

**GREENER, FAIRER, STRONGER: DRAFT CITY RECOVERY AND RENEWAL STRATEGY**

**LEADER (COUNCILLOR HUW THOMAS)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 4**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To seek approval of the draft 'Greener, Fairer, Stronger – City Recovery and Renewal Strategy' and to initiate an engagement process with Cardiff's business community, key stakeholders and local residents.
2. To note receipt of the Business Plan for the next term of the Business Improvement District (BID) and to seek authority to cast the Council's vote in the forthcoming ballot.

**Background**

3. In February 2021, Cabinet agreed a programme of short term action that would support the city economy's transition from lockdown and the short to medium term impact of the economic crisis created by the pandemic. This included a further expansion of the Into Work Service and additional support for business.
4. Cabinet also recognised that the pandemic was likely to lead to changes in the economy and in the way in which people live, work and travel in Cardiff. In response, as part of the Cabinet's wider recovery and renewal programme, a specific report on the future of Cardiff's economy was commissioned for publication in May 2021, focussing on how the city should respond to the economic crisis and the long-term shifts caused by the pandemic in order to build a stronger, more inclusive and sustainable post-pandemic economy. 'Greener, Fairer, Stronger: A draft strategy for city recovery and renewal' is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
5. The city centre has been particularly impacted by the pandemic, with the retail, hospitality, culture and events sectors closed for many months allied to the 'stay home' and 'stay local' instructions. In the immediate future, as social distancing requirements are released, the Council will work with partners to ensure that the city centre can re-open safely and successfully. Over the medium to long term, the city centre must be re-imagined to respond to the emerging long term trends impacting cities. Both immediate recovery and long term renewal of the city centre will rely

on a partnership approach between the Council and city centre businesses.

6. FOR Cardiff, the city's Business Improvement District have played an important role in convening business and supporting recovery activities within the city centre. FOR Cardiff's initial term (5 years) is now coming to an end and a new ballot to consider the establishment of a second term is due to take place this summer. A business plan, attached as Appendix 2, has been sent to the Council by FOR Cardiff as they are required to do before the next ballot.

### **City Recovery and Renewal: Greener, Fairer, Stronger**

7. 'Greener, Fairer, Stronger - the draft City Recovery and Renewal Strategy' outlines the key trends and issues that cities such as Cardiff will need to consider as they emerge from the pandemic. It proposes a series of key 'missions' charting a pathway to recovery and establishes the key ambitions, principles and methods by which the missions will be achieved.
8. The strategy sets out the extent to which the pandemic has impacted the city economy. At its peak in the summer of 2020, 50,000 workers in the city were furloughed; 9,000 have been reliant on the Self Employment Income Support Scheme; and unemployment has roughly doubling over the course of the last year. The most affected sectors also tended to employ more young people, women and people from an ethnic minority background. The pandemic had also seen the city's cultural venues and museums close their doors, with an impact on city life, wellbeing and jobs in the arts and creative sectors.
9. The increase in home working, with an estimated 46% of people working remotely in Cardiff has also had an impact on the city, both in terms of the number of office workers using the city centre, but also the way in which homeworkers have used their local amenities. An increase in active travel has also been observed, as well as reductions in congestion and improvements in air quality.
10. Whilst young people are generally less clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 than the adult population, the wider effects of the pandemic have disproportionately affected the younger generation. Since March 2020, children and young people have experienced several extended periods of school closures and seen the routines of their daily lives upturned.
11. In order to develop the Recovery and Renewal strategy the Council also commissioned Dr Tim Williams, a prominent expert on cities to consider how cities such as Cardiff would respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide strategic advice on how any renewal strategy should be developed. The report is attached as Appendix 3.
12. The study was conducted over the second half of 2020, and sought to adopt both international best practice in responses to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as taking into account global trends in city

development. Additional work was also undertaken to map the economic impact of the pandemic on both Cardiff and other UK cities, as well as to understand the emerging trends that will influence their recovery. The review highlights a number of key findings:

