A Report of the
Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee

Cardiff Riding School

April 2013
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I want at the outset to thank the valuable input from all the external and internal witnesses listed within the report, their assistance has enabled this Inquiry to produce several substantial recommendations, clearly evidenced and air many key concerns surrounding the stables. It goes without saying that in these tough economic times, the scrutiny of non-statutory services is more important than ever.

In 2013 as part of Cardiff County Council’s annual budget recommendations we scrutinised the original budget proposals which put forward the disposal of Cardiff Riding School. During scrutiny these budget proposals were amended stating that the service area would examine alternative operating models for Cardiff Riding School. Due to the high levels of public interest and in the interest of efficiency the Committee decided to undertake a Task and Finish Inquiry into the operations of Cardiff Riding School.

During this Inquiry, Members of the Task and Finish group visited Liege Manor Equestrian Riding School and Cardiff Riding School. Liege Manor was recommended to the group by the British Horse Society as the premier equestrian centre in Wales and offers an exceptional example for Cardiff Riding School to aspire to. Members heard from the owner of Liege Manor and the group is very thankful to Sarah for showing us round her excellent riding school.

The task group heard that Cardiff Riding School provides a role in supporting people with mental health problems and the participation of women and girls and disabled riders in sport in a city centre location. A true asset to the offer of Cardiff as a city and us as a council.

The Inquiry discovered that there are potential opportunities for increased revenue at Cardiff Riding School as identified by the staff in their draft business plan as yet however this is yet to be taken up by senior management. Staff have also indentified savings in their draft business plan identified through cheaper feed, for example, with the caveat that the Council’s procurement process could hinder any cost savings
identified in the draft business plan.

The Committee has put forward 13 Recommendations to Cabinet and if these are acted upon, Cardiff Riding School will be better placed for the future.

As Chairman of this Task and Finish Group, I am very grateful to Cllr Gareth Holden and Cllr Phil Hawkins for their commitment and input into our work. I would like to again thank all the witnesses who willingly gave their time to present evidence to the group as well as the Cardiff Riding School Officers who were able to willingly assist us. I would like to offer a special thank you to Jan Roche and Bob Weatherley from the British Horse Society who gave up their days to act as special advisors to the Task and Finish Inquiry. Finally I must thank Gareth Dudley-Jones who works in the research team in Scrutiny for his organisation, assistance and huge effort during this inquiry.

Councillor Craig Williams
(Scrutiny Committee Chairperson)
The terms of reference for the Task and Finish Inquiry into Cardiff Riding School were to examine the operations of Cardiff Riding School. The Inquiry focussed on:

- Undertaking an analysis of the current business model and financial position
- Examining service user views
- Examining the potential differing models of delivery (including practice followed elsewhere) and risks associated with each model
- Reviewing the expressions of interest process
- Examining the assessment criteria.

Input was sought from a wide variety of sources, enabling key stakeholders and interested parties, and the public to contribute to the debate.

The information gathered from the debate will be used to inform recommendations to the Cabinet on the potential role of the Council.

Members of the task and finish group were Councillor Craig Williams (chair), Councillor Phil Hawkins and Councillor Gareth Holden.
Key Findings

Key Finding 1
Cardiff Riding School has a role to play in supporting people with mental health problems gaining qualifications. It also plays an important role in the participation of girls and women and disabled riders in sport in a city centre location. Cardiff Riding School has received high levels of public interest, but its contribution to council objectives and initiatives is not recognised. For example, Cardiff Riding School is not featured in the Council’s Physical Activity Strategy or ‘Road to Rio’ (Olympic legacy) programme.

Key Finding 2
There are a number of operating models (listed below) for running a successful riding school, both privately owned, third sector and local authority owned. Cardiff Council’s Community Facilities service area is currently examining alternative operating models via an expressions of interests process. Members of the public have raised concern surrounding a potential Community Asset Transfer which poses a risk around Cardiff Riding School losing its current provision of services (for example, losing its provision for disabled riders). It is noted, however, that the local Liege Manor Equestrian Riding School (a private model) does provide for disabled riders.

Potential Operating Models:

- **The Commercial Model** intending to produce a profit for its proprietor. The risks were seen to be that it would be unwilling or unable to comply with Council strategies and policies (e.g. on accessibility, cost structure and equalities);

- **The Community Asset Transfer Model**, comprising a community based not-for-profit company or trust. The risks associated with this model were seen to be similar to the Commercial Model (other than the generation of profit), and also that there is no existing user group currently wishing to take on the transfer;

- **The Council Owned and Operated Model**. This model could be financially sound with improved local and senior management, integration into Council strategies, greater use of work-based diplomas from Coleg Gwent and from Cardiff and the Vale College, improved efficiencies and pricing sensitive to both market and social inclusion. The Inquiry Team heard that risks included the potential of failure of staff to implement the financial plan, lack of local leadership, and lack of senior management involvement and initiative;

- **“Council Ownership-Plus”** where the Council owns and operates the school and employs the staff as at present (although with the improvements outlined in the previous model) but with a separate ‘Friends Group’ (which is not involved in providing the service) also...
raising revenue and access capital funding from external sources (including Big Lottery, sponsorship, community chest grants etc). Members were informed that the risk of “Council inaction” outlined in the previous model would be mitigated by the existence of the Friends Group.

Key Finding 3
Despite receiving some investment, senior management support, interventions and communication has, over a long period of time, been limited. Cardiff Riding School staff have identified issues such as being unaware of the school’s financial situation, feeling isolated from the service area and a lack of support from senior staff. It is, however, recognised that communication issues are the responsibility of all.

Key Finding 4
Cardiff Riding School staff, supporters, users and Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group wish to remain under the umbrella of Cardiff Council.

Key Finding 5
The group heard that Cardiff Riding School is likely to account for 0.9% of Cardiff Council’s leisure services budget, and the contribution which Cardiff Council provides is 0.5% of its expenditure (compared with 51.5% in relation to leisure centres as a whole). Cardiff Riding School requires an average of £50,000 a year from capital/asset renewal on maintenance from Cardiff Council. On-going low level maintenance such as fence repairs is not provided on a consistent and regular basis, but more on a reactive basis.

Key Finding 6
Expert advice provided to the Inquiry Team, riding school staffing comparisons and the benchmark of one horse per acre indicate that there may be issues surrounding Cardiff Riding School’s current business model.

