

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr NH

Date: 9 November 2020



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Councillor Peter Bradbury
Cabinet Members
Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Bradbury,

Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic on Leisure & Youth Sports

On behalf of the Committee Members, thank you for attending the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee with Steve Morris, Laura Williams (Sport Cardiff), Ben O'Connell (Cardiff Metropolitan University) and Rhys Jones (GLL).

Members wished to explore the impact of the pandemic on leisure and youth sports and to understand the work underway to respond and to prepare for post-covid. Members thank Laura for her presentation and 6-month report that complemented the research in our cover report and gave us a clear overview of these issues in Cardiff, in terms of participation rates, impact on community clubs, classes and team sports and the work that the sector is doing to address these.

It is evident that there has been much work to date to adapt to the new landscape, with online content and equipment packs to encourage home and school exercise. However, understandably, this has not been able to replace pre-covid levels of exercise; Members are concerned to note the widening gap in participation rates and the negative legacy this leaves in terms of a backlog of young people who have missed opportunities to learn new skills and participate in sports. Members are pleased leisure and sports partners in Cardiff have recognised this issue and that work is ongoing to put in place programmes and approaches to tackle the backlog. Members wish to pass on their thanks to Sport Cardiff for their work to assist clubs and community groups apply for grants in order to increase the number of trained

coaches, to ensure covid-secure ratios are adhered to, as well as their support to the workforce to cope with the pressures that come from being covid-compliant.

Members recognise that physical activity is critical for mental health and wellbeing and that, whilst leisure and sports are technically a discretionary activity, local authorities have a key role to play with partners in supporting this. Not only does this fit with our duties under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, it benefits our local communities as parks, open spaces, school facilities, leisure centres, community clubs, classes and teams are essential elements of the infrastructure needed to maintain and promote community cohesion and reduce anti-social behaviour. Members are therefore reassured to hear that you and our partners have made these points to Welsh Government and we lend our support to you in this.

It is clear that all attendees have been working to support leisure and sport in Cardiff, both now and in the future. In particular, Members welcome the following:

- Sport Cardiff and the Council's work to encourage Cardiff West and Eastern High Schools to open their facilities for community use. Members note that Sport Cardiff raised that guidance to schools regarding use of their facilities is not clear. Therefore, **we recommend** that you raise with Welsh Government the need to clarify their guidance in this regard and **we recommend** that you ensure that Cardiff Council's guidance to schools supports consistent access to available facilities where this is covid-compliant.
- You and partners' work in lobbying and brokering agreement between Welsh Government and governing bodies to ensure the safe restart of team sports.
- The substantial work in hand to find a long-term sustainable way forward for the leisure services management contract with GLL.
- GLL's wider partnership role in Cardiff, such as supporting volunteers and fitness instructors, providing venues for a wide range of physical activities and working with Sport Cardiff to design and implement programmes to tackle the backlog in swimming.
- The ongoing horizon scanning work by all partners to evolve and adapt to new requirements.
- The development of a new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy.
- The development of a new Aquatics/ Swimming Strategy.

Members recognise the need to encourage participation in physical activity and sport, to boost health and wellbeing, sustain communities and ensure that community clubs, teams and facilities remain viable. Members are keen to play their part in this, as ward councillors and as members of this Committee. As such, I will be liaising with Sport Cardiff and GLL to enable me, in my capacity as Chair of this Committee, to send a letter to all Members explaining which facilities are available so that all ward councillors will be able to promote leisure and sport in their area, helping to boost footfall and participation rates.

Finally, Members heard the concerns expressed about Sport Wales' regionalisation of sport partnerships. It is our intention to carry out detailed scrutiny on this and the likely ramifications for sport in Cardiff and to prioritise scrutiny of their proposals as these become clearer. Scrutiny services will be in touch to arrange this.

Thank you again to you and all whom attended to explain the sterling work you are all taking to encourage and promote leisure and sport in Cardiff and to protect current resources for future generations: the whole Committee wishes you all the best with your work.

This letter requires a response, please, to the recommendations highlighted above.

Yours sincerely,



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

cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
Neil Hanratty Jon Maidment
Steve Morris
Laura Williams – Sport Cardiff
Ben O'Connell – Cardiff Metropolitan University
Rhys Jones - GLL
Clair James Cabinet Support Office