

Rebecca Evans MS

Minister for Finance and Local Government

Welsh Government

Dawn Bowden MS

Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip

Welsh Government

Additional funding for swimming pools

Dear Rebecca and Dawn,

Our committee has raised concerns with you in the past about the impact of increasing costs on sports facilities, especially swimming pools, and we write again to express our increasing concern.

In the Spring Budget, the Chancellor announced £63 million of funding for swimming pools in England. We would like to know:

- Whether this funding will trigger a Barnett Consequential for the Welsh Government, and if so, of how much.
- Whether the Welsh Government will consider using any additional funding it receives as a consequential of this announcement to support swimming pools.

As a committee, we previously called for additional support for this sector in our November 2022 report **Increasing costs: impact on culture and sport** and recent **2023-24 Draft Budget** report.

In February 2023, the Welsh Sports Association and Community Leisure UK wrote to us with "significant concern that not enough is being done by the Welsh Government to support the sector". They said at the time that:

"While the Welsh Government has repeatedly said that they are not aware of any immediate threat to facilities in terms of closure, we believe this view is misguided as there is a very real and immediate threat to the delivery of public leisure services."

On 29 March 2023, the Welsh Sports Association and Swim Wales stressed the need for additional funding whilst giving **evidence to the Local Government and Housing Committee**. Fergus Feeney from Swim Wales referred to the scale of funding needed:

"Just outlining the gap, we think between £10 million and £12 million, best case. But we start at about £30 million. So, this is a significant problem."

We would like to reiterate our call for additional support for sport and leisure facilities, and in particular, swimming pools. We note, of course, that any Barnett Consequential which the Welsh Government receives from the £63 million funding for England will not solve the problems faced in Wales, but we believe nevertheless that it would represent a valuable first step. We would also wish to reiterate our previous calls for capital investment in energy efficiency for sports and leisure facilities, and to stress that this should be a key component of any additional funding provided.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.