



County Hall  
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## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee** ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time of Meeting** MONDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2021, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence sent by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact [scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

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My Ref: T: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr NH

Date: 14 December 2021

Councillor Sarah Merry & Cllr Chris Weaver  
Cabinet Office  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



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Dear Councillor Merry and Councillor Weaver

### **Adult Community Learning Review and Into Work Funding**

Our thanks to you, Helen Evans, and Hayley Beynon for attending Committee on 13 December 2021 to discuss the report to Cabinet regarding the above item. Members wish to thank Helen Evans for her detailed presentation that gave them a good overview of the proposed way forward for Adult Community Learning and Into Work funding.

Regarding Adult Community Learning, Members note that:

- Changes in distribution of Welsh Government funding grants are likely to lead to a £700,000 cut in funding for Cardiff – a 20% reduction per annum - from 2021-2025
- A national strategic body for Adult Community Learning may be introduced by the Welsh Government in 2025, which would replace the existing local authority role
- The proposed revisions to Adult Community Learning include
  - o More 1-, 2- and 5-day courses, spread across the year, including evening and weekends
  - o Courses provided in community settings, online or hybrid
  - o Severn Road Adult Learning Centre ceasing to be used for this purpose and returned to the Education Department for other community uses
  - o The existing team of 14 part time tutors to be replaced by a full-time team of digital trainers and a full-time team of works skills trainers.

At the meeting, Members reiterated their concerns about the impact of funding cuts on service provision in Cardiff. Members also raised their concerns about the proposed national body and whether Cardiff would get its fair share of this resource and were pleased to hear your commitment to lobby Welsh Government loudly and clearly regarding the needs of Cardiff, with the intention of achieving the best outcomes possible for our city.

Members also note Councillor Merry's assurance that she will meet with Councillor Gordon and Women Connect First to discuss possible uses of the Severn Road building.

Regarding Into Work provision, Members note that:

- European Social Funding of £1.1million for four Employability Projects will cease
- It is not yet clear whether the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund will include employability projects – an announcement is scheduled for 20 December 2021
- Cardiff Council has worked with Cardiff Capital Region City Deal partners to establish a framework to enable regional bids to be submitted that deliver local training.

At the meeting, Members discussed whether businesses would be willing to contribute towards training costs so that there are employees with the skills they require. Members note that businesses currently pay a minimal Finder's Fee when they employ someone via Into Work and that officers are exploring the possibility of using community benefit contributions via the planning process. Members further note that the Into Work service has numerous local partners, as well as national partners, that it works with to provide relevant courses.

During our way forward discussions, Members discussed the Finder's Fee and wondered whether there is scope to increase this to, or near to, market level, thereby increasing income. Therefore, Members **recommend** that officers explore the feasibility of increasing the Finder's Fee towards market level and take their findings to the relevant Cabinet Member for consideration.

In addition, Members discussed the proposed Regional Framework and note there are no details of this in the report to Cabinet. Members **request** that details of the Regional Framework are shared with them in the response to this letter.

**Requests following this scrutiny:**

That details of the Regional Framework are shared with them in the response to this letter

**Recommendation to be monitored following this scrutiny:**

The Committee makes one formal recommendation, which is set out below.

As part of the response to this letter I would be grateful if you could state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted, or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet’s response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
That officers explore the feasibility of increasing the Finder’s Fee towards market level and take their findings to the relevant Cabinet Member for consideration.				

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS  
CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr Adrian Robson – Group Leader
- Cllr Rhys Taylor – Group Leader
- Cllr Emma Sandrey – Deputy Group Leader
- Cllr Keith Parry – Group Leader
- David Hugh Thomas – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee
- Jane Thomas                      Helen Evans                      Hayley Beynon
- Alexia Haralambos                      Cabinet Support Office
- Tim Gordon                      Jeremy Rhys                      Chris Pyke

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Date: 15 December 2021

Councillor Peter Bradbury  
Cabinet Member, Culture & Leisure  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Bradbury,

### **Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee 13 December 2021**

Thank you for attending the above meeting, along with Neil Hanratty and Steve Morris, for the Audit Wales Review of Leisure update, and also Rhys Jones and Jamie Coleshill from GLL for the monitoring report on GLL. This letter captures the comments and observations from Members.

#### **Audit Wales Review of Leisure update**

Members thank officers for providing an update for inclusion in the committee papers. It is pleasing to see progress being made in responding to all the improvement areas identified by Audit Wales. Members note the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy will set the vision and priorities for Leisure and that the Local Partnership review will help identify further improvements regarding strategic collaboration, contract management, and service specification. Members look forward to receiving both the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy and the Local Partnership review report and have made time for these at our scheduled committee meeting in January 2022. Members are also pleased to hear that the most recent Internal Audit report rated this area as satisfactory.

#### **GLL monitoring**

Members wish to thank Rhys Jones, GLL, for his clear, understandable, and detailed presentation taking Committee through performance across the four pillars of GLL. Members found it useful to receive comparator information for 2019; this helped to

highlight the impact the pandemic has had on usage and participation rates and therefore income levels. Members note that work this financial year has focused, rightly, on reopening safely and ensuring staff are equipped to provide covid-secure premises and facilities as well as engaging existing and new customers appropriately and safely. Members were pleased to hear how GLL has contributed to community events, such as the Summer of Smiles, and is reaching out to new market segments, for example via work with health colleagues to increase exercise referral scheme participants and hospital discharge rehabilitation schemes.

