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Councillor Burke  
Cabinet Member – Culture, Parks and Events

By Email:



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### Public Letter

Dear Councillor Burke,

#### **GLL - LEISURE CENTRE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY UPDATE and AUDIT WALES RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE**

Our thanks to you, Jason Curtis and Joanne Smith from GLL, and Chris Hadfield, Jon Maidment and Sarah Stork, Cardiff Council, for attending our meeting to present on the above and to answer our questions. Members appreciate the metrics and other information provided in our papers.

#### **GLL - LEISURE CENTRE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY UPDATE**

##### Membership & Usage

Members were pleased to see the positive trajectory for membership numbers and usage across Cardiff, albeit that the impact of the pandemic is still being felt, with membership numbers circa 90% of pre-pandemic levels. Members note the importance of understanding non-users' demographics and needs so that, where appropriate, GLL can reach out and encourage them to use services.

Members welcome the variety of work underway, including with partners, to meet the terms of the contract via specific schemes for specific demographics and needs, to boost accessible and inclusive service provision. Members were particularly interested to hear about the new sessions exclusively for men and boys and **request** further details of where and when these are held. Members also noted that the metrics provided in the meeting seemed to indicate that circa 13% of GLL members are BAME; Members are aware the 2021 Census indicates that circa 21% of Cardiff's population are BAME. This suggests a lower uptake of GLL services from our BAME

communities. Members wish to accept the offer from GLL to provide a more detailed breakdown of BAME membership and usage, overlain with the 2021 Census information, and **request** this be provided in the response to this letter.

In addition, Members were pleased to hear the GLL website is undergoing an upgrade to make it easier to navigate, which Members believe will assist in increasing usage as it will be easier to find out details of service availability.

### Schools Swimming

Members were concerned to learn that Cardiff is the worst performing local authority in Wales in terms of the percentage of children that swim – 50% - and pleased to hear that GLL has worked with the Council, Swim Wales, Cardiff Metropolitan University and other providers, to develop a new approach to school swimming provision, aimed at boosting performance over the next few years. Members recognise the importance of learning to swim and also learning to be safe around water.

### Pentwyn Leisure Centre

Members sought clarification on when this leisure centre would reopen to the local community and note that 'dry-side' activities will be available from June 2024 and the swimming pool should be reopened June 2025. Members were pleased to hear their previous recommendation of liaising with Swim Wales regarding the pool design has been accepted and actioned, with several meetings taking place with Swim Wales on this matter. Members are also pleased to note that GLL intend and expect to operate the pool, which will also include therapy sessions offered in partnership with the NHS.

Members were pleased to hear GLL intend to engage with the local community regarding the activities to offer at the leisure centre and were also pleased to hear their offer to involve local ward members in the design of this engagement, to ensure that ward members are able to direct GLL to relevant local groups to engage with; we welcome this approach.

### Penylan Library and Community Centre

Members are aware of the changes that have taken place recently at this centre and sought clarification of the rationale for this. Members note that market research regarding soft play was undertaken by GLL and that this indicated that provision of this would significantly boost usage of the centre, thus increasing income levels and assisting GLL, alongside other measures, to meet the contract requirement to reduce the leisure centre deficit.

At the meeting, Members **requested** that GLL provide the capacity % for the lessons that used to take place in the space now occupied by the soft play and note GLL's agreement to provide these alongside the expected full usage figures for the soft play provision. We **request** that these be provided in the response to this letter.

Members also explored the communication with customers and engagement with local ward members undertaken in this instance - the replacement of lessons by soft play - and note GLL and officers' explanations that, whilst this option had been discussed for some time, it was only recently realised that the timeline for installing the soft play this financial year was tight as the installation company only had a small window of time available. Members note GLL and officers' acceptance that communication and engagement could have been better and their commitment to ensuring that, moving forward, local ward members will be engaged in a timelier manner and communication with customers will be better planned and executed.

### Boys Need Bins

At the meeting, Members highlighted the ongoing campaign to provide sanitary bins in male restrooms. Members were pleased to note GLL will support this initiative and understand that council officers will be in touch with them regarding this.

### **AUDIT WALES RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE**

Members were interested to hear about the work undertaken to address R5 and R6 of the Leisure Services Follow Up Review Report - Audit Wales (October 2022). Members **request** the consultant's option appraisal report be shared with them so that they can see the full breadth of performance and financial information currently available, in line with R6.

Members also **request** assurance that, if the contract with GLL fails and the Council needs to enact contingency measures, the consultant's report will be updated to reflect prevailing market conditions and that this updated report, other relevant performance and financial information, and the report to Cabinet would be made available to scrutiny members to enable timely pre-decision scrutiny.

Finally, Members **request** an update of progress against all the recommendations in the Leisure Services Follow Up Review Report - Audit Wales (October 2022), so that Members are aware which recommendations are closed and which are still in progress.

My thanks again to you, Jason and Joanne from GLL, and officers for attending Committee and answering our queries.

This letter contains requests for further information and so requires a response:

**Requests:**

**GLL:**

- Further details of where and when the new sessions exclusively for men and boys are held
- A detailed breakdown of BAME membership and usage overlain with the 2021 Census information
- Penylan Centre - the capacity % for the lessons that used to take place in the space now occupied by the soft play and the expected full usage figures for the soft play provision.

**Council:**

- The consultant's option appraisal report be shared with Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee Members
- Assurance that an updated consultant's report, other relevant performance and financial information, and the report to Cabinet would be made available to scrutiny members to enable timely pre-decision scrutiny of any contingency decision, if and when this is required
- an update of progress against all the recommendations in the Leisure Services Follow Up Review Report - Audit Wales (October 2022).

Yours sincerely,

*P Wong*

**COUNCILLOR PETER WONG  
CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc       Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee  
          Group Leaders - Cllr Lancaster, Cllr Berman, Cllr Gibson  
          Gavin McArthur – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee  
          Chris Hadfield   Jon Maidment   Sarah Stork  
          Jason Curtis – GLL                    Joanne Smith – GLL  
          Louise Mead  
          Chris Pyke       Tim Gordon       Jeremy Rhys