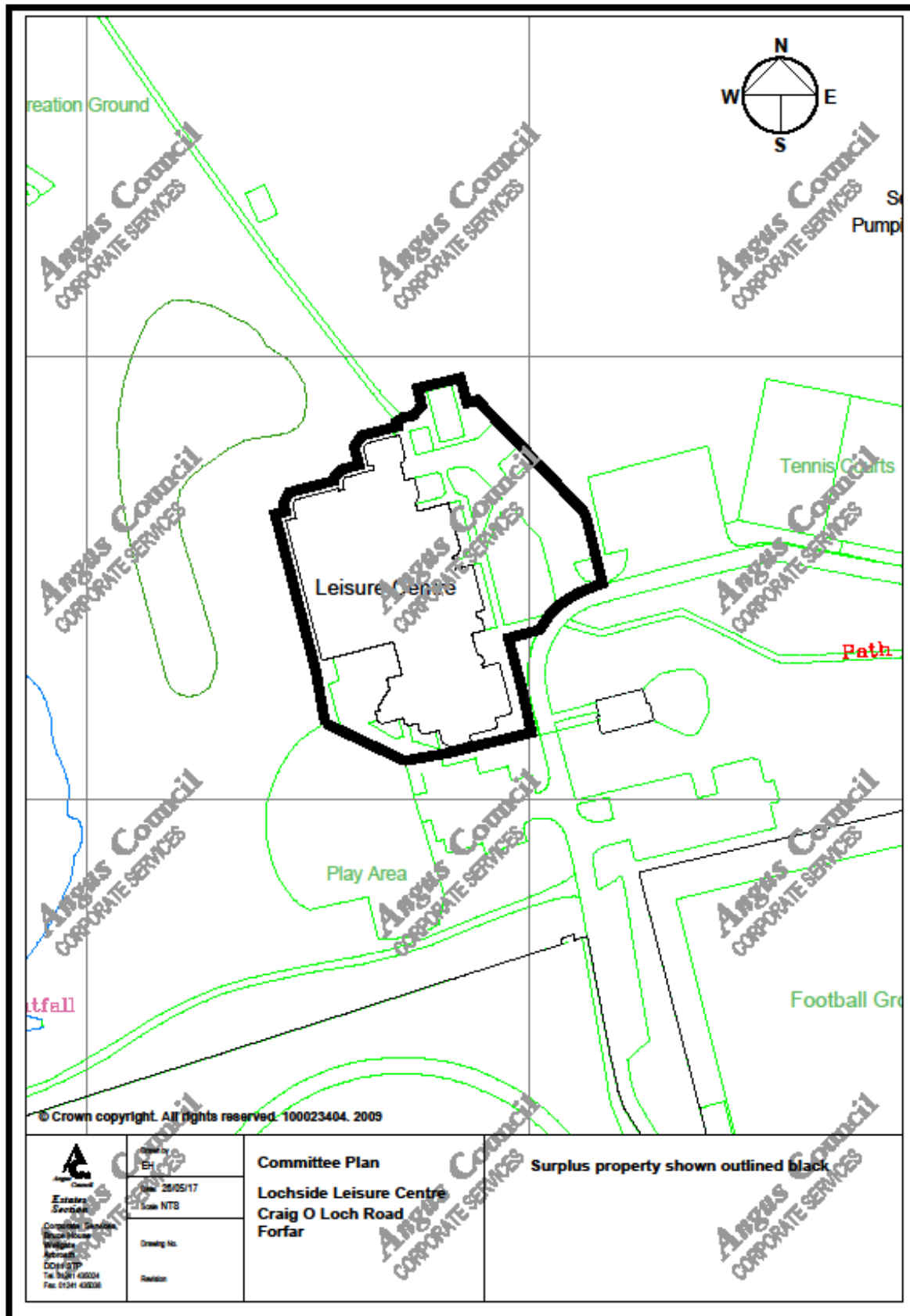
Angus Council is seeking your views on the future of the former Lochside Leisure Centre, and the land immediately around it in Forfar Loch Country Park, Craig O'Loch Road Forfar (see map on the next page).

