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## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee** ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time of Meeting** TUESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2023, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact [scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

12 **Correspondence following committee meeting**(Pages 3 - 10)

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My Ref: SharePoint/E&C Library/Correspondence/Dec23

Date: 13 December 2023

Councillor Burke  
Cabinet Member – Culture, Parks and Events  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
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### Public Letter

Dear Councillor Burke,

### **TREE PLANTING & COED CAERDYDD**

Our thanks to you, Jon Maidment and Chris Engel for attending committee to answer our questions about tree planting in Cardiff and progress with the Coed Caerdydd project. Members have asked that I pass on their following comments and observations.

Members note the Council has a core budget of £10,000 per annum for tree planting, supplemented by memorial trees, small grants, planning conditions and s106 agreements. Members note that, in order to work towards the Council's stated aim of increasing the tree canopy coverage of Cardiff to 25% by 2030, the Council has successfully bid for Welsh Government, Trees for Cities and Coed Cadw grant funding, which run until 2025/26.

Members heard that meeting the target will be challenging, given resource levels and competing land uses, and that there is a need to clarify the land available for tree planting, to be innovative in identifying tree planting opportunities, and to increase engagement with private landowners to identify available, suitable sites.

Members note your views that there has been remarkable progress in the past 2 years, which is testament to communities coming together for a shared cause. Members note the forthcoming programme of tree-planting events, working with communities, schools and businesses. Members note officers' views that there are opportunities to build on the community engagement to date and to develop an

employee volunteer programme. Members also note that work to date with Schools has emphasised how Coed Caerdydd complements the new Welsh Curriculum and offers opportunities to teachers to meet several requirements in one activity.

Members asked how officers deal with competing views amongst communities regarding where trees are planted and note that this issue does not often materialise, as sites are put forward by communities and members and have usually been discussed beforehand, and that officers leaflet nearby residences prior to planting, seeking their thoughts, suggestions and offering them the opportunity to become involved in the tree planting process, which enables them to suggest changes to ensure the best location is used.

Members were interested to hear that engaging with Coed Caerdydd can bring multiple benefits to participants, including tackling isolation and increasing community cohesion as well as increasing a sense of well-being, and note officers are keen to capture these qualitative benefits and are planning to investigate the most effective way for doing this. Members are aware that Scrutiny Services has a researcher who is skilled in identifying the best approach to take to capture qualitative data; we will request that she assist you to identify a suitable method, given the importance of ensuring the qualitative benefits of Coed Caerdydd are successfully captured.

Members were interested to understand the breakdown of where Coed Caerdydd plants trees. Notwithstanding the increased costs, Members believe it is important that the street scene of Cardiff benefit from Coed Caerdydd, particularly those streets that lack trees. Members were pleased to hear an Action Plan to address this has been developed and wish to thank officers for providing this after the meeting. Members note that work is underway with Highways and Transport colleagues, at the design stage of work, to identify how to include trees in proposed work, for example in build-outs and/or as replacements for bollards. Members also note plans to use portable, containerised trees in selected locations, and note there may be scope to use these in Central Square. At the meeting, Members asked whether there was a visual representation of where trees have been planted and are planned to be planted this season and note the response that this is available as a map. Members therefore **request** a copy of the latest version of this map be provided in the response to this letter.

Members were also concerned to understand how Coed Caerdydd works to minimise the risks posed by pests and diseases and were pleased to hear that officers source British seeds and have been reviewing supply chains to ensure strong biosecurity is in place.

Members wondered whether there is any current benchmarking data available to illustrate how Cardiff compares with other cities regarding the level of resource and funding available for tree planting. Members note this work is underway, with Cardiff leading on work with Core Cities to quantify this, with results due Spring 2024. Members **request** a copy of this data when available. Members note that there will be an I-Tree review in 2025/26, which will quantify progress and clarify whether more resource and funding are required. Members are sure that a future committee will want to scrutinise this further.

My thanks again to you and officers for attending Committee and answering our queries. It is pleasing to see the progress to date and the benefits the Coed Caerdydd project is bringing to communities and Members particularly thank Chris and Chloe for their work on this.