Key Finding 7
Cardiff Riding School has identified a number of cost savings and additional potential revenue, which has to date not been considered by senior management. Costs savings include cheaper feed and sourcing a year-long supply of good quality hay, although current procurement arrangements may affect this.

Key Finding 8
There are a number of opportunities which could bring increased revenue to Cardiff Riding School including:

- More liveries;
- Increased lesson prices; and
- College courses (Cardiff Riding School staff presented a document detailing a potential additional income of £20,000 per annum which college courses could raise.)

Key Finding 9
Examples from other riding schools indicate that Cardiff Riding School could operate more commercially and has scope to become more business-like, increase its customer service skills and increase its commercial awareness. It is acknowledged that a balance needs to be struck between commercial and subsidised activities.
Key Finding 10
Analysis of Cardiff Council’s website and information from a site visit undertaken during the Inquiry highlight that the promotion and way finding at Cardiff Riding School is limited.
Recommendation 1
Provide Cardiff Riding School with an opportunity to improve its financial position within the Council in partnership with the Friends of Cardiff Riding School group.

Recommendation 2
Fully explore and identify the key risks associated with any community asset transfer and mitigate and address these. Particular attention will be required to the transfer of potential inefficiencies that may exist within the current Cardiff Riding School structure. (Supported by Key Finding 6)

Recommendation 3
Investigate and implement the feasible actions as contained within the outline business case put forward by the Cardiff Riding School staff, that highlight potential savings and additional revenue as a matter of urgency. (Supported by Key Findings 7 and 8)

Recommendation 4
Review Cardiff Riding School’s placing and contribution within corporate objectives, with a view to its inclusion where appropriate. (Supported by Key Finding 1)

Recommendation 5
Ensure that the Council examines and improves its approach to communicating about the Riding School, acknowledging its role within new and existing sports development and physical activity initiatives. (Supported by Key Finding 1)

Recommendation 6
Develop a robust approach to the marketing of Cardiff Riding School. This should include improving advertisements, signage and an online presence. (Supported by key Finding 10)

Recommendation 7
Create safeguards to ensure that the future provision at Cardiff Riding School addresses the concerns of Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group, staff and members of the public, relating to the need to cater for riders with disabilities, young children and people from different backgrounds. (Supported by Key Findings 2 and 4)

Recommendation 8
Enhance the managerial arrangements for Cardiff Riding School by establishing an Advisory Board/Panel. This board should include experienced equine personnel/managers and income generation and marketing experts as well as users and supporter groups of Cardiff Riding School. (Supported by Key Findings 3 and 4)
Recommendation 9
Examine best practice and consult the BHS to review the staff business case, with particular attention to the horse per acre benchmark and staffing structure.
(Supported Key Finding 6)

Recommendation 10
Review the procurement limitations on Cardiff Riding School and consider the possibilities of devolving power to secure specialist equine items.
(Supported by key Findings 7 and 9)

Recommendation 11
Instruct service area senior managers to assist in the negotiations with Cardiff and Vale College to establish value and sustainability of combined courses.
(Supported by Key Finding 8)

Recommendation 12
Scope any potential additional partnerships with Cardiff Riding School - for example stabling police horses at Cardiff Riding School.
(Supported by Key Finding 8)

Recommendation 13
Develop and support business acumen and commercial practice at Cardiff Riding School so that it is in an improved position prior to any changes in operating models, as identified by some of the examples provided in the report.
(Supported by key Findings 2 and 9)
Background

1. Members were informed that Cardiff Riding School first opened in 1970. Based in Pontcanna Fields, Fields Park Road, Pontcanna, the School is set on 31 acres of parkland close to the city centre. The School boasts both indoor and outdoor facilities that appeal to a wide range of customers.

2. At present, Cardiff Riding School currently offers:
   - All aspects of horse riding and care;
   - Sessions range from beginners to qualified instructors and horse owners;
   - Private or group lessons for disabled riders; and
   - Indoor and outdoor riding arenas, hacking and cross country facilities.

3. There are around 50 horses and ponies at the Centre.

4. On visiting the site, members heard that Cardiff Riding School is open Tuesday – Friday (8am – 8pm), Saturday and Sunday (9am – 4pm), and is closed on Mondays.

5. It was highlighted to Members that the Riding School has two car parks; one main car park and one overflow car park. The main car park has space for 25 cars whilst the overflow car park has space for an additional 40 cars.

6. The site also has two Portakabin offices with access to phone lines and the internet. The second Portakabin doubles up as a lecture room which can accommodate 30 tables and chairs.

7. The indoor riding school was constructed in 1970 and has a floor area of 26m x 54m. It was resurfaced in 2011 and has a seating area with a capacity of 172, and a commentator’s box with a PA system.

8. The outdoor manège is situated to the rear of the Riding School and is 20m x 20m.
9. The School has 30 acres of grazing split over five fields, each with wooden perimeter fencing and gates.

10. Members were made aware that the field below is separate to the fields, and benefits from an assortment of approximately 20 gates and jump poles.

11. The School has a total of 40 stables; two were built with the School; 17 were built in 2007, and a further 21 were built in 2011.
12. The School also contains a feed room which measures 3m x 3m.

13. The tack room contains the equipment required for horse riding. This includes approximately 40 saddles, and a similar number of bridles, bits, pairs of stirrups, outdoor rugs, sweat rugs and indoor rugs.

14. The toilets and changing area are 6m x 3m and are leased. The site also contains an accessible toilet which is accessed via a concrete ramp with handrail.

15. The table below gives a breakdown of the pricing structure at Cardiff Riding School. A full price comparison matrix with other riding schools can be seen in the Income section of this report.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>½ hour group weekend</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>½ hour private weekend</td>
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16. Historical financial figures for Cardiff Riding School can be seen in the Savings section of this report.
The Benefits of Horse Riding

17. Members were provided with a range of academic research highlighting a number of different benefits of horse riding. These include physical benefits, mental/emotional benefits of horse ownership, social benefits, stress reduction, mood improvement and the positive impacts horses have on young people. Some of these benefits are listed below.

Physical Benefits

18. According to Waite (2009), equine activities may encourage physical activity for people of varying abilities. For example, simply walking out to a barn, grooming a horse, lifting a saddle and riding may provide more physical activity than many people typically undertake, especially in our era of computers, television and more sedentary lifestyles.

