

# **PE2056/G: Introduce legislation allowing Scottish Ministers to intervene on the hire of public land**

## **Petitioner written submission, 16 January 2025**

I would like to make the following comments in respect of responses provided to the Committee on my petition.

### **EventScotland**

EventScotland are part of Visit Scotland and are almost fully funded by the Scottish Government and are a government agency. We were not aware that EventScotland actually put on events themselves and would have the need to hire land, their main purpose appears to be funding or assisting councils with pre-booked larger events, e.g. The Commonwealth Games, furthermore, if they did have the need to hire land, we would not expect a government agency to have the same issues as a private company like ourselves.

Their response stating that the decision to hire land is best placed with councils because of the council licensing process, is in my view completely wrong, land hire is a separate issue. Once permission is issued to use the land, it is at that point dealings with licensing begin. They are not involved in the decision to hire land and any events company hiring land anywhere in Scotland will still have to deal with that particular councils licensing procedures. The breakdown is at the land hire stage, this has no arbitrary procedure whatsoever.

I would remind the committee that The Verity House Agreement is not a legal document, which [as stated in my previous submission](#), has already been breached.

### **APSE Scotland**

The Association of Public Service Excellence Scotland (APSE) represent over 300 councils in the UK and it is unsurprising that when they asked councils if councils were best placed to make these decisions on land hire that they were happy with the current situation, and would disagree with any changes.

All factors mentioned by APSE, sustainability, safety and engagement with stakeholders is managed through the council's licensing procedure, not through land hire and would take place anyway.

To suggest a judicial review is a staggeringly naive statement, what business can wait 2 years and have a cost of tens of thousands of pounds every time they want to hire public land? Also, to suggest that an organisation does not hold the correct cover is a reflection on the council, this is checked by the council's legal department, and is done at the licensing stage.

Everything is still managed locally through licensing, nothing changes, it is only the operator of the hired land that changes.

## **COSLA**

We are asking for the Scottish Government to be able to overturn a decision taken by land hire departments in the councils, the job the councils' legal departments and administrators do will remain the same as they are only involved when permission is granted to use the land.