

## ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 JUNE 2023

Present: Councillor Wong(Chairperson)  
Councillors Berman, Brown-Reckless, Henshaw, Jones,  
Lloyd Jones, Shimmin and Thomson

### 1 : CHAIRPERSON AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Noted.

### 2 : TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

### 3 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Jenkins and Cllr Shimmin had advised that he would be late joining the meeting.

### 4 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

### 5 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

### 6 : PENTWYN LEISURE CENTRE

The Chairperson advised that this item enabled Members to scrutinise the new proposals for Pentwyn Leisure Centre, including proposed improvements and leasing arrangements, and how these interface with GLL provision. Members would also have the opportunity to explore any implications for the Council, including financial implications and whether there are any risks to the Council.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Burke – Cabinet Member – Culture, Parks and Events, Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development, Steve Morris – Operational Manager – Sport, Leisure and Development, and Chris Barnett – Operational Manager – Major Projects for this item.

The Chairperson explained the structure of the meeting as questions to the panel on the information in the public domain, followed by questions in closed session on Appendices 2-5.

The Cabinet Member was invited to make an opening statement, following which Members were provided with a presentation by officers.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Members noted and welcomed that Cardiff Rugby has shown a willingness to collaborate with local communities, allowing for community usage and meetings, including PACT (Partnerships and Communities Together) meetings; The area adjacent to the café will be accessible for smaller community activities; The 3G pitches will be open to community use outside of Cardiff Rugby's scheduled occupation, which is primarily on weekdays from 10 am to 3 pm; A diary or program facility will be implemented to facilitate the management and scheduling of community usage.

Members were pleased to learn about the proposed solar scheme, which is expected to reduce the leisure centre's carbon footprint by 22%. They were also informed that the Ground Source Heat Pump will further enhance these environmental benefits. Zack Hellard, the Youth Council representative, suggested exploring additional environmental improvements in line with Cardiff Council's One Planet Cardiff commitments, such as water collection.

Members were assured that leisure centres are part of the Council's estate and are committed to achieving net carbon zero by 2030. This includes an opportunity for Pentwyn Leisure Centre to incorporate further environmental improvements aligned with the Council's goals.

Regarding costs, Members noted that the budget for the scheme has been reduced by £0.5 million, resulting in a total budget of £4.5 million. Members also noted that £1 million to £1.5 million is no longer available from the Pentwyn Park and Ride scheme to fund this particular project. The Council's investment in the scheme is based on an "Invest to Save" basis, with the expectation that all the funds will be repaid.

In terms of pool dimensions, Members heard there is a high demand for learning to swim courses in Cardiff. The proposed pool size is a learner pool measuring 20 metres x 8 metres, with a depth of 1 metre. These dimensions have been determined through detailed collaboration with engineers, the Amateur Swimming Association, and the Health and Safety Executive. The aim was to identify the most cost-effective pool size that meets the needs of those learning to swim.

However, Members were surprised that Swim Wales, and their specialist consultants on pool energy usage, had not been involved in the process. They recommend initiating a dialogue with Swim Wales to ensure that all available efficiencies regarding pool energy usage are taken into account.

Members noted officers' assurances that the reduction in pool size is primarily driven by the need to maintain affordable operating costs, which includes not only energy costs but also staffing costs, with larger pools exceeding 20 metres in length requiring a larger number of staff to operate effectively.

Furthermore, Members heard that there are other pools available in Cardiff to cater to the needs of competitive swimming. They also noted that the previous pool in the Pentwyn Leisure Centre was a free form pool, rendering it unsuitable for competitive swimming.

Members raised concerns regarding the use of 2011 Census data in the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) rather than the more recent 2021 Census data. They requested an explanation for this decision.

Members were pleased to hear of the willingness to engage with local communities and keep them informed about the proposals, as well as seek their feedback. Members noted a suggestion made during the meeting to amend the recommendation to the Cabinet, namely that the scheme be considered as agreed, subject to consultation with the community. However, some Members were concerned that this implies that the decision on the scheme will be made before the consultation process has taken place.

Regarding changing rooms, Members considered that there is an opportunity to engage and consult with communities regarding the specific design of changing rooms. Officers explained it is intended that the changing rooms will be family-friendly. The officers responsible for the project are looking to draw insights from the experience of Cardiff International Pool to inform the design of the changing rooms at Pentwyn Leisure Centre. One member shared a positive personal experience of using gender-neutral changing rooms at Western Leisure Centre.