19. Research undertaken by the British Horse Society (BHS) in 2011 concurs with Waite (2009), suggesting that horse riding and activities associated with horse riding (such as ‘mucking out’), expend sufficient energy to be classed as moderate intensity exercise. Horse riding has also been shown to be of benefit to disabled riders who may have the chance to safely perform physical activities with the horse as a tool (Waite 2009).

20. Research has also shown that horse riding is instrumental in encouraging exercise in female participants. The BHS report (2011) highlights how the vast majority (90 percent plus) of horse riders are female and more than a third (37 percent) of the female riders who took part in the survey were above 45 years of age. Horse riding is especially well placed to play a valuable role in initiatives to encourage increased physical activity amongst women of all ages.
Mood Improvement

21. As Waite (2009) points out, most parents of teenage girls recognise that interaction with a horse will often improve the mood of their daughter. While research investigating the interaction between horses and mood improvement is ongoing at Michigan State University, early indicators are that there is in fact an improvement in Mood Inventory Scores of teenage girls after 15 minutes of quiet interaction with a horse. The BHS report findings concur with Waite (2009) stating how horse riders are strongly motivated to take part in riding by the sense of well-being they gain from interacting with horses. This important positive psychological interaction with an animal occurs in very few sports.

Mental and Emotional Benefits of Horse Ownership

22. Waite (2009) has shown that most people involved with horses are instinctively aware that it provides social benefits that horses provide an outlet for stress reduction, mood improvement, and that equine activities may provide a type of therapy much different from traditional methods.

23. The BHS (2011) have highlighted that horse riders with a long-standing illness or physical impairment who took part in the British Horse Society’s survey are able to undertake horse riding and associated activities at the same self-reported level of frequency and physical intensity as those without such an illness or impairment.

24. According to Muller (2010), horse riding is generally perceived as a healthy activity for improving body awareness, strength and coordination. Furthermore the experience of nature and animal contributes to the mental health of the rider. More than many other leisure activities, this holistic approach corresponds with the World Health Organisation’s definition of health: (“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”)
Social Benefits of Horse Riding

25. As Waite (2009) has pointed out, for people living alone, simply interacting with another living thing provides a tremendous motivator and social benefit. Often, as people get involved with equine activities, they gravitate toward people with similar interests. Muller (2010) concurs with this suggesting that horse riding is an activity which can be practised life-long. Therefore the age pyramid of riders shows a disproportionate progress especially in the age groups above 50 years. Riders usually keep their horses and ride them at stables. This is a community asset and offers a place for socialising with others.

26. Members heard from Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group that horse riding appeals to people from a wide-range of income levels. The graph below produced by Sport England gives a clear indication of participation in horse riding by household income level.

Stress Reduction

27. Waite (2009) highlights how recent studies utilising dogs and dolphins have shown that even limited interaction with the animals may provide a decrease in blood pressure and in the hormones associated with stress reactions. Having an outlet to manage day-to-day stress can only be beneficial and for many, and horses provide that outlet. Physical exercise is a scientifically recognised mediator of stress and it is clear that equine activities may provide exercise, again highlighting the potential for equine activities to reduce stress.
The Impact of Horses in Developing the Skills of Young People

28. Waite (2009) has shown that recent (2005-2006) surveys conducted by both the American Youth Horse Council (AYHC) and Penn State University have found that equine activities develop life skills such as decision making, communicating, problem solving, goal setting and empathy. In the AYHC Study, a significant positive relationship was found between total horsemanship skills development and life skills development.

29. Similarly Muller (2010) has indicated that increasing evidence within the younger generation of poor motor function, personality development and social competence have caused further consideration of riding as an effective educational activity in schools, and therefore it has become an integral part of school curricula in many countries. (Quick S, Dalziel D, Thornton A, and Simon A. (2009). PE and Sport Survey 2008/09).

30. Muller (2010) concludes with stating how a teenager, whether in sport or leisure riding, who has responsibility for a living animal weighing 600kg requires knowledge and skills, but also has to have an awareness of responsibility for life and health of another living being.

31. Members heard that horse riding improves social skills, good co-ordination and balance skills, confidence, responsibility towards others, reduced stress levels and the chance to develop a skill that may lead to a career – even more so following on from the Olympic legacy.
32. Following on from the publication of Cardiff Council’s 2013/14 draft budget proposals and a press release from the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee, the potential closure of Cardiff Riding School attracted significant interest from members of the public, service users and action groups interested in keeping Cardiff Riding School open.

33. The Inquiry team undertook secondary analysis of three public response papers relating to Cardiff Riding School. The team was referred to a paper containing a sample of 100 users’ views provided by some of the 7000 signatories to the Cardiff Riding School Action Group’s petitions. The breadth and depth of support for the School was highlighted, as was the significant positive impact of participation.

34. The Inquiry was witness to 24 emails regarding Cardiff Riding School which had been sent in to the Council’s ‘Scrutiny Viewpoints’ inbox. The Inquiry also accessed the comments received regarding Cardiff Riding School from the budget consultation process.

35. A selection of comments submitted to the Scrutiny Viewpoints email inbox regarding Cardiff Riding School can be seen below:

36. “Being a regular user of the riding school - having attended lessons there for the past 20 years - I am writing to urge the Council to explore fully all the options to ensure that the Cardiff Riding School stays in public ownership.”

37. “One of the most important functions of the school is that it makes equestrianism accessible and inclusive for a large number of people who due to distance, time, monetary and other constraints would otherwise not have the opportunity to come into contact with this activity and all the benefits it has to offer.”

38. “The school is a valuable asset to our community and really is unique. I learned to ride there for many years and have had some of the best times of my life there.”
39. “CRS teaches work ethic to those disempowered by their circumstances, it teaches respect (and self respect) to those who have never had the loving environment in which to learn it and it provides an environment where children and young people are able to grow up away from the negative images shown them by the media.”

40. “As a Cardiff resident whose family have used Cardiff Riding School for many years, I am shocked to learn of the Council’s proposal to dispose of this unique and important Council facility. My youngest daughter current attends the School and it has benefited her immensely giving her confidence in general as well as skill as a rider.”

41. “The quality of teaching and training of the majority of the horses and ponies at the school is second to none in South Wales.”