Members were pleased that swim school rates, at circa 89% pre-pandemic levels, are above the GLL average. However, Members note that Health & Fitness membership is circa 76% of pre-pandemic levels, and that this is lower than GLL centres in England, which are at circa 80% - 85%, with London having the highest rates at 90%. Members found the demographic information on usage, presented by ethnicity, gender, disability and age, useful to see as it helps to pinpoint where further work is needed to address inequalities.

Members note the impact of reduced usage and participation on income levels, with 2021-22 predicted, currently, to be at circa 50% of 2019 income levels. This is despite efforts by GLL to reduce costs and increase efficiencies and efforts to attract different market segments, such as health referrals. Members note GLL aims to reach 95% of pre-pandemic levels and is hoping for increased usage in January 2022 as this is a time people traditionally start new fitness and wellbeing regimes. Members are concerned that this may now not happen, given the impact of Omicron, with either a formal lockdown or people self-selecting to not participate in communal activities until Omicron subsides.

Many of our questions centred on how to boost usage, safely. Obviously, this conversation takes place against the backdrop of Omicron and our comments below are caveated by the need to comply with covid restrictions.

Members highlighted the need to increase the publicity that leisure centres are open and covid-secure. Whilst Members note that each leisure centre has its own Facebook and Twitter pages, Members believe the Council's own social media channels could also be utilised. Members discussed the need for residents in wards



without leisure centres to be advised how best to access leisure centres via public transport routes, for example residents in Riverside could be advised which buses to catch to reach Fairwater or Western leisure centres. As such, Members **recommend** that, where covid restrictions allow, the Council use our social media channels to broadcast clear messages to encourage usage of GLL leisure centres, including providing information on public transport links.

Members note the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy, scheduled for consideration in January 2022, will include actions to boost participation by people with disabilities and people who are BAME. Members look forward to receiving this Strategy and expect this to include an action plan for these groups. At the meeting, Members discussed the value of focus groups to identify how to remove barriers to usage and participation. Members note Rhys Jones wishes to engage more with community leaders to encourage this, and that he has taken on board our suggestion to work with public health colleagues to identify their contacts.

Overall, Members can see the work being undertaken by GLL to boost usage and participation and expect the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy will contain actions to increase this further. However, we are struck by the fact that the impact of the pandemic is still working its way through society and that this will continue for some time to come. From our own experiences as ward councillors, Members are aware that some people have found alternative ways to improve their health and wellbeing – whether that be walking or cycling or other activities that do not require a leisure centre – and may choose to stay with these approaches, and that some people will self-select to not participate in communal activities, for example if their household contains someone particularly vulnerable to covid, even if there is not a formal lockdown.

For these reasons, we understand the need to work in new ways to boost usage, ensure leisure centres are safe, covid-secure, and attract new market segments. It is important that the income levels increase, to ensure leisure centres remain for those able to use them. We recognise that if a lockdown was to occur again, there would be a need for further UK Government support. Members note that the risk to GLL income levels is also a risk to the Council and that this is flagged accordingly on the Council's risk register.

**Recommendation to be monitored following this scrutiny:**

The Committee makes one formal recommendation, which is set out below.

As part of the response to this letter I would be grateful if you could state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted, or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet’s response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted</b>	<b>Cabinet Response</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>
That, where covid restrictions allow, the Council use our social media channels to broadcast clear messages to encourage usage of GLL leisure centres, including providing information on public transport links				

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS  
CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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David Hugh Thomas – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee  
Neil Hanratty Steve Morris  
Rhys Jones – GLL  
Jamie Coleshill – GLL  
Clair James Cabinet Support Office  
Tim Gordon Jeremy Rhys Chris Pyke

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Date: 14 December 2021

Councillor Huw Thomas  
Leader  
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Dear Councillor Thomas,

### **Western Gateway**

Thank you for attending the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee on 13 December 2021, along with Paul Orders, to discuss the briefing report regarding the Western Gateway partnership. This letter captures the comments and observations from Members.

Members were pleased to receive a briefing on the work of the Western Gateway partnership and note that the two workstreams of most significance to Cardiff are: the work on improving strategic rail infrastructure to boost our connectivity with the West of England and the M4 corridor to Heathrow and London; and the Severn Estuary tidal energy work. Members note that you are chairing the work on the Independent Commission to investigate the latter and that a stakeholder round table discussion is to be held in January 2022.

At the meeting, Members asked what the £190,000, made up from £10,000-each contributions from partners, would be used for and note your response that it is being used to build a base staffing resource, who will drive forward the work of the partnership and boost its profile.

Members also discussed how potential conflicts within the partnership would be managed, for example if areas put in competing bids for investment opportunities. Members note your response that the reality of this is recognised and acknowledged within the partnership, and has indeed already occurred, and that partners take the view that whichever area wins the investment, the benefits ripple out across the region via increased employment and use of local supply chains. Members also note

that the two workstreams of particular significance to Cardiff cover areas of strategic infrastructure, with national significance, and as such these bring benefits across the region.

Overall, Members are pleased to see work progressing with our Western Gateway partners and wish you well with these endeavours.

This letter does not require a response, thank you.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS**  
**CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Adrian Robson – Group Leader  
Cllr Rhys Taylor – Group Leader  
Cllr Emma Sandrey – Deputy Group Leader  
Cllr Keith Parry – Group Leader  
David Hugh Thomas – Chair Governance & Audit Committee  
Paul Orders  
Gareth Newell  
Rhian Jones  
Cabinet Support Office  
Tim Gordon  
Jeremy Rhys  
Chris Pyke