

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 OCTOBER 2017

Present: County Councillor Howells(Chairperson)
County Councillors Ebrahim, Gordon, Gavin Hill-John, Parkhill,
Robson, Sattar and Stubbs

14 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

15 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were received from Councillors Robson, Stubbs and Hill-John, who declared personal interests in Agenda Item 5 as Non-Executive Directors of Cardiff Bus.

16 : MINUTES

The minutes of the Joint Environment and Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committees held on 13 September and the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee held on 14 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

17 : MULTI-PURPOSE INDOOR ARENA - UPDATE

The Chairperson invited Councillor Russell Goodway, Cabinet Member – Investment and Development and Neil Hanratty, Director of Economic Development to the meeting.

Members were provided with a presentation on the Multi-Purpose Indoor Arena after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members asked about the estimated completion time for a project such as this; officers advised that it would be 18 months from now then a further 2 years for construction.
- Members referred to traffic implications and asked what plan there was to facilitate the movement of people to the potential venues, which were all South of the railway. Officers advised that the sites being South of the railway, was more about the size of the sites themselves; the potential sites needed to be between 8-10 acres and close the City Centre. Transport planning will be a primary consideration in the site selection exercise, the site needs to be walkable from the railway station. The site selected would be the one that helps deliver the infrastructure the City needs, i.e. a tram to the Bay and to further the Eastern Bay Link completion.
- Members referred to the City Deal contribution and asked why other local Authorities would contribute to something being built in Cardiff. Officers explained that Cardiff only has a population of 360k people, a venue such as this would benefit the region as a whole.

- Members sought clarification on when the project was originally instigated and who by. The Cabinet Member explained that successive administrations have wanted the project, going back to 1993 when the Cardiff 2020 report was written. The report identified components that make a City able to work for itself; one component of that was an events arena. He added that people had concerns over the Principality Stadium being built but it has given Cardiff a Global profile that it could never have paid for. An events arena would do the same and provide more Global exposure and he trusted that the region would understand the importance of such a project and sees the benefits it would bring to the region as a whole not just Cardiff.
- Members understood the significance of the project but highlighted concerns of residents that more urgent to them was an improved public transport system. The Cabinet Member stated that an improved public transport system relies on passenger numbers; Cardiff with only 360k residents doesn't have enough people and for a business case to stack up more passenger numbers would be needed.
- Members welcomed the sites that were being considered, noted that as a City, Cardiff was well used to putting on large events and coping with getting people in and out of the City. Members welcomed the indicative timescales but asked what has happened since 2012/13 as not a lot seems to have progressed. The Cabinet Member stated that it has taken time to understand what is needed, what is happening elsewhere in other cities etc.
- Members asked what other benefits the arena would bring to the City and were advised that the increased footfall to the City brings all sorts of opportunities with it i.e. retail and hotels.
- Members asked with regards to sporting events, whether this would be just for events on the scale of Champions League or if there would be opportunities for local club use too. Officers advised that it would be for large international events that attract paying spectators; Capital Ambition identifies opportunities around the City for local sporting clubs; conversations were being had with Sophia Gardens, Leckwith Stadium, Ely Racecourse etc. for access for indigenous sporting clubs under a separate project.
- With reference to the preferred design of the arena being a Super Hybrid Dome, Members asked if any other countries had one of these. Officers explained that the architects were world leaders in this type of infrastructure, this design was a new concept that the architect has developed for maximum day's usage; there was not another example of it. He added that the architect was currently working on Barcelona's new stadium.
- Members noted that previously the Motorpoint Arena site had been put forward as a site option but didn't appear in the current site options. Officers explained that since Admiral had located near there the area was now too small.
- Members asked what impact the arena would have on other venues in the City. Officers explained that they are in the process of developing a business case which would look at impacts; the Motorpoint Arena would suffer and

possibly close; the Stadium though hosts different events that are much larger in scale than the arena would be.

- With reference to the finance, Members asked what would happen if the City Deal contribution was not forthcoming. The Cabinet Member stated that it would be found from somewhere else, Cardiff has a very clear agenda of what it wants to deliver, as such it has not been difficult to get people to come forward and deliver these things for Cardiff; there are business opportunities with the private sector as with all the major developments in recent years which have been mainly delivered by the private sector.
- Members asked if sponsorship opportunities had been explored. Officers advised that yes they had, one deliberation in the operator lease is sponsorship, or whether it is taken separately; this would be considered in the final business case when it comes forward.

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.

18 : ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING - FUNDING CHANGES

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry, Cabinet Member – Education, Employment and Skills; Isabelle Bignall, Assistant Director Communities and Customer Services and John Agnew, Corporate Customer Services Manager to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she said that public consultation had been delayed until spring 2018 to make an informed decision which will be implemented in 2019/20. This will have a significant impact of how the service will be funded in the future.

Cardiff Council's ACL service has made significant improvements as reflected in their success rate over the past few years seeing it increase each year from 61% in 2012/13 to 94% in 2015/16. This is a testament to the outstanding Adult Community Learning team whom have worked so effectively together with a full commitment to achieve the best possible results and outcomes for learners

The Cabinet Member had recently had the pleasure of being invited to Severn Road Adult Learning Centre to see SHEP (School Holiday Enrichment Programme) which offers non-accredited taster courses to parents, whose children attend SHEP. The aim is to increase the demand from parents attending for more courses in school settings.