**Strategic Issues**

42. Members heard that Cardiff Riding School contributes to several policy areas of Cardiff Council. The Cardiff *What Matters* document aims to deliver seven key strategic outcomes, of which Cardiff Riding School contributes to ensure that *People in Cardiff are healthy, Cardiff is a great place to live, work and play and Cardiff is a fair, just and inclusive society.*

43. Members were briefed on the fact that Cardiff Riding School sits within the Leisure and Play service of Cardiff Council, within its Communities Directorate. The Leisure and Play service oversee the running and development of seven leisure centres, and 4 sporting facilities. Members were also informed that there are also seven play centres across the city in addition to two Spice Playcare locations.

44. The group were informed by staff of Cardiff Riding School that there is a fear that if the School does get taken over, the services they currently offer will no longer be available. It was also noted that Cardiff Riding School does not feature in the Communities Directorate’s Business Plan 2012/13.
45. From an educational perspective, the Inquiry heard from a member of staff who has obtained qualifications from the British Horse Society with the support from Cardiff Riding School.

46. Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group opened with the statement that the Council should support riding as part of its sports and leisure service, noting the importance of horse riding as a participatory sport, being the eighth most popular overall, and the fifth most popular for women. Nationally 88% of riders are female and at CRS the figure is nearly 95%. Despite this, Members heard that the equality impact assessment undertaken by the service area as part of the budget proposals incorrectly reported that closing CRS would have no differential impact on female users.

47. The Action Group noted that the Council has developed a number of important strategies relating to sport, health, and the marketing and development of leisure centres – none of which included Cardiff Riding School. These included:
   - Physical Activity Strategy (with key target of females)
   - National Exercise Referral Scheme (400 monthly from all leisure centres)
   - Road to Rio Olympic Legacy Programme
   - Sales and marketing

48. The Inquiry team were made aware of alternative provisions for disabled riders within the South Wales region. These included:
   a. Cardiff: Briwnant: 4.2 miles, not BHS (British Horse Society), no RDA (Riding for the Disabled Association)
      • Downs Side Riding School, 5.5 miles, not BHS, unsure of RDA
      • Springfield Riding School, 8.5 miles, BHS approved, no RDA lessons
      • Liege Manor: 10 miles, BHS approved, RDA
      • Tal y garn, 14 miles, BHS approved, no RDA lessons
      • Caerphilly Riding School, 10 miles, BHS approved, no RDA lessons
      • Rockwood Riding Centre, 10 miles, BHS approved, no RDA lessons.
49. Members heard that Cardiff County Council is interested in hearing from those individuals, groups or organisations interested in taking the responsibility for managing the Riding School to ensure continued public access and the protection of the Riding School’s environment, heritage and educational value.

50. Members heard that currently the service area is exploring expressions of interest with regards to the future of Cardiff Riding School. It was highlighted to Members that the expressions of interest process in no way determined the future of the Riding School, and that the Council is in no way bound to accept any of the expressions of interest.

51. Members heard from Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group that the Commercial Model intends to produce a profit for its proprietor. The risks were seen to be that it would be unwilling or unable to comply with Council strategies and policies (e.g. on accessibility, cost structure and equalities). It is also likely to request a capital injection from the Council to cover the cumulative maintenance costs of £310k. If this is not covered, the Inquiry argued that a commercial operator may not be able to make sufficient profit from riding, and may either fail or wish to diversify income in unacceptable directions. It may be unable to meet TUPE (transfer of undertakings protection of employment) commitments without assistance.

52. Members heard from the Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group about the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Model, comprising a community based not-for-profit company or trust. Members heard the risks are similar to the Commercial Model (other than the generation of profit) but also that there is no existing user group wishing to take on the transfer. An extract from a paper “managing risks” by the Local Government Organisation was shown, in which it was thought likely that
significant input of monies from the Council was necessary at the outset and periodically afterwards.

53. Members were informed by the Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group that the **Council Owned and Operated Model** was described as not being a “do nothing” option, and could be financially sound with improved local and senior management, integration into Council strategies, greater use of work-based diplomas from Coleg Gwent and from Cardiff and The Vale College, improved efficiencies and pricing sensitive to both market and social inclusion. It accepted that risks included the potential of failure of staff to implement the financial plan, lack of local leadership, and lack of senior management involvement and initiative.

54. Finally, Members of the task group understood that “**Council Ownership-Plus**” where the Council owns and operates the School and employs the staff as at present (although with the improvements outlined in the previous model) but in addition a separate Friends Group, which is not involved in providing the service, is able to raise revenue and access capital funding from external sources (including Big Lottery, sponsorship, Community Chest grants etc). It suggested that the risk of “council inattention” outlined in the previous model would be mitigated by the existence of the Friends Group.

55. Members were briefed that in particular the Action Group stressed that the Council’s policy is not to transfer CRS to a third party, but to review operating models in the coming year. Despite this, the Council appears to be seeking a third party to operate CRS. The Action Group referred to two letters attached to the above paper, and referred to a passage in a letter from Cllr Huw Thomas dated 19th February 2013 that “… work is already underway on plans to secure a third party to operate (CRS)”.

56. The task group were informed that the staff at Cardiff Riding School cannot be financially liable for the School, and that the Friends Group want to work under the umbrella of Cardiff Council.
57. The Action Group commended the approach set out in the Inquiry’s press release. It suggested that the starting point must be to consider the Council’s policies and strategies as a first consideration, and measure each model against the ability to achieve these, and then consider the risks and financial viability of each model.

58. The Inquiry heard that as part of the procurement / expressions of interest process, post receipt of tenders and detailed information (business plans, monetary consideration, services to be retained and new ones envisaged etc) the Council’s CAT Board will meet to evaluate all bids using a pre-defined scoring matrix. This will provide consistency of approach and transparency in selecting a preferred bidder.

59. Members of the Inquiry were informed that some enquiries are made out of simple curiosity and that the Council needs to eliminate ‘time wasters’ at the earliest opportunity to concentrate resources delivering a credible outcome. Time wasters are defined as parties who have no constitution and no means or money to maintain the physical asset, and deliver a credible service. These parties will be identified through evaluation of the initial Expressions of Interest Questionnaire.
Operating Models

60. Members were briefed on a number of different operating model examples, of which two specific examples are owned by local authorities in Liverpool and Birmingham.

