

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 NOVEMBER 2020

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

20 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

21 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Parkhill declared a personal interest in Item 4 as he is member of Creigau Cricket club, Llanishen Tennis Club and Pure Gym.

22 : MINUTES - TO FOLLOW

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

23 : LEISURE & YOUTH SPORTS

The Chairperson advised Members that this item enabled them to consider the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on leisure and youth sports, what local authorities are doing to support these and the recovery process for these areas. The Chairperson was delighted that Sport Cardiff, Cardiff Met and GLL, all major providers of leisure and youth sports in Cardiff, were in attendance. He advised the cover report and appendices provided an overview of the impact of the pandemic on the sector and that Committee now had the opportunity to explore with panellists how we address this impact and ensure that we have services in the future.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Bradbury – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure; Steve Morris – Operational Manager – Sport, Leisure & Development; Laura Williams – Head of Sport Cardiff; Ben O’Connell – Director of Sport, Cardiff Metropolitan University and Rhys Jones – Head of Service GLL

The Chairperson invited Cllr Bradbury to make a statement in which he stated he was pleased that from Monday, following the Firebreak Lockdown, junior sports could resume albeit under new regulations. He noted the importance of junior sports not only for fitness but also for engagement with young people. He noted the good work undertaken by Sport Cardiff and Cardiff Met during the pandemic and also the work undertaken by GLL within the regulations. He considered it important to support and facilitate the safe return of community sport if guidelines allow.

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

Member asked about the use of space and if spaces were being divided up to facilitate group numbers. Members were advised that clarification is still being sought on the guidance that there can be up to 15 people in an activity and if spaces can be split up and shared; this would be a challenge for outdoor spaces such as pitches. Rhys Jones added that the guidance was complicated and regularly changes. He stated he was really concerned about swimming and bringing people back to pools, but added he was committed to working with Sport Cardiff on this and hoping to reintroduce family swimming. Some cycling will also be brought back, lots of outdoor spaces would be used for gym classes. It was noted that the 15 limit does not apply to under 11's. It was also noted that the definition of organised activity means that there would be a coach, so there would have to be one coach per group of 15.

Member asked about the grants awarded, how many clubs received a grant and on average how much each received. Officers advised that 86 clubs submitted applications to the Active Wales Fund and around 80/85% had received funding. The funding ranged from a few hundred pound to £5k, there were very varied amounts given to a variety of clubs.

Members noted that extracurricular activities in schools had stopped and asked if this was due to the guidelines or increased pressures on schools. Members were advised it was the pressure on schools, the school day and environment. There were some allowances such as school rugby but there was no transportation to fixtures, additional cleaning regimes etc. There was a lack of guidance from PHW/WG on what schools can and cannot do but the Council is working with them to see how they can support them and provide resources. It was also noted that schools currently have additional cleaning routines in place so to have external parties coming in to provide the after schools clubs would be challenging. The Cabinet Member added that there was an initial reluctance from schools with community facilities in them, to open up. Their concerns would be worked through and they would be opened up safely when they can. It is the edict of the Council to do so when it is safe and this had been managed for Cardiff West and Eastern High Schools

Members were concerned about the impact on people's mental health across Cardiff. The Cabinet Member agreed that sport was very important in supporting young people's mental health and it was a real underlying problem in the pandemic. There are discussions ongoing with the Welsh Government on the importance of activities under safe guidance.

Members referred to cohorts who have missed out on such things as swimming and asked how demand would be managed after the pandemic. The Cabinet Member advised that the conversation had already started around this. Young people not engaging in sport can be lost to sport forever,

and there was potentially a generation who would be disengaged. Along with this there was the potential for the death of many community sports clubs which can be the centre of the community, holding events, socials etc. Officers added that they have embarked on an aquatic strategy which will need to evolve due to Covid. After the pandemic there would be an opportunity for partnership working in relation to swimming, rebranding family swim sessions, Welsh Medium, Urdd sessions etc. There would be a need to look at the delivery model in relation to volume and capacity, having enough swimming teachers etc.

