

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 SEPTEMBER 2018

Present: Councillor Howells(Chairperson)
Councillors Henshaw, Gavin Hill-John, Parkhill, Robson, Sattar
and Stubbs

11 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gordon and Simmons.
Councillor Stubbs advised that he would be late arriving.

12 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2018 were agreed as a correct record
and signed by the Chairperson.

14 : UPDATE ON COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Jane Henshaw to the Committee.

15 : INNOVATION PREMISES

The Chairperson welcomed Mark Jackson, University of South Wales – Director of Design and Digital to the meeting and advised that the Committee are currently engaged in an inquiry looking at what the Council role should be regarding the provision of workshops and innovation premises. The Chairperson stated that the Committee would be interested to hear Mark Jackson's perspective on this, the work that his university is doing in this area and what he thinks the Council role should be.

The Chairperson explained that whilst this was a formal setting, it was intended to be more of a conversation than a formal Q&A session, so contributions and suggestions of topics and areas that may not have been directly asked about were welcome. Mark Jackson explained that in his role as Director of Design and Digital he was responsible for courses such as Design, Illustration, Fashion, Photography and Computer Games design, with over 1500 students, mostly from around Wales. It was hoped that students would stay in Cardiff after graduation, all students were now on one campus which was very positive and upbeat, currently there was the highest satisfaction scores ever received and there was lots of excitement around innovation and investment.

It was noted that students are very involved with creative industries, which are based primarily in the City Centre and Bay area and consequently students stay mainly in that geographical area as the infrastructure and support mechanisms are already there and are quite restricted to that part of the City.

Mark Jackson noted that the potential innovation and workshop spaces run by Cardiff were out of this area and are not so suitable for his students for the following reasons: students don't have transport; they like the localised contact with their lecturers; and the University is committed to supporting their Alumni as long as they need it. He added that after graduation, students can often have a difficult few months and they use the University Campus to embed ideas and use the support of staff over the summer before the undergraduates arrive. They need digital space as they work primarily from their laptops and mobiles. Currently some students use the Tramshed, WeWork, and locations in the Bay, some rent spaces in shared spaces and coffee shops. Spaces are needed for access to knowledge and hold conversations, even if these are digital; occasionally physical space is needed for 3D printers etc. However, what is really important is space to access knowledge.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Members asked what the University's view of Cardiff was in relation to creativity and innovation. Mark Jackson considered that it was the best it has ever been, it felt exciting and tangible to students with an energy that suits the creative sector. He added that he felt for the first time things were in line between Education and the Industry. He considered that Cardiff's social scene fits student life, and he had received very positive feedback from Overseas Students. He considered that students felt happy and confident in the City and there was a feel of something exciting happening. Students who commute rather than live in Cardiff however do have a different experience.

Members asked how much more innovation and workshop space was needed in the geographical area to help students when they first start-up businesses. Mark Jackson stated it more about the location of spaces, spaces around Cardiff wouldn't work, there needed to be in the area between the University Campus and the Bay, this cluster and community drives innovation in a way that it may not in other sectors. The students are often working on their own and they need to be with other creative people to have a synergy, they also work on a different model, working evenings and having less of a gap between their social and work life.

Members asked what was needed to support Innovation, such as funding mechanisms etc. Mark Jackson stated that young people are very creative, the challenge comes with taking that creativity and commercialising it into a tangible income; that's where it becomes business. Business advice speaking a creative language was needed. There was lots of support provided from the Council, Banks and University Sector but what was needed was mentoring to take the students to these introductions and beyond, to provide advice to businesses about how to expand and consolidate. He added that networking events were buoyant in Cardiff at the moment and this has built up over the past 2 years.

Members asked if the mentoring would be better provided by the University or an outside body. Mark Jackson considered it could be both but as students have to leave the University at some point, not all support should be provided by them. It would be good to have successful creatives mentoring start-up creatives as it is often 2 to 3 years in that a business needs more advice.