Local Authority Models – Liverpool and Birmingham

61. Members heard that the school in Liverpool is much smaller than Cardiff Riding School, and is principally geared for the needs of disabled riders. It has a much larger revenue subsidy than Cardiff Riding School, but there is a charitable Friends’ Group which has raised significant capital funds from charitable and commercial donors.

62. Members were highlighted to the fact that Birmingham has until recently been a trekking centre in the Council owned country park, but has recently had a capital injection of £250,000 from the Council for indoor facilities following a land transaction with a supermarket chain. The manager is employed by the Council, which owns the land and buildings, but not the horses.

Hole Farm Trekking Centre

63. Members heard that Hole Farm Trekking Centre is owned by Birmingham City Council and is BHS Approved.

64. The Farm is run by a qualified manager who is paid a salary by the Council and she covers the cost of electricity, rates and all horse related expenses.

65. Members heard that the Local Authority have decided to lease the centre to the manager in the near future. The owner will become self employed and is currently preparing a business plan. She will then be able to allocate her own lesson price structure and hold events/BHS Exams to generate further income.
**Mudchute Equestrian Centre**

66. Members heard that the centre is located within Mudchute Park and Farm near the Isle of Dogs and established by the local community and is BHS approved.

67. Members were informed that finances are raised by membership fees which vary from £2 to £20 per month, and fundraising via events / venue hire / family parties / training workshops / conference hire, local business support and grants. There is a restaurant on site which also generates income and lessons for local children are subsidised by the adults who learn to ride there. Lesson prices are cheaper than other schools in London.

**Lee Valley Riding Centre**

68. Members heard that the centre looks after 60 horses and is run by Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (East London) whose remit is to develop and preserve leisure, recreation, sport and nature throughout the Regional Park.

69. The group heard that a livery has been established to generate regular income because of a lack of clients and rising costs.

70. Lee Valley is managed by a professional who came from a private commercial centre and is BHS Approved. There was a threat of closure 12 years ago and this manager was employed shortly after and a five year business plan was drawn up via an equestrian consultant. The centre was turned around in under three years.

71. Members heard that turnover was £350k per annum until the now current manager took over but now it is over £800k and 30 people are currently employed.

72. The group heard that often the most affluent people in city centre locations have horses which they rely on for livery provision, drawing on an example in Milan city centre. This could be an option for Cardiff Riding School, as it generates regular income, the Inquiry was informed.
Beechley Stables, Liverpool

73. The group was informed that Beechley Stables is owned by Liverpool City Council. It is manager run and BHS approved and lies within half a mile of the city.

74. Members heard that the stables were threatened with closure several years ago but a petition collected over 10,000 signatures and horse riding continued as part of Liverpool City Council activities commitment within its Lifestyle Programme.

75. The Inquiry heard that the Stables were formerly Liverpool Mounted Police stables.

76. The Inquiry heard that the Friends Group work very closely with Liverpool City Council.

77. The group heard that the Friends of Beechley Stables Group work constantly with the local authority and in some instances provide up to 50% of funding required for improvements. As many disabled riders come to ride there, the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) have also contributed in the past.

78. Members were informed that Holiday Pony days take place during school holidays – this was also the case with other riding schools and is a common feature. It was generally regarded as a good source of revenue whilst allowing a child the feeling of owning a pony for the day.

79. Finally, Members were informed that revenue also comes from hire of facilities and the café on site.

Vauxhall City Farm Riding Centre

80. Members heard that Vauxhall City Farm Riding Centre is a registered charity (membership based) that also relies on donations and volunteer support. It is BHS approved. The group heard that the manager is employed by the charity that also run an offer scheme – buy 10 lessons and get the eleventh free.
Radway Riding School

81. The group heard that Radway Riding School is a commercial establishment owned by the proprietor who lives on site and it is also BHS approved.

82. The proprietor has implemented special offers and also offers prospective new clients a guided tour of the facilities followed by a coffee. One such offer is a taster session of £15 for 10 minutes.

Byker Riding School, Newcastle

83. The group was informed that Byker Riding School utilises local businesses by seeking their sponsorship for horses. Members heard that the school operates at almost entirely a profit and it is award winning.

Liege Manor Equestrian Centre and Riding School, Vale of Glamorgan

84. Members heard that Liege Manor Equestrian Centre has been established for 20 years and it is run as a commercial model. The centre is Wales' premier equestrian centre with approvals and accreditations from the BHS and ABRS. Members also heard that the Centre is home to over 60 horses and ponies, the majority of them living within the state of the art stable complex.

85. Liege Manor Equestrian Centre specialises in tuition for all ages and abilities. Lessons take place in the indoor arena, outdoor arena or show-jumping paddock. All of the instructors are qualified with the BHS and all of the horses and ponies used are schoolmasters with many years' experience.

86. In addition to this, Members heard that Liege Manor offers a five star livery service for full and working liveries and a loan scheme for people who wish to have the experience of owning without having to make the financial commitment.

87. Liege Manor is Wales' largest Pony Club Centre. The Events Committee holds regular shows for livery owners and clients.
88. Members also heard that Liege Manor has featured in *The Times* as one of the eight top riding schools in the U.K. It is the only riding school in Wales to gain acknowledgement.

89. The centre is endorsed and approved by the BHS, ABRS, RDA and the Wales Tourist Board.

90. Members were informed that it is a condition of employment at Liege Manor that all instructors and students continue to train and / or compete to continually broaden their knowledge and expertise.

**Social Enterprises**

**Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy**

91. Members heard that the Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy's mission is to enable horse-motivated students with learning disabilities to relate more successfully to others and to have greater and more appropriate control over their own lives. This use of horses, to enable young people to learn and develop, is the core of the Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy (FCRT).

92. Members were informed that the FCRT works with young people’s motivation for horses, to harness the motivation to enable co-operation, communication and concentration.

93. Members heard that the centre provides a residential Further Education through Horsemastership (FETH) Course which enables people who cannot progress at school and whose educational needs cannot be met in ordinary colleges, to benefit from further education. Literacy, numeracy, communication, independent travel, money management and social skills are all taught and learnt in a horse environment, using the horses’ inclusiveness, warmth, smell, movement, routine and needs.
Members were informed that work experience placements and strong links with the local community provide opportunities for students to use new skills to progress to meaningful occupation and independence that would otherwise not be possible.

