
STATEMENT OF THE LEADER

Brexit

I have recently updated Members in detail on the Council's preparations for Brexit which, at the time of the publication of this statement, sees an increased risk of a 'no deal'. Whilst a short extension has now been granted by the EU until 22nd May 2019, this is conditional on the current deal negotiated by the Prime Minister – which has twice been rejected by Parliament – being approved. If it is not, then a shorter extension until 12th April 2019 will be offered. A longer extension could yet be agreed, but this will require European elections to take place in the UK on 23rd May 2019.

Despite Parliament agreeing a motion to reject a 'no deal' Brexit, there are numerous ways in which a 'no deal' outcome may still arise over the coming weeks. I want to reassure Members that the Council, and its public service partners, have taken its planning responsibilities seriously and preparations for a potential 'no deal' Brexit are advanced and continuing. I remain committed to keeping Members updated on any developments that will impact on the delivery of public services in Cardiff over coming weeks.

UN Anti-Racism Day

On 16 March 2019, I joined the march that was held in Cardiff to mark UN Anti-Racism Day. This was a very poignant occasion which took place the day after the unspeakably shocking and horrifying act of terrorism that took place in Christchurch in New Zealand, the latest in a long line of hateful acts that show humanity at its worst. I am sure that Members would wish to join me in expressing this city's support for the people of Christchurch and New Zealand at this difficult time. I also want to send a message to the people of Cardiff that intolerance, bigotry and racism are traits that our city deplores. Cardiff has always been enriched by diversity and we need to look to a future where our shared humanity is recognised and our cultural differences are celebrated. There can be no place for bigots or racists who would seek to separate us here, and it is important that all the people and communities of Cardiff should come together to respond to this tragedy by showing humanity at its best.

MIPIM 2019

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. That is why I was pleased to lead the Invest in Cardiff team at this year's MIPIM property event in Cannes on 12th-15th March 2019. It provided a great opportunity to join with partner organisations in promoting Cardiff and showcasing various investment and development opportunities within Cardiff and the Cardiff Capital Region. I would like to take this opportunity to join with the Cabinet Member for Investment & Development in thanking our private sector partners for helping to sponsor Cardiff's representation at MIPIM and for the valuable contribution and support that they provided at the event.

Clwstwr Creadigol / Creative Cluster

Cardiff's Clwstwr Creadigol was one of nine creative clusters in the UK that was awarded research funding by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of its £80million Creative Industries Cluster Programme. It aims to transform the screen and broadcast industries in the Cardiff Capital Region by helping them to innovate and compete. The Council continues to be a key partner in helping to deliver the project, which is being led by Cardiff University, working closely with University of South Wales, Cardiff Metropolitan University and other institutions, such as the Welsh Government, and commercial partners, including BBC Cymru, S4C, Boom Cymru, ITV Cymru Wales and Sony UK Technology Centre. We have committed resources over five years in support of project and, as part of this commitment, the Clwstwr Creadigol delivery team moved into an office at Cardiff City Hall earlier this month. I was pleased to welcome the team to City Hall and I hope that their new office becomes a focal point of creative innovation in the city.

Great Western Cities

I am due to meet with the Mayor of Bristol and the Leader of Newport City Council on 27th March 2019 to discuss the development of a Great Western Powerhouse to ensure that both the South East Wales and West of England city-regional economies can work together to better promote this larger region internationally in order to secure investment in national strategic infrastructure. This will be particularly important in any post-Brexit economy and will enable the region to compete more effectively with the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.

**Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader of the Council
22 March 2019**