Members asked what the reason was for the corridor from the University to the Bay. Mark Jackson explained that the students see a line down to the Tramshed from Central Square and see this as the pathway to the Bay, he considered this would be accentuated when the BBC move in. He added that every year the students hold exhibitions and the venues for these have moved from the City Centre to the Bay area as they consider the type of people who would attend are those based in the creative areas based in the Bay area.

Members asked if there was a role for the Council to provide premises for the students to use and if so what would they look like. Mark Jackson stated that the number of spaces on the list surprised him and that he doesn't know the spaces and considered his students wouldn't engage with them. He did however want to support the link with the Council but the spaces needed to be targeted in terms of location, which he understood was very difficult as the area was prime land. He added that he has the same thing happen elsewhere and as areas become gentrified the creative industries move out.

Members asked if the Council had a role in facilitating greater networks and/ or mentoring. Mark Jackson stated that the Council does work collaboratively with Universities in a way they didn't previously. He added that quite often the people who do volunteer to be mentors don't have a connection with creative industries and this makes it difficult for them to add value or speak the same language as creatives. Theoretically, the Council could support networking events, but it may be difficult as most of these tend to be informal, pop-up events in bars and coffee shops. Members asked how the Council, business and Welsh Government could work better to support innovation. Mark Jackson explained that often students don't understand the difference between the Council and Welsh Government, so this difference needs to be more visible. There also needs to be more engagement and involvement in curriculum development.

Members asked from Mark Jackson's experiences at other Universities, if he has seen how other Local Authorities support Innovation. Mark Jackson stated that he attends conferences and looks at best practice. In Bath old factory units were provided as start-up units for Art Practitioners when they left University. In Manchester and Leeds old warehouses were given as free spaces, but this was years ago and it was the right time and the right energy and synergy was present and the Councils had these spaces available.

Members asked what makes undergraduates leave the City. Mark Jackson explained that it was the cost of living when they left University, quite often students are staying in Halls of Residence for the full 3 years of the course and they can't afford to live in the City when they graduate.

Members asked if Cardiff was losing entrepreneurs and potential wealth generators as a result of this. Mark Jackson said yes potentially as for some students when they graduate, they move home to family and the creative bubble can burst.

The Chairperson thanked Mark Jackson for attending and for his contributions stating that these will help the Committee to shape its final report on these issues, which it is

planning to bring to Committee in October. The Chairperson added that Committee will send the notes of the meeting to him so that he has the opportunity to check them for accuracy.

16 : WORK PROGRAMMING AND WEBCASTING

Members were advised that this item enables Committee to consider whether any further amendments are required to its draft work programme and to identify which items they feel warrant webcasting.

The Scrutiny Officer took Members through the work programme, outlining any amendments that had been made since the work programming forum held in July and updating Members on each issue.

With regards to webcasting, Members looked at each topic and considered that the following topics are of public interest and should be webcast:

Historic Assets; Economic Development White Paper; Indoor Arena; Bus Station; GLL; Metro and City Deal

RESOLVED to:

- I. formally approve the work programme
- II. formally approve the nominations for the task groups as Cllr Howells, Cllr G Hill-John and Cllr Robson for the Workshops and Innovation task group and Cllrs Henshaw, Gordon and Parkhill for the Events Inquiry.
- III. take the list of items to webcast to discuss with the other Scrutiny Chairs, Head of Democratic Services and Head of Communications.

17 : PERFORMANCE: BRIEFING PAPER - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chairperson advised that this report gives Members the opportunity to consider the economic development performance indicators reported to some other core cities and to consider the way forward regarding economic development performance monitoring.

The Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that in a previous committee they had noted that the number of indicators had reduced for 2018/19 and Members had been advised that this was to do with the work that the Council can directly influence. The Scrutiny Officer had been tasked to look at what indicators other Local Authorities use.

The report outlined comparable core cities that had been grouped in similarity to Cardiff. Members were advised that Cardiff was not missing any categories but may want to look at the substance of the information provided.

It was agreed that Members would consider the information in Appendix A to the report and provide feedback to the Chairperson who would then start discussions with Economic Development officers about the information that would be of real use going forward.

18 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

19 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 11 October 2018 at 5.00pm in Committee Room 4, County Hall.

The meeting terminated at 6.25 pm

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