**Equine Learning**

Members of the task group heard that Equine Learning is a community interest company and licensed riding establishment that operates a small, friendly and inclusive equestrian centre in south Warwickshire.

The horses and ponies at the centre are well trained and cater for various levels of horsemanship. Members heard that the centre also offers a range of equine learning and horsemanship programmes in addition to horse riding, and they also work alongside a registered charity, The Centaurus, to offer access to horses for disabled and disadvantaged children, young people and adults.

Members heard that at Equine Learning CIC they operate an inclusive equestrian centre where therapeutic and mainstream activities run side by side.

Finally members heard that the Equine Learning Company offer an accredited certificate and diploma in equine skills. The course is available to 14 to 19 year olds and will operate at the stables on a day release basis.

**LEAP**

Members heard that LEAP’s purpose is to provide safe and healing Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) and Equine Facilitated Learning (EFL) programmes, for a variety of individuals. The team includes an EAP Counsellor, EFL Equine Specialist and the centre’s horses.

Members were informed that the clients seen by LEAP can find it hard to engage and be motivated. Their negative survival patterns can occur, rather than appear vulnerable. For the horses to respond positively and a relationship to develop LEAP’s clients need to start developing their authentic self.
101. It was noted that the focus of all Equine-assisted Therapies is not riding or horsemanship. In fact 95% takes place on the ground. The focus involves setting up activities involving the horses which will require the client or group to apply certain skills. Non-verbal communication, assertiveness, creative thinking and problem-solving, leadership, work, taking responsibility, teamwork and relationships, confidence and attitude, are several examples.

102. The Inquiry heard evidence of the benefits of Equine Assisted therapy and Learning for over 700 clients with issues ranging over the entire mental health spectrum.

**Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship**

103. Members of the task group were informed that Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship in South Devon, UK provides young people and adults with the opportunity to participate in educational and therapeutic activities with horses in the natural environment.

104. Members heard that Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship registered as a community interest company, limited by guarantee in April 2008. The creation of Sirona aimed to allow the project to expand its reach and work alongside different individuals and groups, of all ages and needs, in a range of therapeutic and learning activities.

105. The evidence received highlighted that Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship takes a holistic approach to working with people and horses and provides a non-judgemental learning environment that enables people to:

   • Explore and learn more about themselves through engaging with horses in activities centred on horse behaviour and management, employing a ‘natural horsemanship’ approach; and
• Develop an interest in the natural environment and engage in physical exercise in order to experience mental and physical health benefits, whilst having fun.

Management Arrangements

106. Members were briefed on the fact that Cardiff Riding School sits within the Leisure and Play Service of Cardiff Council. The Leisure and Play Service oversee the running and development of seven leisure centres and 4 sports facilities. Members were also informed that there are also seven play centres across the city in addition to two Spice Playcare locations.

107. In terms of management, it was highlighted to Members of the task group that Cardiff Riding School employs 10 full time equivalent staff who report to the manager of Maindy Leisure Centre. Members heard that the recently appointed manager of Maindy Leisure Centre reports to the Operational Manager of Leisure and Play who in turn reports to a Head of Service for Community Facilities.

108. Cardiff Riding School staff informed Members that they had not realised Cardiff Riding School had been losing money, and that up until six months ago they were not aware of the financial situation.

109. Cardiff Riding School staff disseminated a draft Business Plan to Members of the Inquiry on proposed changes to the day-to-day running of the school which could bring potential savings. It was noted that the draft had yet to be appraised by senior management who were not fully aware of its content.

110. The Inquiry was informed that staff of Cardiff Riding School have felt isolated from the service area at times. They have, however, also felt they have been complacent and not necessarily asked for help or support. It was also noted that communication between staff and the service could be improved to highlight the positives which have taken place at the Riding School.
111. The group heard that management and staff at Cardiff Riding School have not been managerially trained, and that staff have largely been employed due to their operational expertise with regards to horses. Staff also informed the group that they definitely want to sit under the Council’s umbrella as they feel proud to work for Cardiff Council. However, there is a need for more managerial support through training and the management of finances.

112. The group heard that staff costs have been over budget for at least the last four years, exacerbated most recently by changes to the working regulations for ‘casual’ staff and the outcomes of Job Evaluation/Single Status.

113. The graph below, produced by Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group, shows the breakdown of costings to Cardiff Riding School

(source: Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group)

114. The service area are developing their commercial acumen, drawing on the example of the Active Card, which has improved leisure centre visitor numbers and participants in physical activity.

115. The presentation by Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group showed Members that in 2011/12 the subsidy to Cardiff Riding School represented 0.5% of its
expenditure, compared with 51.5% in relation to leisure centres as a whole. In 2012/13 Cardiff Riding School is likely to account for 0.9% of the council’s leisure centre budget. The graph below gives an indication of the subsidy Cardiff Riding School receives compared to Leisure Centre subsidy.

116. The group was informed that Cardiff Council spends an average of £50,000 a year from capital/asset renewal on the maintenance of Cardiff Riding School.

117. Members noted that Cardiff Riding School has access to Leisure’s pool of technicians for electrical and other technical works, but it lacks having a ‘handyman’ who can provide low level day to day support. It is accepted that the land at Cardiff Riding School could be better maintained. Improving the condition of the land is not included within the £300,000 identified for capital investment.

![Graph showing the subsidy Cardiff Riding School receives compared to Leisure Centre subsidy.](source: Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group)

118. The Council’s estimate of capital funding needs amounting to £310,000 is a total cost which can be phased, and is not an annual sum. Works needed include a new roof for the indoor manège.

119. Members heard that Ragwort is hindering the use of the fields to their full extent. They also heard that Ragwort is a common wild flower that is widely
distributed as a weed which is poisonous to horses as it damages their liver when eaten. Ragwort is a problem for the fields at Cardiff Riding School as it means the staff have to pull it up by hand as it is unlawful to leave it.

### Potential Savings

120. In discussing the potential savings identified, Members were informed of the structural issues that Cardiff Riding School faced, primarily related to the number of horses and personnel issues.

