

COUNCIL: 18 MARCH 2021

CULTURE & LEISURE STATEMENT

AGENDA ITEM:

Covid-19 Impact on Culture & Leisure

As I shared with Members last month, Covid-19 continues to impact on large parts of my portfolio, with many functions temporarily suspended or closed.

We are now a year on from the initial lockdown and I am all too aware that the events, live music and cultural sector are still to re-open. It is encouraging to see infection rates falling and the vaccine roll-out progressing at pace. However, we know that these are just two measures and there are many other considerations that will need to be taken into account before we can safely fully reopen our venues and welcome events back to our capital city.

In the interim, the Council continues to liaise closely with the Welsh Government and industry sector partners to consider next steps and to ensure that we are ready to respond as soon as it is safe for us to do so. Based on the Welsh Government's current alert levels, it is hoped that a number of carefully curated test events will be staged after Easter. These will be limited in size and will require strict adherence to social distancing and associated safety guidance. Council officers continue to work with Welsh Government and the wider sector to facilitate the development of this guidance.

The Council's cultural venues remain closed, but we continue to liaise with Welsh Government to assist in mitigating the associated financial pressures. Many of the Council staff historically employed at the venues continue to support our response to the pandemic, including supporting services such as Test, Trace, Protect (TTP). In addition, officers are working to prepare and support plans for the city's recovery as we move through the Welsh Government alert levels, building on the successful approach implemented during the summer and autumn months of 2020.

Parks and Playgrounds

Last week, I was delighted to announce that the Council had been successful in securing grant funding of £228k through the Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Fund. The fund has been set up to tackle climate change and the Trust has made a pledge to support the planting of 50 million trees throughout the UK by 2025. The funding will enable the Council to establish a tree nursery for the production of locally grown native stock, contributing to the aim of increasing tree canopy in Cardiff over time and supporting our vision for a carbon-neutral city.

I'm also pleased to report that, as part of the Council's investment programme, four playground refurbishment schemes at Caedelyn Park in the Rhiwbina Ward, Moorland Park in the Splott Ward, Grange Gardens in the Grangetown Ward and the Creigiau Play Area in the Creigiau & St Fagans Ward are underway.

Those who have visited Roath Park recently will have observed the refurbishment of the Scott Memorial Lighthouse, which has included re-painting, renewal of lighting and servicing of the clock. I am very grateful to the sponsor of these works. The refurbishment has generated significant interest and made a real difference to one of Cardiff's most iconic features.

Councillor Peter Bradbury
Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure
11 March 2021