

COUNCIL: 24 OCTOBER 2019

INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

Indoor Arena

The Council will be pleased to learn that the Indoor Arena project continues to make good progress.

Councillors will recall that in July this year, Cabinet agreed a procurement process for the project with the appropriate notices being issued in August. I can report that the Council received seven bids in total and a shortlist of two was agreed last week and those shortlisted have been advised that the Council intends to proceed to the next stage.

I had anticipated that there would be a need for a further Cabinet decision before the Council could proceed to that next stage, but I now understand that this is not necessary and, as a result, we will take matters forward with immediate effect. However, I can confirm that I intend to seek time at the December meeting of Cabinet to enable colleagues to consider the acquisition of the land at the Red Dragon Centre in order to allow the project to proceed.

I can confirm that, as of last Friday, the Council has issued an Invitation to Tender to the successful bidders, with the dialogue process beginning this week. This will lead to a submission of final bids next February ahead of a Cabinet decision next March that will confirm the Council's preferred bidder and agree appropriate Heads of Terms. This subsequent timetable will involve the submission of a planning application in September 2020 in anticipation of a decision by the Council's Planning Committee in December 2020. This will enable the project to commence on site in spring 2021 with an anticipated date of completion in May 2023.

I know that Councillors will understand that the development of the Indoor Arena represents the final piece of our city's event hosting infrastructure. This will provide the city with the range of venues required to enable us to deliver any type of event, and any scale of event. It will help us to continue to attract more visitors for longer, and fundamentally will anchor the next phase of development for Cardiff Bay.

I am grateful for the support that Councillors across the Chamber have given to the project so far and I will continue to work with you to ensure that the Council delivers our shared aspiration and honour the commitment set out in *Capital Ambition*.

Cardiff East Industrial Strategy

Last month Cabinet took the important step of approving the new Cardiff East Industrial Strategy.

I have made clear on a number of occasions in recent years that I believe that the east of Cardiff has suffered from poorer economic outcomes than other areas of the city. It has seen under-investment in its infrastructure, which has meant that there is not a single rail station serving the city east of Cardiff Bay Station. It has been strangled by poor access across communities meaning that those jobs that are on offer are hard to access. This Administration is committed to address these challenges effectively.

Our strategy provides a spatial vision for the whole area that will allow us to take advantage of the opportunities that are offered through the development of the land south of the railway line. It seeks to deliver the transport improvements necessary to unlock the benefits that will be generated by the new development and will ensure the delivery of the environmental enhancements necessary to make the area a better place to live, work and visit.

The strategy extends from the city's port development to the proposed Cardiff Parkway railway station project at St Mellons. I firmly believe that Cardiff Parkway offers the greatest potential of any project to transform the east of the city, providing both the much needed transport improvements as well as a modern employment offer that compliments rather than competes with the city centre. Given its importance to Cardiff, as well as neighbouring authorities, the Administration is seeking support from the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to help put in place the wider infrastructure that is required to unlock the development of the site and the new station.

It is anticipated that a planning application for the development of the new railway station will be submitted in spring 2020 with construction expected to be completed and operational by 2023.

International Sports Village

Councillors will be aware that earlier this month Cabinet approved the next phase of development for the International Sports Village.

The Administration remains committed to delivering a nationally significant leisure destination at the ISV site. Councillors will be aware that this project has been under development for nearly two decades, and although some initial progress was made, the project has undoubtedly stalled. It is now time to get the job done. Given the changes in the market for property development, it has been clear for some time that a different approach is needed to get the project back on track.

The Cabinet report approved the new way forward granting permission for the Council to bring forward the development of the council-owned waterfront site to help fund the wider leisure development.

Overall our plans aim to attract a number of new 'adventure sport' attractions to build on the existing facilities to establish a national-level visitor attraction. It also includes new public spaces, with improved pedestrian access, delivering new bars and restaurants on the waterfront, and enhancing the Bay edge walkway for public use.

I am also committed to the development of some community spaces to support the residential developments on the peninsula.

Supporting Employment

Councillors will recall that I have previously referred to the closure of the Allied Bakeries facility in Cardiff leading to 140 people being made redundant. Following the announcement, I asked economic development officials to contact the senior management of the plant to offer support. I can confirm that because of the engagement of the Council's Into Work services a programme has been put in place that, so far, has resulted in over 70 employees being registered with the Into Work employment support service. Working with other agencies, the Council has been successful in getting all but two of the remaining workforce into employment.

Cardiff continues to attract more and better jobs. Councillors will, I know, applaud the efforts of the economic development team that helped to secure investment in Cardiff by SIPCOM, a multinational tech company. SIPCOM's decision to establish a tech hub in Cardiff, creating some 15 well-paid jobs initially, is good news for the city and demonstrates the ongoing investor appeal of Cardiff despite an uncertain UK economic backdrop.

Councillor Russell Goodway
Cabinet Member for Investment & Development
18 October 2019