The court decided that the building, as well as the land it sits on, is part of Forfar common good. This means that the Council requires to ask the communities in Forfar and Angus for their views on what should happen to the building now that it is no longer used as a leisure centre. The Council is required to consult on a specific proposal for the building. This is a formal consultation process under Section 104 of Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

Details on ways to have your say are included in this pack in Section 5.

If you want to read more about the building, further information is included in the links in this document. We would encourage you to view this before responding.

PLAN OF LOCHSIDE LEISURE CENTRE



2. What we are consulting on

When the Council opened the Forfar Community Campus with community leisure facilities, Lochside Leisure Centre became surplus and no longer of use to Angus Council.

In December 2020 we started an initial informal consultation with the public, looking at what your views on the future of the building and land were and who may potentially operate the building. This consultation closed on 31 January 2021. The results of that initial consultation consisted of 334 responses with:

1. 4 (1.2%) in favour of the Status Quo (Option 1)
2. 77 (23.1%) in favour of selling the former leisure centre and land (Option 2)
3. 38 (11.4%) in favour of leasing the former leisure centre (Option 3)
4. 95 (28.4%) in favour of a Community Asset Transfer of the building (Option 4)
5. 120 (35.9%) in favour of retaining the parkland and demolishing the building (Option 5)

The purpose of the initial consultation was to inform Council about the strength of public feeling and guide Council towards choosing one option for statutory consultation as required under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The Council has discussed the future of the former Leisure Centre at its various meetings since January 2021 (March¹; May²; June³; September⁴).

At the Council meeting on 9 September 2021, Angus Council made the decision to **formally consult on demolishing the former leisure centre and retaining the parkland.**

¹ Report 98/21

https://www.angus.gov.uk/media/agenda_item_no_7_report_no_9821_lochside_leisure_centre_initial_consultation_outcome_and_next_steps

YouTube recording of meeting https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCNVQOKG_-A and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wS2pa7mQDio>

Minutes

https://www.angus.gov.uk/media/minutes_of_previous_meeting_of_angus_council_of_18_march_2021

² Report 139/21

https://www.angus.gov.uk/media/agenda_item_no_8_report_no_13921_lochside_leisure_centre_initial_consultation_outcome_and_next_steps

YouTube recording of meeting https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlZm_RUXbsA

Minute https://www.angus.gov.uk/media/minute_of_meeting_of_angus_council_of_13_may_2021

³ Report 218/21

https://www.angus.gov.uk/media/agenda_item_no_16_report_no_21821_lochside_leisure_centre_initial_consultation_outcome_and_next_steps

YouTube recording of meeting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF5-iOY9XBY>

Minute

https://www.angus.gov.uk/media/agenda_item_4i_minutes_of_previous_meeting_of_angus_council_of_24_june_2021

⁴ Report 277/21

https://www.angus.gov.uk/media/agenda_item_no_7_report_no_27721_lochside_leisure_centre_initial_consultation_outcome_and_next_steps_0

YouTube recording of meeting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Df6R5rJhiZ8>

Minutes - The minutes of the meeting of 9 September 2021 will be reported to 3 November 2021 Council meeting.

3. The Process and Timeline

This formal consultation runs from 1 October 2021 and closes on **26 November 2021**.

How to take part in the survey is set out in below. We will look at all the responses and write a report on the findings. We will publish this on our website. This report will be submitted to the Council, with the target date of 16 December 2021.

We expect that the Council will decide what to do with the building and land at that Council meeting.

4. The History of Lochside Leisure Centre

Forfar loch and surrounding land was purchased in 1954 by the then Royal Burgh of Forfar, the local authority at the time, and was paid for out of common good funds at a cost (then) of £5,500. This land includes what is now Forfar Loch Country Park and the Leisure Centre site within it. An indicative worth of the land value on which the leisure centre site is now in the region of £350,000.

We do not know much about the land before it was purchased. It is understood to have been used at least in part as a waste disposal site prior to 1954. The Leisure Centre was built using Council funds and opened in 1975. The building has since been paid for from the Council's budget (known as the general fund) for the last 45 years.

