

## ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 DECEMBER 2017

Present: County Councillor Howells(Chairperson)  
County Councillors Ebrahim, Gordon, Parkhill, Robson and Sattar

### 30 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gavin Hill-John and Stubbs. Councillors Ebrahim and Parkhill had previously advised that they would be arriving late.

### 31 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Robson declared a personal interest in Item 5 as a Non-Executive Director of Cardiff Bus.

### 32 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

### 33 : LEISURE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP - GLL/ COUNCIL

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Jon Maidment, Operational Manager- Parks and Sports, Sarah Stork - Leisure Client Services Manager, Juliette Dickinson (GLL Regional Director) and Dawn Pinder (GLL Partnership Manager) to the meeting.

Members were advised that a year ago, the Council entered into a 15-year partnership with GLL (Greenwich Leisure Limited), who took over responsibility for running 8 Leisure Centres in Cardiff. This item enabled Members to evaluate the progress made in the first year. To help inform the scrutiny, the Chairperson had issued a press release to ask users of Leisure Centres to contact him with their observations. The Chairperson had received over 70 responses, via email and social media, raising issues and concerns and identifying improvements. The Chairperson advised Members that he would ensure that these were shared, anonymously, with attendees, as they provided valuable insights to customers concerns.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which he said that this item was the most important item from the Leisure Service to come before scrutiny for some time. It was noted that the majority of the specifications and challenge to achieve the zero subsidy had been determined in conjunction with the agreement of the previous committee. The Cabinet Member considered that the committee had always been hands on and had proved to be very useful in the process and he was pleased the Chair had sought feedback; he would ensure he challenged GLL on the issues raised.

It was added that currently they were early into a 15 year contract and there was a challenge to reduce the subsidy down but going forward there was a positive development coming in the form of Capital Investment and Programming.

Members were provided with a presentation on the Leisure Management Partnership GLL/Council after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members asked for more information on GP Referral membership and were advised that this was a membership that starts after a 16 week GP referral scheme had been undertaken. It was a 3 year phased membership that is subsidised in the initial year; the membership aimed to encourage regular use of the gym to aid with patient recuperation.
- Members referred to the closure of cafes in leisure centres and considered that the cafes had provided a sense of community for customers after their sessions and for parents waiting for children attending swimming lessons etc. Members asked whether there would be a future for cafes in leisure centres. The Cabinet Member stated that if the service had stayed in-house then the cafes would have closed as they were heavily subsidised and had been criticised for serving unhealthy foods. He added that the cafes also had competition in the form of cafes in Hubs and Community Cafes.

Juliette Dickinson stated that it was a shame to have had to take the decision, very few leisure centres manage to get cafes to break even. The cafes were losing around £100k per annum so they were reluctantly withdrawn. If a café was to be reintroduced in the future it would be in one of the larger leisure centres. Currently GLL are looking at better vending machines with better and healthier options.

- Members noted the commitment to healthy eating and encouraging activity but wondered how this fitted with limiting teenager's access to the gyms in the evenings and teenagers having to book in advance. Members were advised that it was policy to not have under 16s in the gym unsupervised, so access was restricted to supervised sessions as it was felt this was better for the service provided and for health and safety reasons. The age group had been expanded to include 11 to 15 year olds, but if there was a real demand then supervised sessions would be increased.
- Members asked about the impact of the café closures on staff and were advised that the majority of the staff had taken voluntary redundancy and 1 had been redeployed. Most of the positions were from the cafes but some back of house positions had been centralised.
- Members asked about sickness levels and were advised that these had been reduced by 50%, this had meant that sickness hours had been reduced from 3000 to 1500, it was noted that of the inherited 13 employees on long-term sickness, 11 had now returned to work.

