

COUNCIL: 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER

All-Wales Performance 2017/18

I am pleased that Cardiff Council is continuing to make improvements in key service areas and is the joint best performing Council in Wales when it comes to improving the services we offer. Annual performance data for all 22 local authorities in Wales in relation to Public Accountability Measures in 2017/18 was published last month by Data Wales. Cardiff was joint first in terms of areas in which performance had improved and we had the joint fewest number of indicators where performance had declined. It is also worth stressing that, for the majority of indicators, we scored higher than the Wales average.

Visit to Doha and Bucharest

I led a Council delegation to Qatar and Romania earlier this month in a bid to secure trade and investment deals for the city and to present a significant range of major investment opportunities in Cardiff to leading sovereign wealth funds and potential investors. This followed on from previous discussions between the Council and UK Government Trade Commissioners about the importance of leading British cities seeking out opportunities across the world for trade and inward investment deals post-Brexit. It also follows the launch in May 2018 of the direct daily service by Qatar Airways between Cardiff Airport and Hamad International Airport in Doha.

The visit to Doha in Qatar was facilitated by the UK Government and Welsh Government and included meetings with the British Ambassador to the State of Qatar and representatives from leading financial institutions, among them the Qatar International Islamic Bank, the Qatar National Bank Capital and the Qatar Investment Authority. The Council delegation was able to present a significant range of major investment opportunities in Cardiff to potential Qatari investors. Qatar Airways has also been in discussions with the Council and Welsh Government around developing a new 5-star hotel in Cardiff.

The visit to Bucharest in Romania provided an opportunity to discuss a potential investment in a new leisure facility in Cardiff Bay.

It is important that Cardiff – as the Capital City for Wales – continues to seek out new investment opportunities. We cannot allow the continued uncertainty surrounding Brexit to halt our plans for the city and the city region's future development and growth. Cardiff must continue to be an outward-looking, international city, acting as the connecting point between Wales and the world.

Funding for Creative Cluster

Cardiff is one of nine creative clusters in the UK to have been awarded significant research funding by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as part of its £80million Creative Industries Cluster Programme. This aims to bring together world-class research talent from leading UK universities with companies and organisations from across the creative sector and I was pleased to offer the Council's full support to this endeavor early in the bidding process. The Council will continue to be a key partner in helping to deliver the project and has committed resources over five years in support of the successful bid, which was led by Cardiff University, working closely with University of South Wales, Cardiff Metropolitan University and other institutions and commercial partners, including BBC Cymru, S4C, Boom Cymru, ITV Cymru Wales and Sony UK Technology Centre.

As one of the UK's leading centres for screen production, creativity continues to be at the heart of Cardiff's regeneration agenda and this funding will provide significant investment in research and development within the screen sector in Cardiff and the wider city region. This will be transformational in growing the sector and the Council looks forward to working with the city's three universities and creative industries to support Cardiff's position at the cutting edge of screen innovation and to lead the way in developing new ways to consume digital content and stories.

South East Wales and South West England Regional Meeting on Cross Border Working

I attended a meeting organised by the Secretary of State for Wales, Rt. Hon. Alun Cairns MP, and Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Transport, Ken Skates AM, which was held on 17th September 2018. The UK Industrial Strategy refers to 'growth corridors' and 'powerhouse regions', including the 'Western Powerhouse' region. It is anticipated that the Shared Prosperity Fund will make some funding available at this spatial level, specifically for infrastructure, international trade and investment activity. The Western region will, therefore, need to be positioned to influence the development of the UK Government's industrial policy in order to access any associated funding. This is particularly important in the context of investing in regional transport and infrastructure priorities, such as improving journey times between Cardiff and Bristol.

Cardiff @ MIPIM Launch Event

I attended the launch of Cardiff @ MIPIM 2019 on 18th September 2018 to promote Cardiff's representation at next year's MIPIM event in Cannes. MIPIM is the world's leading property market event and will bring together the most influential players from international property sectors, offering unrivalled access to the world's investment and development community. It is important that Cardiff is represented and the recent event in Cardiff was an opportunity to promote the benefit of attendance to local businesses. With over 100 exhibiting countries and around 26,000 participants, MIPIM is a unique opportunity to develop new trade and investment propositions with investors from across the world. As the economic powerhouse of the South East Wales city region, and the national economy, attending MIPIM allows Cardiff to showcase the strength and ambition of the UK's

fastest growing city to developers, investors and occupiers. There are a number of packages available to businesses, each granting a delegate pass to the Palais des Festivals, access to the Cardiff promotional HQ and an invite to all events hosted by Cardiff and our sponsors.

I have always been clear that a strong relationship between the Council and the business community is a pre-condition of city success. That is why I look forward to continuing to work with businesses, with MIPIM in Cannes acting as just one in a series of ongoing collaborative arrangements between the Council and the business community.

Meeting with Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

I was pleased to meet with the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe, on 18th September 2018. It was an important opportunity to outline my ambition for Cardiff – delivering inclusive and resilient growth – and how the Well-being of Future Generations Act can help us deliver this.

**Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader of the Council
21st September 2018**