121. The Inquiry team were informed by the British Horse Society about their guidelines for the keeping of horses, stable sizes, pasture acreages and fencing. It was noted that their guidelines were that the average pasture will maintain approximately two horses per hectare as permanent grazing (1-1.5 acres per individual), provided that it was good pasture. This was considered a minimum acreage requirement for the average horse, but there are numerous variables that must also be taken into consideration. The acreage required per horse or pony will depend, to a large extent, on the type of and general management of the animal and also on the grazing quality and pasture management capabilities of the keeper. Possible stock densities may increase with a larger acreage: for example, 10 acres could support more than 10 horses (provided the acreage is sub-divided, and effective management and husbandry is employed). Expert advice highlighted that the number of horses at Cardiff riding school was high. The Inquiry Members were also informed that the number of horses does not directly equate to money income. For instance, there are currently four new horses at Liege Manor which are not being used but instead phased in to be brought up to speed whilst older horses are retired.

122. The group heard that Cardiff Riding School has 10 full time equivalent staff. It was noted that Liege Manor has more horses (65 compared with 50) and fewer staff (10 FTE compared with 6 FTE). The team at Cardiff Riding School however feel the Centre is understaffed.
123. The group were informed that there are 10 staff at Liege Manor and this equates to six full time equivalents. There are also volunteer children during the school holidays whilst the Inquiry was also informed that 30 children from all over south Wales were attending a class later that morning.

124. The group heard that whilst Cardiff Riding School is trialling new, cheaper feed the budget that they currently have for feed is not large enough for them to overspend.

125. Looking at cost saving elements, the Inquiry found that, giving the example of hay, it is not as simple as buying from the cheapest source. It needs to be of good quality and a guaranteed year-round supply. The Inquiry also heard that it is not as simple as looking for the cheapest supplier as the Council is governed by its procurement process.

126. The cost of horse feed and blacksmith services have increased above the rate of inflation whilst vet fees can fluctuate which makes financial projections difficult to estimate.

127. Staff of Cardiff Riding School had put together a Business Plan of proposed changes to the day-to-day running of the School, which includes potential savings and this was the first time that there was opportunity for it to be presented to the group.

128. Members saw that in the draft business plan produced by staff, staff identified a number of potential savings. These include a change in bedding (bringing in a reduction of £2,575.16), reduce hay usage (bringing in a reduction of £2,310.12) and reduced costs of the sale of four unsuitable horses (which has potential to save £6,149.52).

129. Members were aware that, in their draft business plan, staff identified that a change in feed brand, which is being implemented from April 1st will bring in a total saving of £1,040 a year.
130. Members’ attention was drawn to the financial information with regard to Cardiff Riding School as seen below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Costs/income</td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Costs/income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>22636</td>
<td>259203</td>
<td>22632</td>
<td>255215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premises</td>
<td>25980</td>
<td>33624</td>
<td>21507</td>
<td>20090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport related</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies &amp; services</td>
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<td>69654</td>
<td>79221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services (controllable)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services (uncontrollable)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4420</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross expenditure</td>
<td>32345</td>
<td>374782</td>
<td>31823</td>
<td>355508</td>
</tr>
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<td>Internal Income &amp; Recharges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-879</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-4479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net expenditure</td>
<td>32345</td>
<td>373903</td>
<td>31823</td>
<td>351029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External income</td>
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<td>-325159</td>
<td>-32291</td>
<td>-337737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>48744</td>
<td>-4672</td>
<td>13293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Leisure and Play Service Area)
131. Members were informed that it is recognised that liveries bring increased revenue to riding schools. Liveries are a stable where horse owners pay a weekly or monthly fee to keep their horses. Members of the public can then use a horse which is part of the livery a set number of times per week which entitles the owner to a discount on the stable fee.

132. Currently there is one working livery at Cardiff Riding School and that the School would like more to increase their revenue. However, this is not necessarily a popular option as people do not like loaning out their own horse.

133. Members were highlighted to the fact that liveries would bring in more income. Members were informed that full livery costings can range from £100 - £150 per week. Full liveries include a stable for the horse as well as bedding, hay and feed provided. Staff would then be responsible for all the care of the horse including mucking out and feeding the horse on a daily basis. Cardiff Riding School staff, in their business plan, have identified that an extra 3 working liveries would generate £3858.40 in additional income per annum.

134. The group briefly explored the idea of stabling South Wales Police horses at Cardiff Riding School.

135. The Inquiry team asked what they felt would help with finances at the Riding School. Staff gave a number of options including increasing lessons by £1, offer different services (for example college courses were being explored and negotiations are currently ongoing which could have the potential to draw in revenue of £20,000), more equipment to hire out, and outdoor space needs to be more useable. Members were also informed that all pricing has gone up on a blanket 6% increase, although the Inquiry was informed that pricing should have been looked at on an individual basis. For example, Members were drawn to the draft business plan produced by the staff at Cardiff Riding School which included
potential for increased prices on Pony Club rides, disabled lessons and themed lessons.

136. The table below gives a comparison of Cardiff Riding School lesson prices with other riding schools. As is evident from the data, the prices are largely comparable but there is scope to increase prices to bring the cost further in line with some of the private riding schools. For instance, Cardiff Riding School charge £11.60 for half hour group lessons whilst Liege Manor charges £14.00. However, looking at one hour group lessons, Cardiff Riding School charge more than Liege Manor; £20.70 compared to £19.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson type</th>
<th>Cardiff Riding School</th>
<th>Briwnant Manor</th>
<th>Liege Manor</th>
<th>Tal y Garn</th>
<th>Hole Farm</th>
<th>Mudchute Equestrian Centre</th>
<th>Beechley Stables</th>
<th>Vauxhall City Farm</th>
<th>Radway Riding School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ hour group</td>
<td>£11.60</td>
<td>£12.00</td>
<td>£14.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£10</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ group weekend</td>
<td>£13.80</td>
<td>£13.00</td>
<td>£14.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour group</td>
<td>£18.60</td>
<td>£17.00</td>
<td>£19.00</td>
<td>£17.00</td>
<td>£16</td>
<td>£30</td>
<td>£20</td>
<td>£30 (45 minutes)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour group weekend</td>
<td>£20.70</td>
<td>£18.00</td>
<td>£19.00</td>
<td>£17.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour private</td>
<td>£37.60</td>
<td>£31.00</td>
<td>£55.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour private weekend</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£33.00</td>
<td>£57.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¾ private</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£42.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>¾ hour private weekend</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£45.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ hour private</td>
<td>£25.10</td>
<td>£21.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£20</td>
<td>£30</td>
<td>£40</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ hour private</td>
<td>£25.10</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
137. The presentation from the Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group gave a number of examples of equestrian development opportunities (such as a new outdoor school surface and a second, half size indoor school particularly aimed at beginners and disabled riders group), which could substantially increase the income of the School and possible sources of funding for these. An important source is the People and Places Fund which could provide funding for the whole development.