- **News of the death of cities has been greatly exaggerated....** Agglomeration, innovation, creativity will continue to drive economic growth and jobs. As Wales' core city Cardiff will continue to play a leadership role in the Welsh economy post-Covid.
- **A new model of working will emerge.....** whilst agile and home working will inevitably change the way the office operates in the future, many businesses and workers want to get back into cities. Spaces and places in cities for people to collaborate will also become even more important for our economies.
- **A reboot of the retail experience.....**The accelerated shift to online retail may not reverse, having profound impact on the role of the city centre, district centres, and the labour market, particularly for young people. However, a new retail landscape will emerge, more authentic and more unique, and making the city centre and district centres more interesting places.
- **The city as experience:** While the trend to online shopping may be irreversible, signs are that hospitality will bounce back as lockdown eases, and the role of food and drink, arts and culture in the city economy, and events, spaces and experiences that bring people together will remain important.
- **The local, rediscovered:** Lockdowns have led to greater appreciation of local areas and demand for local services. Neighbourhoods, with easy and safe access to shops, schools, health care and green and blue spaces, giving more space to people, will be a central part of post-recovery cities.
- **Digitisation – of everything** - will continue: In addition to zoom calls and online retail, citizens will increasingly access services online.
- **Without concerted action, the gap between rich and poor will widen:** Poorest communities have faced a double whammy of health and financial hardship as a result of the pandemic. Unless concerted action is taken, the health inequalities that exist between the richest and poorest communities across the city will widen.
- **Unlocking lockdown:** Over the short term, fear of the virus may continue to hit public transport, with a shift to car, cycling and walking. To avoid moving from lockdown to gridlock, cities are investing in pop-up parking, city-wide cycle-networks and in accessible, safe, district centres.

- **Preparing for the next shock to the system:** Future risks, especially the climate emergency, will require planning to ensure city resilience, and also opportunities in the low carbon economy that need to be taken.
- **Good governance matters:** Good governance is characteristic of cities that have responded well, with partnerships and relationships with public services, the private sector and other tiers of government being central to the ability of Council's to forge a city-wide response to the pandemic and recovery and renewal. For those that got it right, the pandemic has seen an increase in citizen satisfaction with increased trust in local government.

### Recovery

13. Greener, Fairer, Stronger - the draft City Recovery and Renewal Strategy outlines the immediate steps that are required to respond to the pandemic, with the principal aim of protecting jobs and businesses as the economy begins to re-open. A central part of this approach is to ensure we can encourage footfall from visitors, shoppers and workers to return to our city centre in a safe way. Activities that will support this aim include:
  - New permit arrangements for businesses
  - City Centre Marshals
  - Opening of Castle grounds
  - Animation of Churchill Way, Hill Street and other key locations
  - Commuting plans for businesses
  - Increased parking provision and monitoring of parking capacity
  - Improved signage and wayfinding
  - Promotion of staycations and domestic tourism
  - Adoption of child friendly measures
  - Additional promotion of the city centre and district centres
  - Continuation of the Economic Task Force
  - Use of Kickstart Scheme within the Council and across partners
  - Increased support for Into Work services
  - Roll out of test events
  - Support for venues where restrictions continue
  - Increased waste collections
  - Greater use of open space
  - Continued roll-out of vaccination and track and trace.
  - Providing direct business support
  - Continued signposting and promotion of business support schemes
14. These actions intend to enable businesses to operate, attract footfall in a safe way to the city and district centres, and provide direct support for businesses and those looking for work.

## Renewal

15. The report acknowledges that as we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic there will be a need for the city to respond to the challenges it will face. To do this the Council has set out a number of key missions to test through its engagement process:
  - Mission 1: Reimagine the city centre
  - Mission 2: A City for Everyone
  - Mission 3: City of Villages
  - Mission 4: Culture and sport - led renewal
  - Mission 5: Tech City
  - Mission 6: One Planet Recovery
16. The missions set out a series of ambitions, principles and methods, as well as some proposed projects that will help us achieve these ambitions. The missions, principles and projects included are intended as a means of leading discussions on the future development of the city and will be developed during the engagement process. Some of the proposals and projects included in the missions are funded, some are not. Where funding is yet to be secured, the intention is to work with public and private sector partners to identify potential resources.