Members were provided with a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

Councillors Robson, Stubbs and Hill-John declared personal interests at this point as Non-Executive Directors of Cardiff Bus.

- Members noted the 37% cut that was mentioned in the presentation, and that despite this, the service had been able to increase effectiveness. Members

asked if the service would be able to increase effectiveness with further cuts. Officers stated that the previously there was one programme which encompassed the Learning for Work programme which was grant funded and the Learning for Life courses which were paid for. They were meshed together and the Welsh Government felt that the service was not able to show that the grant was being used for the Into Work type courses. When the service had the 37% cut, it completely split the 2 programmes and released a number of delivery points and use schools, community groups etc. the reduction was about streamlining the service and delivering it more effectively so there had been scope to absorb that previous cut in funding.

- Members noted that there was huge number of people who had accessed the accredited learning courses. Members were concerned that Learning for Life and Entry Courses had depleted since the Cardiff and Vale college had been administering them and that a huge drop off had been seen. Members were concerned that with the Communities First Programme ending in 2018, there would be a gap that would need to be filled. Officers stated that Cardiff is part of the Cardiff and Vale college partnership but the college don't run Cardiff's provision as they have their own; during the time of the 37% cut and the courses were being split, Cardiff had been unable to offer as many taster courses as previously, and not met the number as outlined in the Policy, these courses were being specifically targeted now to get to the required number. There will be a paper coming to a future scrutiny on the Employability Gateway, which would address the Communities First ACL provision.
- Members asked how Cardiff could make the case to the Welsh Government that the only realistic options would be to stay as is or to be in Adult Learning Partnerships. The Cabinet Member stated that there was slightly worrying trend about the inclination at times of the Welsh Government to centralise things when there is a really important role for local Government and the relationship they have with local communities, and that she would resist options 3 and 4; apart from the impact on funding local authorities are ideally placed to know what is needed in parts of the City.
- Members asked what assessment had been made for demands for financial preparedness courses in anticipation of Universal Credit. Officers explained that this would be covered in the Employability Gateway coming to Committee next month; in addition to this there will be a redevelopment of part of the Central Library to enable people to access help in relation to Universal Credit and for PC access, the Council was working closely with Into Work Services on this.
- With reference to options 3 and 4, Members asked what these would mean from a service user perspective. Officers stated these options would be similar to additional grant funding, users would have to prove the need. It would be harder to prove the need for social isolation courses etc. There would be bidding for key priorities.

Members urged that the focus remains on back to work courses as critically they lead to jobs. Officers stated that this was exactly what the Employability Gateway does. The Cabinet Member stated that there are case studies that

show the value of soft courses too, which also have hard edge economic benefits too.

- Members asked how the Council targets and supports people with little English language. Officers explained there is a huge amount of work being done on the digital readiness of the City, with sessions being held in all Hubs. Courses are tailored to people's needs including language barriers. Central Hub is a manned Hub with help specifically on Universal Credit, Welfare Reform etc.
- Members considered that while the programme is new, schools could be used to offer this help too, as not all areas across the City have Hubs.
- Members asked for more information on the formula for Deprivation/Sparsity. Officers explained that at a recent workshop with Welsh Government, officers from local authorities were quite surprised at some of the proposals around the table. There was a key point around the sparsity, there are providers across Wales talking for many years about the established formula which they don't agree with in principle, saying they have lost out as a result of how the grant funding is proportioned in terms of what they are able to deliver. From a Cardiff perspective, officers were concerned that if sparsity formula is used then there are not really infrastructures in a lot of those areas even if they were to receive a significant increase in funding they would not be able to deliver anything with it.
- Members asked if there would be any opportunity during the consultation to suggest a different formula and if officers had a preferred formula which they considered fair. Officers stated that they have looked at a number of formulas but considered that there may not be any benefit at this point to challenge the formulas being suggested. There is a lot of work still to be done after the consultation with the providers in terms of how they move forward and hopefully what comes out of the public consultation will be reflected upon.
- Members made reference to the third option which is the commissioning route and considered that this was essentially down to who could fill in the best forms so had concerns with this option too.
- Members asked if there had been an assessment undertaken as to the repercussions to the service in Cardiff. Officers stated that there had been; they accept that whatever happens there would be a cut, how significant was the key issue. The cuts would have a direct reduction on staff and courses; officers are looking at ways that they can help and mitigate these reductions, working with Into Work Services to pull down other grants etc.

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.

19 : CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Members were provided with an update of the correspondence sent and responses received since the beginning of the municipal year;

- *Response Received* – from Councillor Goodway to the Chair’s letter, sent 19 July 2017, following pre-decision scrutiny of Funding of the Bus Station Interchange at the Committee meeting on 18 July 2017.
- *Response not required* – to Chair’s letter, sent 14 September 2017, following Call-In of the Cabinet Decision re Funding of the Bus Station Interchange, held on 13 September 2017
- *Response Awaited* – from Councillor Thorne to the Chair’s letter, sent 15 September 2017, following scrutiny of Employment Services at the Committee meeting on 14 September 2017.

RESOLVED to note the report.

20 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 9th November 2017 at 4.30pm.