
STATEMENT OF THE LEADER

Supporting Creative Industries in Cardiff

On 30th May, Channel 4 announced that Cardiff had been shortlisted as a possible location for the broadcaster's new national headquarters. Cardiff was one of seven cities or regions that were shortlisted, alongside Bristol, Glasgow, Greater Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and the West Midlands. Cardiff has also been shortlisted for one of two Creative Hubs. As part of the relocation proposals, Channel 4 has committed 300 jobs and to increasing commissioning spend across the nations and regions of the UK, which would have a significant impact on the independent creative sector in Cardiff and the wider region.

The city's submission to Channel 4 was excellent and a real team effort that benefited from the full support of Welsh Government and the Cardiff Capital Region. I was pleased to chair Cardiff's bid and experience first-hand the extraordinary talent and dedication of Cardiff's creative sector. The final decision will be made in October 2018 and I will continue to update Council on the bid's progress.

In addition to being included on the Channel 4 shortlist, it was announced last month that Cardiff will host next year's Creative Cities Convention after our successful pitch beat Bristol and Glasgow. The Creative Cities Convention – which is a joint collaboration between the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Pact (a trade body for independent TV producers) – acts as a meeting place for people working in creative media across the UK. Dates for the 2019 Convention will be announced in the Autumn.

As the Core Cities UK Cabinet Member with responsibility for culture, I also attended the second of three board meetings of the Cultural Cities Enquiry in Glasgow earlier this month, following the initial meeting that was held in London in April 2018. The Cultural Cities Enquiry brings together cities from across the nation, UK Arts Councils and leaders from the cultural, education, design and development, hospitality and technology sectors to consider how we can ensure that culture continues to improve and enrich the lives of cities and citizens in more ways and at a deeper level. The Enquiry's ambition is to provide a set of practical recommendations that will enable city leaders and cultural institutions to make best use of available resources and set up new channels of investment (of both human and financial capital) in order to unlock maximum social and economic value for communities. The Enquiry will also report its findings in the Autumn.

All of this is important for our city because our creative industries are a vital and growing sector within Cardiff. The relationship between arts and cultural clustering and the economic performance of cities is proven. Skilled workers often sacrifice higher salaries to live in places with a vibrant cultural scene. In turn, a vibrant cultural scene leads to higher wages for workers in the creative economy.

Volvo Ocean Race

Cardiff welcomed the 13th edition of the Volvo Ocean Race to Wales for 14 days from 28th May to 10th June 2018. In hosting the only UK race stopover in 12 years, in what is the world's longest sporting event, Cardiff has been able build on its reputation as a destination of choice for global sporting events. Seven boats arrived in the city following a 3,300 nautical mile transatlantic voyage from Newport, Rhode Island, with less than five minutes separating the first two boats across the finishing line.

The event enabled Cardiff to showcase the newly developed Alexandra Head, which for a two-week period was transformed into an impressive race village, hosting a free festival of live entertainment and music, water sports and cultural events. The event also saw the provision of a comprehensive volunteer programme, which drew participants from far and wide, with in excess of 8,000 volunteer hours achieved. Cardiff's hosting of the event attracted a wide and diverse audience of over 180,000 visitors, over 30,000 of which were from outside of Wales, and I anticipate the positive economic impact of the event being in the region of £12 million. The hosting of the Volvo Ocean Race also underlines this Administration's ambition in building on the success of last year's UEFA Champions League Final, placing Cardiff and Wales on the worldwide map.

To mark the beginning of the transatlantic leg of the race last month, I was invited to attend a ceremony at Newport, Rhode Island. Following the official engagement, I also had the opportunity to meet a number of potential investors and global business advisors in New York to highlight opportunities for investment in Cardiff. As a result of these meetings, additional opportunities and potential visits that could benefit Cardiff and the wider economy have been identified, and are being pursued by the Council.

Local Government Reform

I have recently met with, and written to, the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services in relation to the Welsh Government's Strengthening Local Government Green Paper: Delivering for Local People. I welcome the constructive approach from the Cabinet Secretary and see this as an invaluable opportunity to set out an approach for reform and delivery that is ambitious in scale, sustainable in nature and focused on improving outcomes for the communities we serve.

Local Government represents a crucial tier of democracy; it is close to local communities and it responds to the specific needs of place. This is significant because where and how we live shapes our life chances, the nature of the local economy as well as our physical and mental health. Crucially, what will raise productivity or tackle deprivation in one area will fail in another. The evidence also

shows that the current model of centralised power is widening wealth, health, social and geographical divisions. It is therefore clear that meeting our shared economic and social ambitions requires a local response and a significant devolution of power to local areas.

Cardiff has always been ambitious for the people it serves and, as a capital city, for the nation it represents. It has demonstrated what can be achieved through ambitious place-based policy. This has been instrumental in the city's success, driving forward levels of population growth and job creation that are amongst the fastest in the UK. It is an approach that has enabled transformative regeneration projects, the joining-up of public services and has unlocked major investment, even during a time of biting austerity. Over a period of thirty years, it is bold decisions by an ambitious city government and its partners that have made this success possible. From St. David's Hall to St. David's 2, local leadership of place has not only helped shape the economic and cultural success of the city, but a region and a nation.

The case for stronger councils is one that I have made myself in the past, and Cardiff has already outlined to the Cabinet Secretary a range of new powers which would support the city's development. Longer term budget cycles, the consolidation of responsibilities in areas such as public health within Local Government and business rate retention for the purpose of re-investment in growth projects are but a few of the levers that would help improve productivity and tackle inequality at the local level. It is good to see discussion on extended powers for local government featuring in the green paper. I am clear, however, that I would have concerns about any process of reorganisation, or of regionalisation which distracted us from our delivery agenda or which weakens the accountability of decision-makers to the citizens of Cardiff. In the face of unprecedented and immediate demand challenges, my Administration's first priority is getting on with delivering an ambitious agenda to make Cardiff a more equal, more prosperous city; a capital that truly works for Wales.

Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader of the Council
15th June 2018