The construction of the building included piled foundations through the waste material, which is understood to be around 3 metres (9 feet) deep under the centre.

Problems with the building first appeared in the early 1980's with various cracks and defects detected in several surveys and investigations over the years. Various repairs have been undertaken since then, including rebuilding part of the sports hall store. Floors of the building are known to slope significantly, there is cracking of walls and floors and distorted doorways. There has been significant ground movement and there is on-going cyclic movement with on-going crack movement.

Whilst the Lochside Leisure Centre was originally built in 1975, the background to this consultation really starts in 2013 when Council consulted on the proposed new facility at the Forfar Community Campus^{5,6}. The consultation/engagement exercise was reported to Committee and it was noted that "the significant body of feedback would appear to thoroughly support the community campus approach". More details can be found in the reports referenced below. It was intended at that time that the Forfar Community Campus would replace Lochside Leisure Centre when the campus was opened. It was agreed that the former Lochside Leisure Centre would be surplus to requirements and that the Council had no future need

⁵ <http://archive.angus.gov.uk/ccmeetings/reports-committee2013/Education/62.pdf>

⁶ <http://archive.angus.gov.uk/ccmeetings/reports-committee2013Education/254.pdf>

for the building when the new community campus opened. Lochside Leisure Centre was closed in February 2017.

The Council has been steadily reducing the number of properties it uses in order to save money and reduce its carbon footprint. The money saved by doing this has made us more efficient and has helped to maintain frontline services. As previously stated, the Council has no need to use the Lochside Leisure Centre.

Since its closure in February 2017, the building has been unused, and its long-term condition is a concern. It is also expensive to have it sitting empty, costing over £4,250 per month, mainly in rates.

The legal court procedures on the future of the building can be found at the references below^{8,9}. The outcome was that the building was deemed to be part of the common good because it was built on common good land. As such, the people of Forfar and Angus need to be consulted before any decision to sell, lease or change the use of (including demolish) the building is made. This means that the Council must consult with you under Section 104 of the Community Empowerment Act before deciding on the future of the building and the land.

Forfar common good is administered by Angus Council separately from other local authority funds for accounting purposes, so it is financially separate from the Council. The Council agreed at its meeting on 13 May 2021 that the costs associated with the former leisure centre will be accounted as part of the Forfar Common good Fund from 12 May 2022 as a result of the decision of the Court of Session.

Despite some interest in the building, or parts of the building and its associated land since it was declared surplus to council requirements, no individual or group has come forward with a competent or viable plan which would secure its future. Any such bid could still come forward during the period of consultation for consideration. However, as the financial responsibility for the building will rest with the Forfar Common Good from May next year, any plan must be financed appropriately.

At this formal stage the Council is seeking views on demolition of the building. The Council continues to have no use and no plans for the building.

Please note that any proposals for demolition and its cost, would include restoration of the site to attractive parkland, in keeping with the neighbouring landscape.

⁸ <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/cos-general-docs/pdf-docs-for-opinions/2020csoh16.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

⁹ <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/cos-general-docs/pdf-docs-for-opinions/2020csh50.pdf?sfvrsn=0>



5. How to Have Your Say

It is now your opportunity to comment on the proposal to demolish the former Lochside Leisure Centre and to restore the common good land to country park.

You can complete the on-line form on our 'Have Your Say' at https://www.angus.gov.uk/have_your_say/consultations

A hardcopy can be printed off from the above site and returned to:

Angus House
Orchardbank Business Park
Orchardbank
Forfar
Angus
DD8 1AN

Your data will be protected according to our Data Protection policy which you can find on this link:

https://www.angus.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/information_governance/angus_council_full_privacy_statement

6 What happens next?

We outlined the process in section 3 above. Once the consultation closes on **26 November 2021**, we will collate the responses and intend to report to 16 December 2021 Angus Council meeting.

If you have any questions regarding any of the Information Pack or the consultation you can contact us at CommEngagement@angus.gov.uk

You can also request additional formats such as large print by contacting CommEngagement@angus.gov.uk

Thank you for your interest in the future of the former Lochside Leisure Centre. We look forward to hearing your views.