

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2021

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

9 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Stubbs

10 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

11 : REVIEW OF LEISURE CONTRACT WITH GLL - TO FOLLOW

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Bradbury – Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development, Steve Morris – Operational Manager – Sport & Leisure, to the meeting.

The Chairperson advised that this item is to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet. The scope of the scrutiny includes the proposed variations to contract, including the reasons for these, the likely impact on service delivery, and the implications and risks for the Council.

The item contains confidential information in Appendices 1,2,5,6,8,9 and 10, so Members were requested to keep any questions and comments on these until the closed session.

The Chairperson invited Cllr Bradbury to make a statement in which he said that it has been a challenging period for the industry as a whole, it was important to improve the offer and get investment into leisure centres, including the Cardiff Blues taking over Pentwyn Leisure Centre, where there will be community involvement and an improved facility. The Cabinet Member wished to thank the community of Pentwyn and Health Board Colleagues for their patience and support in setting up the vaccine centre. The Cabinet Member made reference to the Velodrome and the importance of inviting schools into the centres.

Members received a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments;

Members asked about removing some Leisure Centres from the contract and whether consideration had been given to the long term implications of this. The Cabinet Member explained that removing from the contract was different to removing facilities. The Velodrome would be removed from Maindy as a better facility was being built in the ISV. An opportunity had arisen with the Cardiff Blues and Pentwyn Leisure Centre that would improve the facilities and community offer. It is about ensuring the long term sustainable offer for Leisure Services and a boost for the surrounding areas.

Members referred to Cashless payments and asked what the implication were for those people who want to use cash. Officers advised that the majority of centres had been built in the 1980's and had not changed very much. Where there was a chance to bring Capital Investment, there was a chance for GLL to be more efficient and competitive. Cashless had been piloted by GLL and had worked well; it would be a turn style model, which helps with monitoring numbers/usage, but cash would always remain a payment option.

Members discussed an audit review of Leisure Services and how all Members and the community could be involved while still keeping contract management information confidential. The Cabinet Member advised that there would be all Member briefing arranged and they would have an oversight of the confidential information, and sessions could be arranged for Party Groups for deep dives. Officers further explained the previous contract management via a Board who dealt with any issues that arose. Going forward, there would be mainstream performance management in line with the rest of the Council, a quarterly report where any issues are escalated. Officers explained the difference with the Cardiff Blues in that that Council proposes the lease and they have a proposal for how they will operate the centre, it is an arrangement rather than a contract and it aligns with Council policy.

Members discussed the relocation of the velodrome, whether cycling clubs had been consulted and whether they were on board. Members noted that Maindy was very central, near the Taff Trail and used by North Cardiff cycling clubs. The Cabinet Member explained he had met with people, there had been a few concerns but not about location, more so about not wanting one club to dominate. There had been some concerns around sustainable transport to the ISV and these are being addressed. Some Club representatives had been involved in planning the facility and others had been kept informed to ensure they fed into the process. Access was a crucial point as people need to be able to get there by bicycle, so officers were looking at extending the cycle superhighway from the Bay to ISV including the redevelopment of Channel View and the bridge across the river; cycle connectivity was being designed into the plans. The new Velodrome would have better facilities, a clubhouse and should springboard the cycling clubs.

Members asked about any changes to opening hours at GLL leisure centres and Officers advised that to compete with private facilities and to meet the needs of people wanting early morning rather than late nights, it was proposing generally 6am – 9pm.

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting at this point during consideration of this item as the Committee discussed exempt information of the description contained in paragraph 14 and 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The public may be excluded from the meeting by resolution of the Committee pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during discussion of this item.

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.

12 : INTERNATIONAL SPORTS VILLAGE - TO FOLLOW

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Goodway – Cabinet Member for Investment & Development, Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development, Chris Barnett – Operational Manager – Major Projects, Jo Phillips – Project Manager to the meeting.

The Chairperson advised that this item is to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet. The scope of the scrutiny includes the proposals for a velodrome and the new development strategy, how these fit with wider Cardiff Bay regeneration plans and the implications and risks for the Council.

The item contains confidential information in Appendices 1 to 2, so Members were requested to keep any questions and comments on these until the closed session.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which he said that this project had been ongoing for 20 years and finally there was something in prospect that was deliverable and achievable.

Members received a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

Members welcomed the masterplan but had questions around how it enhances biodiversity and open spaces. Officers explained they were very early CGI images at present, but the intention was to have lots of green spaces, trees, pocket parks, SUDs requirements on site, internal planting and landscaping; all addressing biodiversity issues.

Members asked if the walkway around the Bay was still a consideration and were advised that it was, it was part of the fundamental policy and would be included in any development that comes forward. Officers added that a report would come to Cabinet on the development of the waterfront area with a promenade etc. so Scrutiny would have sight of the report.

Members discussed the width of the 'edge' and the importance of having enough space for walkways and cycle ways, with buildings not being too close to the edge. The Cabinet Member explained that anything can be specified but that it costs and could affect scheme viability, the developer then calculates the residual land mass value and the contribution they can make. A report on the waterfront would be brought back to Committee.

Members sought clarity on timings and whether there would be an overlap between the Velodrome closing at Maindy and opening at ISV. Officers assured Members that the new facility would be delivered before the old one closes.

Members asked what arrangements were in place to ensure the facility is accessible to all cycling groups across the City. Members were advised that the Governing Body and cycle clubs have been engaging in the process and mainly there had been an overwhelmingly positive response. Engagement would continue as the development progresses and would also look at all encompassing provision.

Members asked what the casual usage was currently at Maindy. Officers explained that the centre offers a pay as you ride option as well as it being included in GLL membership; clubs use the facility and groups of people can book it out; it is also used for road safety provision and learning to cycle. All the cycles are currently owned by the Maindy Flyers and other clubs use them but hiring bikes out would be a necessity going forward to enable people to see if they like the sport.

Members asked about the membership options for the new velodrome but officers explained that there was no detail on that as yet; indicative work had been undertaken and would be part of the full business case workings. Members asked if it was likely to be more expensive and officers said it was about increasing income by increasing participation rather than increasing prices.

Members discussed the importance of inclusivity and officers stressed they had been working with Pedal Power to include disability cycling and the closed road circuit would enable more people to use it.

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting at this point during consideration of this item as the Committee discussed exempt information of the description contained in paragraph 14 and 16 of Part 4 and paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The public may be excluded from the meeting by resolution of the Committee pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during discussion of this item.

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.

13 : CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

This item enabled Members to receive an update on correspondence sent and received.

Members noted that the two responses that were outstanding at the time of writing the report, had now been received.

14 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

15 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 13 MAY 2021 AT 4.30PM

The meeting terminated at 7.20 pm