## **Next Steps**

17. In February 2021, Cabinet agreed to run a programme of engagement over the summer with the public and with city stakeholders on its proposals for city renewal. The programme will be designed in collaboration with Cardiff University. The outcome of this work will be presented back to Cabinet later in the year.
18. It is proposed that a series of online events will be held over the coming months including:
  - A webinar with key city stakeholders
  - A series of workshops with representative groups
  - A web-based survey open to all residents
  - Dedicated child-friendly events
19. Specific engagement will be undertaken with the Cardiff Youth Council, the Race Equality Task Force, the Public Service Board and business representative groups such as the FSB. A dedicated Child Friendly engagement programme will also be designed as part of a Cardiff Commitment conversation on the future development of Cardiff.

## Business Improvement District

20. The city's Business Improvement District, FOR Cardiff, was established with a five year term following a ballot of city centre businesses in 2016.

Business Improvement Districts are place based partnerships that raise funding, via a levy on businesses, to support projects and investment in the place it relates to. Over its initial 5 years term, FOR Cardiff has invested almost £7.5 million in city centre activities.

21. As the initial BID term draws to its conclusion, FOR Cardiff has signalled its intention to seek a re-ballot for a second term. A seven month consultation exercise has been undertaken with local businesses to shape the development of a new business plan which will form the basis of the vote for the second term. The extensive consultation exercise consisted of a series of events and exercises, and whilst primarily focussed on business engagement it included a survey of city centre residents to help shape the plan.
22. Subsequently a business plan has been developed by FOR Cardiff that is attached as Appendix 2. A summary of the key proposals and projects within the BID business plan are outlined below, under the themes enhance, deliver and represent.
  - **Enhance** - Projects to attract visitors, and make the place more attractive for residents and workers, comprising city centre marketing campaigns and events (including the development of a new unique Christmas Event, investment to support transforming public spaces, environmental projects, art installations and cultural activities.
  - **Deliver** - Projects to make the city centre cleaner, safer, including additional investment in Cleansing Team, supporting the Evening and Night-Time Economy, including Night Marshals, the Cardiff Against Business Crime partnership, the Give DIFFerently campaign and free member training.
  - **Represent** - Representing city centre business, and advocating and promoting Cardiff city centre, as well as supporting activity to showcase positive messages around equality.

### Second Term Ballot

23. In advance of undertaking a ballot on a second term of operation the BID is required by law to submit a copy of the proposed Business Plan to the Council. The BID is required to provide evidence to the local authority of the consultation exercise undertaken to inform the Business Plan, the estimated revenues and expenditure of the proposed Business Plan, a proposed Operating Agreement relating to revenue collections, financial management arrangements of the proposed BID and confirmation that the proposed plan does not conflict with any policy formally adopted by the Council. The Council has subsequently received all the relevant information required and carried out the necessary checks.
24. Once the Council has received the required information and carried out the necessary checks, it must instruct its Returning Officer to make arrangements for conducting a BID ballot. It is anticipated that the BID ballot will be held in June and closing on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Council is also

entitled to vote in the BID ballot in relation to its hereditaments. It is recommended that the Council votes in support of the proposed BID renewal given the alignment of the plan with the Council's plans and strategies and the City's recovery priorities.

25. If the BID ballot returns a 'Yes' vote, it is understood that the Council will once again be offered a position on the For Cardiff board, the body responsible for implementing the BID.

### **Scrutiny Consideration**

26. The Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee considered this issue on 13 May 2021. The strategy has been updated to reflect their comments. The letter from the Chair will be circulated once received.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

27. To present the draft City Recovery Strategy to initiate a public engagement Process and to support City Centre Recovery by providing approval to cast the Council's vote in favour of a second term of the BID.

### **Financial Implications**

28. This report sets out a series of initiatives that prior to any implementation or commitments need to ensure that they can be delivered within the funding already allocated and obtained from other external bodies. There is specific reference to initiatives such as Kickstart and in order to ensure all funding is fully secured an appropriate level of due diligence has been put in place in order to ensure full drawdown of the Grant.
29. With reference to the BID, in the event of a positive vote and outcome to secure a second term the Council will be collecting the income on behalf of the BID and provide timely payments to the BID.