- Members referred to the zero subsidy and asked if GLL were on target to achieve this. Members were advised that in year they were slightly below but that was to be expected in the first year of a new contract; there was a five year plan to get to the zero subsidy point.
- Members requested more detailed information on the results of the Better survey and were advised that this could be provided to them.
- Members asked for clarification on whether the Armed Forces Covenant had been removed and were advised that it had not been removed, there had been specific sessions held at Maindy but there had been little uptake on these; Members of the Armed Forces Covenant were still able to swim at any time at any centre in the scheme.
- Members discussed the spreading of blood borne viruses and were advised that there were strict cleaning regimes in place with appropriate chemicals used.
- Members referred to the changes to the Junior Active Card and the classes that can be accessed using it, and asked if the Council had carried out an Equality Impact Assessment to assess the impacts these changes would have. Members further asked if it was a contractual requirement for GLL to carry out EIA's. Members were advised that GLL do not have to carry out EIA's but stated that access and inclusivity was at the heart of what they do. It was stated that the Junior Active Card was giving too much away, and people who had joined later were not getting the same benefits. It was explained that next year it was likely that concessionary pricing would be brought in, targeting people who need it, those that do not qualify will pay proper prices. It was also explained that GLL were considering a bolt-on which would be a reduced price for a second course. The Cabinet Member added that the Junior Active Card had been withdrawn for new members as people were signing up for too many classes then not using them which caused problems with class numbers and staffing the classes. It was noted that communication could be better in the future and that was the first year in a long-term contract and lessons were being learned.
- Referring to communication, Members asked if there were any plans to look at how GLL communicate with its customers in terms of advising of class cancellations and getting back to people who have concerns or have complained. Members were advised that when classes are cancelled it happens at short notice and GLL have to use any means they have available to them to communicate that message, stating it can be quite difficult to cover classes especially specialist classes such as Yoga. With regards to customers' complaints and concerns, Members were advised that GLL are keen to receive customer feedback, but when comments are left on the central GLL website it can take some time to get to the correct people. Customer feedback should go to the Leisure Centre Manager in the first instance, GLL were keen to look at local arrangements on this. The Cabinet Member added that he has spoken to GLL and the Councils Communications team to work more with Twitter etc. going forward.

- Members asked if there were any significant plans to make major environmental improvements such as solar panels in Leisure Centres. Members were advised that Juliette Dickinson would endeavour to find out information on this, however Members were advised that the main emphasis in the next year would be investing in lighting, upgrading to LED efficient lighting in Leisure Centres.

RESOLVED that the views of the Committee would be discussed during the way forward section of the meeting and a letter sent to the Cabinet Member in due course.

#### 34 : DELIVERY OF THE NEW BUS STATION

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Goodway, Cabinet Member for Investment and Development and Neil Hanratty, Director Economic Development to the meeting.

***The Chairperson moved that the presentation and discussion of this item be heard in closed session as it contained confidential information by virtue of paragraph 14 of Part 4 and paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972.***

***The Chairperson moved that Committee resolve to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting at this point.***

RESOLVED: that the views of the Committee would be discussed during the way forward section of the meeting and a letter sent to the Cabinet Member in due course.

#### 35 : CARDIFF CENTRAL STATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Goodway, Cabinet Member for Investment and Development and Neil Hanratty, Director Economic Development to the meeting.

***The Chairperson moved that the presentation and discussion of this item be heard in closed session as it contained confidential information by virtue of paragraph 14 of Part 4 and paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972.***

***The Chairperson moved that Committee resolve to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting at this point.***

RESOLVED: that the views of the Committee would be discussed during the way forward section of the meeting and a letter sent to the Cabinet Member in due course.

## 36 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

This report provided Members with a correspondence update report, an update on performance and budget monitoring and sought Members views on how they wished to engage with the recently launched Investment & Development Green Paper.

### RESOLVED: To

- i. note the content of the letters contained in Appendix A to the report; and
- ii. consider the Investment & Development Green Paper as a briefing at the next committee meeting.

## 37 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 11 January 2018.

***This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg***