

25 November 2020

Deputy Kirsten Morel
Chair
Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel
By email

Dear Deputy Morel,

In response to your Panel's recent query about the sport portfolio, I can provide the following additional information:

- 1. Minister, the Business Case explains that the pandemic has meant that 2020 income for government owned sports facilities is down and that this additional budget will ensure that the long-term impact on sports facilities due to the pandemic will be minimal. In total the business case seeks to secure:**

- £2,137,000 in 2021
- £1,005,000 in 2022
- £720,000 in 2023
- £0 in 2024

- a. Where has the additional funding come from?**

The additional funding is being made available from the Covid-19 head of expenditure and balanced within the overall Government Plan.

- b. What will happen if funding isn't secured for this project? Presumably it will have an impact on the other projects related to sports facilities?**

If funding is not secured in the Government Plan, the sports services would have to be reviewed and potentially reconfigured to meet the funding available. It is likely that savings would have to be found.

- 2. The planning assumption for this project has been that the public health scenario might improve during 2021 – what if the situation with Covid-19 doesn't improve?**

Should the public health scenario not improve then the impact on income to the sports facilities would need to be reviewed and either savings found to offset the additional shortfall in income, alternative savings in non-sport areas found, or an additional bid for further funding made.

If Covid-19 does not improve in 2021, refurbishment of certain facilities may be delayed, especially if certain sports cannot recommence. An example would be armour coating of squash court walls. The Active offering would need to change on a more permanent basis to add stability to the product. This could include a slimming down of the membership options, particularly corporate memberships. Utilising school sports facilities for public use in the evening rather than hiring to commercial entities could be considered in order to increase income streams.

- 3. When the island's sports facilities closed, was the opportunity taken to upgrade and maintain them?**

Both Les Quennevais Sports Centre and Springfield Stadium were used for Community Antibody Testing and Workforce Antibody Testing during Level 3 of the Safe Exit Framework. The

management and administration/stores services were provided by Sports Division staff. Some facilities were turned to alternative use (States Assembly at Fort Regent, for example). Budgets were also under pressure at the time and contractor availability and authorisation to work was limited, so large scale refurbishments could not be undertaken. Planning permission and design for schemes would have had to be made prior to works commencing in many areas, which would not have been possible in the time available.

In the early stages of Covid and when some of the facilities were closed, a number of small remedial refurbishment works took place, carried out in-house mainly by Sport Division staff. Some limited refurbishment work was undertaken, particularly at Les Quennevais pool. Contractors were prevented from working initially as permits to work had to be applied for and approved. Sport facilities were not considered an essential service. At Level 3 of the Safe Exit Framework contractors were able to work if they could operate in isolation with only minimal contact with sports centre staff on site. Due to the availability of contractors and a depleted supply chain, most local contractors would not accept additional workloads.

Additionally, UK contractors were prevented from travelling to Jersey. Others that could travel at Level 2 of the Safe Exit Framework were affected by the initial times for turnaround on PCR testing times and the need for isolation. It is important to note that during Levels 4 – 2, the Sport Division supported a number of other more business-critical areas of Government operations and the staff were redeployed. This included but was not limited to working in clinical waste, call centres, household refuse and recycling centre, and driving ambulances.

4. How will you ensure that people will choose the Government-owned sports facilities over private ones, once the situation with Covid-19 improves and they are running to their full suite of services?

Throughout the Covid period the Sport Division has maintained good communications with its users, clubs, associations and our Active members. The products and services on offer have varied subject to the levels of restriction applied by Public Health. This remains the case due to ongoing uncertainty and while the guidance is still adapting to need the current Covid circumstances. The reduced offering at Level 2, Level 1 and now the Winter Covid Strategy has been reflected in Active membership fee changes. The Sport Division will continue to maintain good levels of communication with its audiences so that they can be welcomed back as soon as the situation returns to normal. Many services provided by the Sports Division cannot be offered by the private sector due to the type, size and unique sporting facilities in the Government portfolio.

Yours sincerely,



Senator Lyndon Farnham
Deputy Chief Minister | Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture
+44 (0)1534 440628 l.farnham@gov.je