### **Legal Implications**

30. The Cabinet has responsibility for preparing, agreeing and, if appropriate, consulting on the Authority's plans, policies and strategies, which do not form part of the Policy Framework (Cabinet reserved power number 4 in the Scheme of Delegations Section 2). The draft strategy appended as Appendix 1 falls within the Cabinet's reserved powers.
31. Public bodies are required to consult before making decisions, particularly where smaller organisations and individuals may be affected by the proposals. Consultation must be carried out at a time when proposals are at a formative stage; include sufficient reasons for the proposal so as to allow intelligent consideration and response; allow adequate time for response; and the outcomes of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising proposals. The public engagement programme referred to in the report should have regard these principles.

32. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) may be established and renewed under Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 and are governed by the Business Improvement Districts (Wales) Regulations 2005 ('the Regulations'). A BID may only be established after it is approved in a ballot of non-domestic ratepayers within the proposed BID. Approval requires a majority of those voting to vote in favour of the proposals, and the total rateable value of the properties of those voting for the proposals must be more than that of those voting against them. The Regulations make detailed provisions about the information which must be provided with the proposals, the conduct of the BID ballot and arrangements for the BID.
33. The Council has responsibility for checking that the BID proposals meet the statutory requirements and for conducting the BID ballot. If the Council is of the opinion that the BID arrangements conflict with any adopted Council policy, it must notify the BID body as soon as reasonably practicable, and it has the power to veto the proposals. If the BID renewal proposals are approved by ballot, the Council is responsible for collecting and enforcing the BID levy in accordance with the agreed arrangements.
34. When making decisions on strategic and policy matters, Members must have regard to the Council's public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010. Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are: (a) Age, (b) Gender reassignment, (c) Sex, (d) Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, (e) Disability, (f) Pregnancy and maternity, (g) Marriage and civil partnership, (h) Sexual orientation, (i) Religion or belief – including lack of belief.
35. The Council also has a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage ('the Socio-Economic Duty' imposed under section 1 of the Equality Act 2010). In considering this, the Council must take into account the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers (WG42004 A More Equal Wales The Socio-economic Duty Equality Act 2010 (gov.wales) and must be able to demonstrate how it has discharged its duty.
36. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to consider how its decisions will contribute towards meeting its well being objectives (set out in the Corporate Plan). Members must be satisfied that the Council's decisions comply with the sustainable development principle, which requires that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
37. The Council must also be mindful of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards and consider the impact of its proposals upon the Welsh language.



## **Property Implications**

38. This report does not make any specific property recommendations or seek decisions on property. However it is acknowledged that the use of property and property transactions will have a key role in achieving the aims and objectives of the recovery programme. It is important that Strategic Estates are involved in all relevant discussions relating to property and property advice in the context of recovery. Any resultant property transaction should be undertaken via Strategic Estates through the agreed asset management and delegated approval processes.

## **HR Implications**

39. There are no HR implications that arise as a direct result of this report

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the draft 'Greener, Fairer, Stronger, the City Recovery and Renewal Strategy' (Appendix 1) for engagement purposes; and delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Investment and Development to establish a programme of engagement, including a Child Friendly engagement process in respect of the draft Strategy, and to return to Cabinet in the autumn with a final draft Strategy for approval.
2. Note the BID renewal proposal prepared by FOR Cardiff, with supporting business plan (Appendix 2) and the intention to hold a BID ballot with an end date of July 1st and
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development to cast the Council's votes in the BID ballot in relation to the Council's relevant hereditaments in favour of the BID's renewal and, subject to approval of the BID by ballot, to enter into any associated agreements with FOR Cardiff in relation to implementation of the BID's second term.
4. Note the Global Perspectives Report produced by Dr Tim Williams, Appendix 3;

<b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>Neil Hanratty</b> <b>Director of Economic Development</b>
	14 May 2021

*The following appendices are attached:*

- Appendix 1: Greener, Fairer, Stronger, the City Recovery and Renewal Strategy  
Appendix 2: Business Improvement District Business Plan  
Appendix 3: Global Perspectives Report – Dr, Tim Williams