

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr NH

Date: 9 November 2018

Councillor Peter Bradbury & Councillor Russell Goodway
Cabinet Members
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Dear Councillor Bradbury and Councillor Goodway,

Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee: 8 November 2018

Thank you for attending Committee with Neil Hanratty, Director of Economic Development, for pre-decision scrutiny of the report to Cabinet titled '*Securing the Future of Cardiff's Heritage Buildings*'. This letter supplements the email sent on my behalf yesterday evening, recommending amendments to the report to Cabinet prior to publication. It sets out Members recommendations, comments and observations on the proposals outlined in the report to Cabinet.

Members note that this report to Cabinet is an enabling report and that, apart from the Norwegian Church where there is a specific recommendation in this report to Cabinet, further reports will be brought to Cabinet on detailed proposals for all the heritage buildings. Members note that, as part of these reports, financial assumptions will be fleshed out. On this basis, Members support the recommendations to Cabinet and look forward to carrying out pre-decision scrutiny on more detailed proposals as these come forward.

Members are pleased to see a strong, upfront statement that there is resolute commitment to retain Council ownership of heritage buildings. We recognise the need to find alternative uses for these buildings that sustains their future whilst retaining these valuable cultural and historical assets for future generations. As such, Members stress the need to ensure that future uses do not dilute the heritage value of these buildings. We raised at the meeting the possibility of using organisations with expertise and experience in securing heritage buildings, such as the National Trust and/ or CADW, and recommend that the Council seek input from these organisations to gain their views on proposals, and include these views in future reports to Cabinet.

As discussed at the meeting, Members strongly believe that there is an opportunity to promote the Industrial and Edwardian history and heritage of Cardiff; retaining these heritage buildings contributes to this.

In terms of the proposed way forward, Members note the aim is to transfer maintenance costs and risks from the Council to lease operators. Members recognise the value of this but wish to point out that maintenance costs and risks need to be considered alongside other risks, such as reputational risk. These are significant buildings and we need to factor in consideration of all the risks to the Council were handover of these buildings to prove unsuccessful.

Members also note that further work is required to understand fully the possible risks associated with each heritage building, in terms of risks associated with listed building status, trust status, covenants and grant conditions. Members expect these risk assessments to be detailed, with appropriate legal advice, in future reports to Cabinet.

In terms of the specific heritage buildings, Members have the following comments and observations:

Cardiff Castle

- Members note that this report seeks permission to establish a ring-fenced budget, consisting of the surplus generated from the Castle, to meet the maintenance costs of the Castle
- Members would like to accept Neil Hanratty's offer to provide a written update on progress with establishing Dr Who tours and Black Tower Tales.

City Hall

- Members note there is to be further work on a detailed options appraisal, which will be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet for decision
- Members note the wish to retain usage of the Council Chamber for Council meetings and highlight the consequent need for usage of ancillary rooms to enable Council to meet in Council Chamber, for example rooms for party groups to meet.
- Members note that the possible use as a conference centre would be for circa 1,000 delegates.

Mansion House

- Members note the comment that retaining civic use of the building seems to be attractive to investors, as it adds character.

Old Library

- Members note that discussions will be held with existing tenants to meet operating costs from rental income and service charges.

Norwegian Church

- Members note that there will be proper consultation with the Norwegian Church Trust.

St David's Hall

- Members note that the proposals are for Ground Floor modernisation.

New Theatre

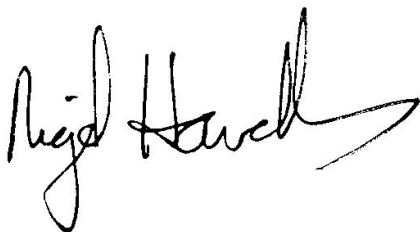
- Members note that Cabinet is being asked to provide authority for officers to explore the potential to rent the building to a theatre operator without subsidy. Members would like to scrutinise these proposals, as we are interested in exploring the impact on the cultural offer of Cardiff.

Finally, Members recognise that only the urgent maintenance backlog is referenced in the report to Cabinet and that work is underway to catalogue the full maintenance backlog, as part of an ongoing review of all council property. Members ask that, once available, this information be shared with Committee Members to assist our understanding of the full picture regarding our heritage assets. Members appreciate the scrutiny of this information comes under the remit of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee and we will not duplicate their work.

Once again, thank you for your attendance and for bringing this report for pre-decision scrutiny. This letter requires a response, please, as it:

- Contains a recommendation re seeking input from organisations with expertise and experience in securing heritage buildings and including this in future reports to Cabinet; and
- Requests a written update regarding Dr Who tours and the Black Tower Tales at Cardiff Castle.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS
CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
 Neil Hanratty Clair James Cabinet Support Office