

**COUNCIL: 30 JANUARY 2020**

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## **STATEMENT OF THE LEADER**

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### **Capital Ambition**

The new Capital Ambition document, which provides an updated statement of the Administration's priorities and commitments for the remainder of the municipal term from January 2020 to May 2022, was agreed by the Cabinet on 23 January 2020. The key priorities and policy commitments set out in Capital Ambition will now be translated into deliverable organisational objectives as part of the new Corporate Plan 2020-23, which will also include detailed delivery milestones, key performance measures and targets. This will be considered by Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet and Council – alongside our budget proposals for 2020/21 – in February 2020.

### **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill**

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill was introduced into the National Assembly for Wales on 18 November 2019. The Bill is a significant and substantial piece of legislation at 176 pages and 683 pages of accompanying documents, including explanatory memorandum and regulatory impact assessment. The Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent by the end of summer 2020, with some provisions being commenced the day following Royal Assent and others being introduced following the local council elections in May 2022.

The various proposals set out in the Bill have been discussed by the Council's Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, Democratic Services Committee and Audit Committee. I also led the WLGA delegation in giving evidence to the Assembly's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020. The Council supports the WLGA's position on most aspects of the Bill, but continues to have concerns about the proposals for the regionalisation of economic development, land use planning, transport and education improvement functions through new Corporate Joint Committees.

### **Cardiff Music Board**

The first meeting of the Cardiff Music Board, which I chair, took place on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Members will be aware that the establishment of a Music Board for the city was one of the key recommendations made in the report produced last year for the Council by Sound Diplomacy. The first meeting of the Music Board also considered the creation of a signature music event and the introduction of musician loading zones following the recommendations made by Sound Diplomacy.

The Music Board has 22 members who have been chosen to reflect the social diversity of Cardiff and these include industry professionals and local stakeholders who will take forward the aspiration for Cardiff to establish itself as an International Music City, covering all genres, at all levels and for all people across the whole city. The Music Board is also tasked with championing the city's music scene, protecting and promoting music from grassroots to established acts, and developing Cardiff's Music Strategy.

I believe that the new Cardiff Music Board can play a significant role in helping to achieve our ambitions for the future of music in Cardiff. The music sector already does a lot for the city, both culturally and economically, but we want to maximise that value and really harness the power of music for the benefit of the city and the people who live, work and visit it.

### **Western Gateway**

The new Western Gateway partnership was launched at ICC Wales in Newport on 1 November 2019. This initiative has been led by the three cities that initially developed the Great Western Cities partnership (Bristol, Cardiff and Newport), but has been expanded to develop a strategic partnership that includes representation from the wider city regions – West of England, Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay. The UK Government also announced a £400,000 in-year commitment from existing budgets as start-up funding to help kick-start the new partnership.

The Western Gateway will assist in promoting and maximising economic growth across South Wales and the West of England to create jobs, boost prosperity and support the world-renowned universities and businesses within the region. It also aims to mirror the successful, established work of the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine and will seek to ensure that the region is globally competitive. The Western Gateway partnership is chaired by Katherine Bennett CBE, Senior Vice President of Airbus who will lead and shape the governance, management and initial priorities for the partnership.

### **UK Government Hub**

I attended an event on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to mark the completion of the construction of the new UK Government hub, which forms part of the Central Square development. The new building is named Tŷ William Morgan/William Morgan House and is one of 16 UK Government hub buildings currently being created across the UK. The keys to the building were presented formally by the developer, Rightacres, to the new Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Simon Hart MP. Later this year, over 4,000 UK Government civil servants will be relocated to work in the new building.

The Council was heavily involved in securing these jobs for Cardiff and Wales. Over a two year period, the Council lobbied UK Government to persuade them to create a new hub in Cardiff city centre. This included lobbying the Secretary of State for Wales and Wales Office officials; delivering events in London attracting a variety of senior officials from across the civil service; and hosting numerous visits to Cardiff, including visits from the Head of the Government Property Unit, the Permanent Secretary of HMRC and Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP during his time as the Minister responsible for the Government Estate. This was important work as HMRC had a presence in every major town and city and their ambition to rationalise to 16 hubs meant there was stiff competition from all over the UK.

The building that has been delivered is one of the largest office developments ever built in Cardiff. The Council continues to work with colleagues in UK Government to secure a second phase of development, to accommodate more civil service jobs, earmarked for the site adjacent to their new hub building in Central Square.

**Councillor Huw Thomas**  
**Leader of the Council**  
**24 January 2020**