This letter contains requests for further information and so requires a response:

**Requests:**

- Members request a copy of the latest version of the map showing trees planted to date and proposed to be planted this season, to be provided in the response to this letter
- Members request a copy of the Core Cities benchmarking data when this is available late Spring 2024.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR PETER WONG  
CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee  
Group Leaders - Cllr Lancaster, Cllr Berman, Cllr Gibson  
Gavin McArthur – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee  
Jon Maidment Chris Engel Neil Hanratty  
Mel Jackson  
Chris Pyke Tim Gordon Jeremy Rhys

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My Ref: SharePoint/E&C Library/Correspondence/Dec23

Date: 13 December 2023

Councillor Michael  
Chair – Licensing Committee, Public Protection Committee &  
Member of SRS Joint Committee  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
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### Public Letter

Dear Councillor Michael,

### **SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES**

Our thanks to you, Helen Picton, Jason Bale, Christina Hill and Will Lane for attending committee to answer our questions about how Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) supports the local economy of Cardiff. Members have asked that I pass on their following comments and observations.

Members note SRS work proactively and reactively to ensure there is a fair, safe and equitable trading environment, providing advice, support and guidance to local businesses and taking action against rogue traders. Members were interested to learn about the scope of this work, covering food safety, health & safety, trading standards, neighbourhood services, and enterprise and specialist services. Members particularly note:

- SRS support business and major events, an area the Council wishes to grow, which will have a knock-on impact on SRS and use of resources
- The Cumulative Impact Policy for Cardiff City Centre is currently out for consultation, closing in January 2024; this policy helps shape Cardiff's Night Time Economy.

Members also note that the work of SRS is increasing with new legislative responsibilities, for example Special Procedures, Single Use Plastics and ensuring food businesses undertake waste collection in line with new Welsh Government requirements.

During the meeting, Members explored the impact of challenges facing SRS and note:

- Recruitment & Retention of Staff – Members were pleased to hear there has been some progress in this area, including staff returning to work for SRS. Members note the work undertaken to develop Regulatory Apprenticeships and that it is hoped these will become available in mid- late 2024.
- Single Use Plastics – Members were interested to hear that Wales introduced the Phase 1 requirements after Scotland and England, so many cross-border businesses had already prepared for this, reducing the impact on SRS. However, Members note there are Phase 2 requirements due in 2025, which businesses will need to prepare for, and SRS will need to regulate.

Members note that SRS has no assets and so budget savings can only be provided by either staffing reductions or by income generation. Members were interested to understand how SRS generates income and whether there were further opportunities for this and note:

- Cost Recovery – some services offered by SRS, such as Primary Authority partnerships, are covered by statute and SRS is therefore only able to recover costs, rather than generate income
- Training Courses – SRS offer courses to businesses to assist them to meet legal requirements. At the meeting, Members highlighted there is an opportunity for SRS to offer a training course for businesses on Phase 2 of the Single Use Plastics requirements, to help them meet legal compliance. Members note officers' agreement that this would be an opportunity to generate income.

Members were also interested in existing service provision, in particular SRS's work to tackle under-age sales. Members note that an intelligence led approach is taken to test purchase attempts, enabling SRS to focus their limited resource on businesses suspected of breaking the law. Members also note that test purchase attempts complement SRS's everyday work of liaising with businesses and explaining legal requirements to them.



Members highlighted that the work of SRS may identify areas requiring new regulation or clarification of existing regulation and note officers' responses that SRS contribute to Welsh Government consultations and working groups on developing policies, and also work collaboratively across teams, pooling their expertise and utilising their intelligence officers' analyses to ensure they take a problem-solving approach.

My thanks again to you and officers for attending Committee and answering our queries. It is clear that SRS provide a professional service of much value to the local economy of Cardiff and Members wish to pass on their thanks to all those working in SRS for their hard work and commitment to ensuring a safe environment for local communities.

This letter does not contain recommendations or requests for further information and so does not require a response, thanks.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR PETER WONG  
CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee  
Group Leaders - Cllr Lancaster, Cllr Berman, Cllr Gibson  
Gavin McArthur – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee  
Helen Picton Jason Bale Christina Hill Will Lane  
Cllr De'Ath Neil Hanratty  
Louise Mead  
Chris Pyke Tim Gordon Jeremy Rhys

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