Members were concerned about community clubs and asked what support could be provided. Officers advised that lots of grants have been applied for as they need more coaches for the smaller groups. There was pressure on the workforce as they need to write new policies etc. Sport Cardiff will continue to support them in helping to find funding opportunities and encourage confidence. The Cabinet Member added that the Council tries to be a broker between the Governing Body and the Clubs. He added that it was vitally important for the clubs to keep the junior sectors, also from a financial standpoint in relation to funding. It was important to put pressure on Governing Bodies to provide funding.

Members noted that Netball was decimated at the moment and the impact this has on female participation and accessibility to indoor courts, there would be a real challenge around how to maintain and re-engage going forward.

A discussion took place around the reorganisation of sport into a regional model and that this has not worked well in North Wales. There was concern expressed that the new Model would take away elements of control, knowledge and expertise. The process was currently on hold due to the pandemic but when restarted, stakeholders would look at what the model would look like. Funding would come centrally and be dispersed by Sport Wales rather than via the local authority. There are concerns but Sport Wales are very much committed to this as a way forward. Members asked if the concern was around less funding and were advised that it was difficult to know the full impact on a local level as there was no evidence to say it was a better/worse way of working. The Cabinet Member stated that his concern was that the challenges of sport in Cardiff were very different to other areas, such as BAME/Female participation; also in Cardiff there were different challenges in different parts of the City itself. Officers added that currently each local authority provides staff with knowledge and experience in areas such as legal/HR and they provide office space etc. In the new model this would have to be funded from the pot of monies allocated, thus reducing the funding available for sports itself. Members were concerned about this and asked that this be brought back to Committee to be scrutinised in more depth, via an evidence gathering session as had happened previously for Community Adult Education.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

24 : LEISURE SERVICES CONTRACT - GLL

Members were advised that this item was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet that seeks approval to review the Council's contract with GLL for possible variations and to raise the Risk Rating to a Corporate Red Risk.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Bradbury – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure; Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development; Steve Morris – Operational Manager – Sport, Leisure & Development and Rhys Jones – Head of Service GLL.

The Chairperson advised Members that this item contained confidential information in the presentation and at Appendix 1, the meeting would start in open session so Members were reminded not to refer to the confidential sections.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Bradbury to make a statement in which he stressed that this was not a report to close leisure centres, it was to provide an honest appraisal of the current situation during the pandemic and to seek Scrutiny views. He committed to bringing any substantial items on this area to Committee in the future for pre-decision scrutiny. He updated Committee on issues including the Council supporting GLL through the hardship fund, which the Council have claimed back from Welsh Government, as GLL are a non-profit social enterprise with limited support. He added that there is a crisis in this area due to Covid related lost income and it was important to use the opportunity to review how to increase membership, direct debits and to look at the programme offer going forward so that communities have a sustainable offer for years to come. The risk was highlighted on the Corporate Risk Register; this was a nationwide issue and it was only right to have a cabinet report to highlight the situation and to ensure a stable position post-covid.

Members were invited to ask questions in open session:

Members noted this was a Cabinet Red Risk and asked what changes as a result of that. Officers explained it was so that Cabinet were aware of the issue, it was good governance to escalate it and make members aware, bring to Scrutiny etc. There had recently been a Audit Wales review of leisure services, some information is contained in the report and advice of Audit Wales has been taken into account.

RESOLVED: to agree to go to closed session to enable questions on the confidential aspects of the report.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

25 : CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL JOINT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members were updated on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee work since the last update to Committee.

Members were advised the City Deal Cabinet had met twice since the last update, remotely on 14 September 2020 and 19 October 2020. The items considered were detailed in the report.

The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met on 11 September 2020. At the meeting, Members agreed to hold a workshop to discuss further the governance arrangements of the JOSOC, including terms of reference and quorum arrangements. This workshop is being held on 13 November 2020 and will include a discussion on the Forward Work Programme. To support the Forward Work Programme discussion, Members will receive a presentation from the Regional Skills Partnership team.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on 4 December 2020.

26 : CORRESPONDENCE

Members were advised of any outstanding responses to Chairs letters.

Members were advised Cardiff Youth Council had contacted the Chair to ask that a representative join the Committee; the Chair asked Members whether they agreed with this.

RESOLVED: to agree that a representative from the Cardiff Youth Council join the Committee as soon as practicably possible.

27 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

28 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TBC

16 November 2020 at 5.00pm

The meeting terminated at 6.35 pm

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