In terms of accessibility, Members were pleased to hear that the swimming pool lease will include criteria to ensure that the pool is accessible to all, including Muslim women and girls. The design and operation of the pool will be tailored to meet their specific needs.

Members noted that it is a requirement for sport governing bodies to have robust safeguarding protocols and procedures in place, including conducting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. As part of the Council's procurement framework, contractors will be required to undergo DBS checks.

During the meeting, Members discussed the possibility of employing a modular design approach for the scheme. They were pleased to hear that the officers agreed with this suggestion, as it would allow for future opportunities to expand provision in a more flexible and modular manner.

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 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.

## 7 : TENNIS IN PARKS

The Chairperson advised that this item enabled Members to scrutinise a report to Cabinet that sets out proposals for the Council to enter into an agreement with Tennis Wales to operate 6 tennis court sites across Cardiff. Members would be able

to explore the impact of these proposals, including the introduction of a membership and management scheme, as well as any risks to the Council and the implications arising from these documents, including any financial implications.

For this item the Chairperson welcomed Cllr Burke – Cabinet Member – Culture, Parks and Events and Steve Morris – Operational Manager – Sport, Leisure and Development.

The Cabinet Member gave an opening statement after which Officers gave their presentation.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Inclusivity and Accessibility. Members noted that;

- Phone numbers will be displayed on notice boards at Tennis in Wales sites to enable individuals who are unable to book online to book sessions and access the courts;
- Officers will inquire with Tennis Wales about their plans to address digital inclusion/exclusion and will report back to the committee with their response.
- Officers will also check with Tennis Wales to determine the qualifying criteria for obtaining a Student Pass and share that information with the committee.
- The agreement with Tennis Wales ensures that there will be free access and free equipment available at all sites within the scheme. These free access sessions will be scheduled at various times and on different days throughout the week.
- The agreement also includes funding for a full-time tennis coach, provided by Tennis Wales, who will actively work to boost participation through free taster sessions, "come and try" sessions, free 6-week courses, free tennis leagues, and free tennis ladders across all sites.
- UK Government DCMS and Lawn Tennis Association funding criteria emphasize the need to increase participation among under-represented groups, including Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, with measurable outcomes.

Members were pleased with the above points and emphasised the importance of publicising them to residents to ensure inclusivity and accessibility within the scheme.

Demand:

Members discussed the level of tennis provision in Cardiff, acknowledging the presence of several private facilities, and sought reassurance regarding the demand for municipal provision.

Members were pleased to learn that Tennis Wales has conducted research on the latent demand for tennis in Cardiff and express confidence that the six sites will be successful. They also noted that similar schemes in England, including in deprived urban areas, have significantly increased participation.

Members were pleased to hear that low-level lighting, which will not disturb local residents, will be installed to make the courts usable year-round.

Members raised the topic of indoor tennis, given the weather conditions in Wales. They would appreciate an explanation as to why the indoor tennis provision at the House of Sport has ceased and if there is a possibility of reopening it.

**Encouraging Talent:**

Members noted that players who demonstrate potential will be supported in accessing talent pathways and development centres.

**Trusts:**

Members acknowledged that several parks in Cardiff are subject to Trust arrangements. Strategic Estates and Legal Services are working on establishing a way forward, and if the Council is the appointed Trustee, a separate decision report will need to be presented to the Cabinet in their capacity as Trustee.

**Capital Investment and Maintenance:**

Members noted that this project presents a rare opportunity to attract funding and investment into municipal courts, which is greatly needed.

Members were informed that Tennis Wales will assume the maintenance responsibilities for the courts.

**Charges:**

Members expressed interest in comparing the proposed costs by Tennis Wales with the costs of other sports. During the meeting, several members mentioned the costs at tennis facilities in Cardiff. Members believe it would be beneficial to provide an overview of charges at tennis facilities in Cardiff and other sports as outlined in the papers to offer clarity and raise awareness of the value provided by the Tennis Wales scheme.

**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.

**8 : WORK PROGRAMMING 2023-24**

Noted.

**9 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

Members were provided with an update on Correspondence sent and received by Committee.

Members agreed the terms of reference for the Museum of Cardiff Inquiry, as set out at Appendix A to the report.

Members were content with the proposed Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23, at Appendix B, and this Committee's wording, attached at Appendix C.

**10 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)**

None received.

11 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11 July 2023 at 5.00pm

The meeting terminated at 7.10 pm