

COUNCIL: 29 NOVEMBER 2018

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER

Cardiff Creative Sector

The Council was informed of Channel 4's decision on 31st October 2018 that, despite being amongst the six cities shortlisted for two new Channel 4 Creative Hubs, the decision was made to award them to Glasgow and Bristol. The Channel 4 HQ would be located in Leeds. Whilst disappointing, the feedback received from Channel 4 on Cardiff's bid was highly complimentary, which was described as 'superb'. Bristol's accessibility to creative clusters from South Wales to the West Midlands worked in their favour, whilst Glasgow benefited from the sheer scale of its established broadcast and production sector. I extend my congratulations to the successful cities and fellow Core Cities members.

Channel 4 has made it clear, however, that the establishment of a Bristol Creative Hub is a means of engaging more with businesses in Cardiff as part of a broadening commissioning strategy. They are also keen to support the growth of the production sector in Cardiff. To that end, we will build on the excellent work we have undertaken with the sector over recent months to firmly establish our city as a location for creative and digital businesses. I have been hugely impressed by the collaborative nature of the sector in Wales and I would like to thank our partners in the broadcast and production sector for the time that they put into our bid. Our work on the Channel 4 bid cemented a relationship between Cardiff partners that will be invaluable in driving forward further growth and success within the sector, creating more and better jobs for the people of Cardiff.

Fair Funding for Local Authorities

Members will be aware that the Council is currently preparing to set its budget for 2019/20. Despite initially anticipating a funding increase of around 0.4% (or £1.6m) from the Welsh Government, a combination of rapidly rising demands on services and inflationary cost pressures mean that the Council is facing a budget gap of £35.2m next year and almost £93m over the next three years. Closing this funding gap presents a significant challenge.

As a result of austerity, we have delivered nearly a £¼ billion in cumulative savings since 2010 and lost over a fifth of all 'non-school' staff. During the same period, local authorities across Wales have had their funding reduced by £1bn by the Welsh Government. If schools funding is excluded, as is the case in England, then core funding to Welsh Local Authorities has fallen by 35%. No other Welsh public service

– including the Welsh Government, the NHS, the Police or any others – have experienced the same level of cuts.

As local authorities, we are responsible for delivering some of the country's most valued services. Our ability to deliver these highly valued services has been dramatically reduced meaning that our ability to prevent demand increasing and problems escalating to crisis intervention point has been greatly diminished. I call on all Councillors to make the case for Local Government and the services it delivers.

Meeting with the Lord Mayor of London

On 22nd November 2018, I met with the Lord Mayor of the City of London. As Lord Mayor, Alderman Peter Estlin acts as a spokesperson for the City, leading overseas business delegations to key international markets on behalf of the UK's financial and professional services industry. It was an important opportunity to set out Cardiff's inward investment offer, discuss new business opportunities and consider how we could work together to promote the UK as a top global destination for foreign investment. It allowed the Council, along with a number of companies, government officials and industry experts across Wales, to set out the strength of the Financial and Professional Services in Wales.

The City of London is a national economic asset for the UK, as are the UK Core City Regions. Collectively, UK Core City Regions deliver 26% of the UK's economic output and 20% of its trade and exports. With increased international competition, our importance to the UK economy has to be reassessed in this global context to ensure that Cardiff, and all other UK cities, can fully respond to any emerging opportunities.

Outward Looking Capital: Eurocities and Core Cities

On 30th November 2018, I will be attending the Eurocities AGM in Edinburgh. The network brings together the local governments of over 140 of Europe's largest cities and over 45 partner cities that between them govern 130 million citizens across 39 countries. It is an important forum for influencing EU institutions to respond to common issues that affect the day-to-day lives of Europeans, particularly those living in urban areas. With the nature of the UK's future relationship with Europe uncertain due to Brexit, it is important that Cardiff retains strong links with other European cities to pursue areas of common interest, not least in terms of promoting trade, security, culture, education and cohesion.

A Core Cities Cabinet meeting will also be held during the Eurocities conference in Edinburgh, which will seek to maintain our focus on enhancing the role of cities as drivers of growth and opportunity, as well as helping to shape constructive relationships with other European cities going forward.

Cardiff Public Services Board

I chaired a meeting of Cardiff's Public Services Board (PSB) on 20th November 2018, World Children's Day, which approved Cardiff's Child Friendly Strategy. It was timely as a recent UN report concluded that levels of child poverty were "not just a disgrace, but a social calamity and an economic disaster", and warned of the significant detrimental impact that austerity measures have had in the UK. The Child Friendly Cardiff Strategy 2018 gives children a voice and identifies the actions we will take forward to help ensure that children in Cardiff are healthy, happy and have every chance of achieving their potential. I commend the work of the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills for leading on this important agenda.

Maintaining the focus on social justice, each member of the PSB also committed to reviewing its services to vulnerable rough sleepers and hostel residents to ensure that Cardiff delivers effective public services that are more than the sum of its parts.

Global Parliament of Mayors Annual Summit

I was pleased to attend the Global Parliament of Mayors Annual Summit, which was held in Bristol between 21st and 23rd October 2018. Over 80 Mayors from around the world attended the summit on the theme of '*Empowering Cities as Drivers of Change*', which aimed to equip cities with the data, knowledge, resources and tools necessary to combat critical issues. Organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the British Council delivered a programme of keynote speakers with industry experts to help inform the debate between mayors. I also met with Core Cities Leaders as part of the event.

Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader of the Council
23 November 2018