

**COUNCIL: 28 JANUARY 2021**

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## **CULTURE & LEISURE STATEMENT**

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### **COVID-19 Impact on Culture & Leisure**

Members will be aware that Covid-19 has significantly affected large parts of my portfolio, with many functions temporarily suspended or closed.

As you would expect, the city's major events programme has been decimated. Nonetheless, the Council has continued to work in the background to identify opportunities to bring new events to Cardiff once the pandemic has passed. This includes council officers working with the Welsh Government to prepare for the re-opening of events and large venues by putting Cardiff forward for trial re-openings as soon as Covid-19 restrictions allow.

The Council's cultural venues have also remained closed over a significant period and we anticipate that this is likely to continue for some time yet. Again, the Council has worked closely with the Welsh Government to mitigate the financial impact of these closures, given that they are all income based businesses. To date, we have been successful in recovering lost income through the various funds made available by government.

We had planned to transfer the New Theatre to HQ Theatres in April 2020. This has been delayed, but a dialogue has continued with the company over the course of the last year and they remain committed to seeing through the arrangement. We are currently targeting April 2021, but of course this remains subject to change depending on the pandemic and mass vaccinations.

In terms of the council staff employed at the venues, some have had to be furloughed, but many have been redeployed across the Council to support our response to the pandemic, including supporting services such as the Test, Track, Protect (TTP) service.

GLL and the city's leisure centres have also suffered a similar fate to our venues. The leisure centres currently remain closed and the Council has worked closely with GLL and the Welsh Government to mitigate lost income to ensure that the Leisure Services contract remains intact and is able to continue once the lockdown is eased. The Council has committed to undertaking a review with GLL to ensure that the contract is sustainable over the long-term. Part of this will include a new approach to the future of Pentwyn Leisure Centre.

I announced at the last Council meeting that this administration will secure the long term future of Pentwyn Leisure Centre, which will be used by Cardiff & Vale University Health Board as a mass vaccination centre for up to 12 months. Whilst the building is being used for this important purpose, I intend to bring forward plans to upgrade large parts of the building and I anticipate that a report outlining further details will be considered by the Cabinet in Spring 2021.

### **Tree Planting**

I am pleased to report that the Council's Annual Tree Planting Programme, which was developed in conjunction with stakeholders organisations and commenced in late November 2020 to coincide with the National Tree Planting Week, is progressing well. I anticipate that in the region of 2,400 trees will be planted by the end of March 2021. In addition, I will shortly be communicating plans for an ambitious and major programme of planting aimed at increasing tree canopy across the city and contributing to the Council's One Planet Cardiff agenda.

**Councillor Peter Bradbury**  
**Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure**  
**21 January 2021**