138. It was noted to Members by the BHS that Cardiff Riding School needs to do more in terms of bringing in revenue; examples were given such as barbeques and open days in the summer.

139. The Inquiry heard that an inter-school dressage competition at Cardiff Riding School raised enough capital to pay for a harrow. Members heard that the harrow is used for breaking up and smoothing out the surface of soil.

140. The group heard that every employee needs to focus on customer service. An example was given in respect of potential customers walking past. Should they only have a certain amount of money on them, could they offer to do a shorter lesson, for example £15 for 45 minutes.

141. It was noted to Members that the more successful riding schools have more business sense. Lee Valley for instance is immaculate, well presented and professional. Despite considerable investment Cardiff Riding School still gives a poor first impression which could be vastly improved.

142. It was explained to the group that Cardiff Council has, not including full scale refurbishments, invested more money into Cardiff Riding School over the last six years compared to any other leisure facility. For example, the service area quoted that during the time period Cardiff Riding School has had £282,000 spent on it in comparison with Maindy Leisure Centre (£263,000), Pentwyn Leisure Centre
(£128,000) and Llanishen Leisure Centre (£251,000) which all attract in excess of 400,000 users. The Riding School attracts approximately 35,000 users per year.

143. Members heard that income at Cardiff Riding School is not a problem and the Riding School has achieved income levels well over budget, however it does still require a subsidy. This is due to, Members were informed, increased overheads such as staffing and materials.

144. Members heard from Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group who produced the chart below to indicate the varying income sources of Cardiff Riding School.

145. The Inquiry team asked what staff felt would help with finances at the Riding School. Staff gave a number of options including increasing lessons by £1, offer different services (for example college courses were being explored and negotiations are currently ongoing which could have the potential to draw in revenue of £20,000), more equipment to hire out and outdoor space needs to be more usable.

(Source: Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group)

146. The group heard that Cardiff Riding School costs are higher, particularly in terms of staffing and that livery costs are different.
147. Members heard that Vauxhall City Farm Riding Centre run a scheme where service users can buy 10 lessons and get the eleventh free. Members also heard that Radway Riding School offer a taster session for 10 minutes which costs £15.

148. Members were informed through the staff business plan that worked based diplomas through Coleg Gwent can bring in potential revenue of £800 per student whilst the cost to Cardiff Riding School will come at no additional cost as the wages will be paid directly by the College. This is currently being explored and negotiations are underway.

149. Members of the Inquiry had their attention drawn to the business plan produced by staff at Cardiff Riding School. It highlights how having six competitions per season can have potential revenue of £900 per year.

**Advertisement and Marketing**

150. Members heard that marketing and advertisement is a crucial aspect of improving and maintaining any business, particularly with the advent of social media in recent years.

151. The Members observed that there is very little in terms of signage leading up to the Riding School. Members were reminded however that due to the Riding School's park location there are considerable restrictions on signage.

152. The Inquiry were made aware that there are no leaflets and little information around to promote Cardiff Riding School, and that a sign directing people to the School was not pursued a few years previously.

153. Members heard that the scope for marketing across the Leisure Services budget is small because of a lack of funding.
154. The group was informed that the prices for lessons at Cardiff Riding School featured on the Cardiff Council website are out of date.

155. Members of the group were made aware of the business plan produced by Cardiff Riding School staff, which recognises the need for increased advertising and marketing.
Inquiry Methodology

156. The Economy & Scrutiny Committee applies a project management approach to its inquiries including mechanisms to consistently prioritise topics suggested for scrutiny, scoping reports and project plans. The aim of these is to ensure there is a dialogue with the service areas involved in the scrutiny process with the ultimate aim of improving overall service delivery and enabling effective scrutiny.

157. A press release was circulated which called for members of the public who use the School to provide their views (and in particular their thoughts on the way it is run, the facilities and the options for the future) to the Scrutiny email inbox. The press release explained how it is important for Councillors to be fully aware of the options available for the Riding School and to examine the different models of practice that exist.

158. Over the course of the Inquiry, Members heard from the following witnesses:

**Internal**

Gloria Garrington, Assistant Manager, Cardiff Riding School  
Jane Gwillem, Cardiff Riding School Employee  
Malcolm Stammers, Operational Manager, Leisure and Play  
Graham Craven, Head of Service, Community Facilities  
Charles Coats, Corporate Property and Estates Manager

**External**

Sarah Bassett, owner of Liege Manor Equestrian Horse Riding School  
Bob Weatherley, British Horse Society, Riding Schools Inspector  
Jan Roche, British Horse Society, Development Officer  
Terri Delahunty, Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group  
Jim Wood, Save Cardiff Riding School Action Group  
Michelle, Volunteer at Cardiff Riding School
Financial Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications.

Legal Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without modification. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet / Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal power of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. standing orders and financial regulations; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.
Committee Terms of Reference

To scrutinise, measure and actively promote improvement in the Council's performance in the provision of services and compliance with Council policies, aims and objectives in the area of economic regeneration.

The Committee is responsible for looking at the following areas:

- Cardiff Business Partnership
- Cardiff & Co Marketing Initiative
- South East Wales Economic Forum
- Economic Strategy & Employment
- European Funding & Investment
- SME Support
- Cardiff Harbour Authority
- Lifelong Learning
- Leisure Centres
- Sports Development
- Parks & Green Spaces
- Libraries, Arts & Culture
- Civic Buildings
- Events & Tourism
- Strategic Projects
- Innovation & Technology Centres
- Local Training & Enterprise.

To assess the impact of external organisations including the National Assembly for Wales, Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and quasi-departmental non-governmental bodies on the effectiveness of Council service delivery.

To report to an appropriate Executive or Council meeting on its findings and to make recommendations on measures, which may enhance Council performance in this area.
Councillor Craig Williams
(Chairperson)

Councillor Dilwar Ali

Councillor Joe Boyle

Councillor Peter Bradbury

Councillor Phil Hawkins

Councillor Gareth Holden

Councillor Mohammad Javed

Councillor Georgina Phillips

Councillor Christopher Weaver