

CYNGOR CAERDYDD CARDIFF COUNCIL

COUNCIL

25 JANUARY 2018

ECONOMIC GREEN PAPER '*BUILDING MORE AND BETTER JOBS*' CONSULTATION

CABINET MEMBER, INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, STATEMENT TO COUNCIL INTRODUCING THE GREEN PAPER

I am pleased to present the Administration's Investment & Development Green Paper "Building More & Better Jobs".

Today is an opportunity for Councillors to speak and me and my cabinet colleagues to listen. We want to hear your views and opinions this afternoon which, along with the views of the Greater Cardiff business community and individuals from across Cardiff, will help shape the city's economic development agenda for the next decade and beyond.

And I hope that the party groups and individual members will make take the time to submit a response to the consultation that is now under way. We are eager to build the widest possible consensus for what the city needs to achieve so that it can survive successive administrations over the next decade or more.

Our Green Paper outlines some initial thoughts on how we might achieve our goal. It is a consultation document and does not reflect the Administration's adopted position. It provides a real opportunity for everybody with an interest in this city to influence the future shape of Cardiff.

Today we can proudly consider Cardiff as a vibrant and thriving city.

We have seen faster job growth, and we expect to see faster population growth than any of the UK Core Cities. Almost half of the working age population have a degree or equivalent. We are consistently rank number one in terms of quality of life. Our universities undertake some of the best cutting edge research not just in the UK, but across the world.

We are the hub of Wales' service economy, from finance to the creative industries. And we are the heart of the Welsh economy with over 90,000 daily commuters. It's important to celebrate our success, but it's critical that we acknowledge where we have failed to succeed.

Thousands of people in the city are still looking for work. Income inequality persists. The top 10% of workers in our city earn three times more than the bottom 10%. The claimant rate in the worst performing ward is more than 10 times the rate of the best performing ward. But our challenges not only stem from inequality. We have to accept that Cardiff's success remains relative.

Levels of productivity in Cardiff still lag other UK cities. Admiral – a company attracted by the former South Glamorgan County Council in the early 1990s - remains Wales'

only FTSE 100 listed company and still Cardiff can't boast headquarter operations of major private sector organisations.

And the truth is, these issues can only be tackled through ambition. If we want the people of Cardiff to be ambitious for the city, then this council has to be ambitious for them.

We know that cities either move forwards or move backwards – they don't stand still. We must continue to attract investment in our city, and we must put in place the environment to make that investment thrive. I believe now that we now need a relentless focus on delivering more, and better, jobs for the people of Cardiff. And we need to make sure we can translate this growth potential into better outcomes for everyone.

And if we think the challenges facing Cardiff are daunting, let's just reflect for a moment on the challenges facing some of our neighbours across the Capital Region and how Cardiff's economy can support the region to rise to the challenges. Nobody is more pleased by the creation of the Capital Region and by Welsh Government's apparent conversion to a city region style agenda across Wales than me. I have been advocate of this approach for almost two decades.

There is not a single successful city-region in the world that I am aware of that doesn't have a competitive city at its core.

Cardiff represents Wales' biggest opportunity. But a successful Cardiff needs a successful and vibrant hinterland and we need to respect the fact that those communities want to be more than one massive commuter belt around Cardiff.

And there is something we could do now. Ever since local government reorganisation in 1995 – which if you didn't know, I was even more opposed to than I was to Brexit – ever since 1995 I have advocated the creation of some kind of shared services partnership to deliver local authority back office and support functions. And I have argued repeatedly for these activities to be located in valley communities where attracting private sector investment is more than a challenge.

In exchange, Cardiff and Newport should be afforded a degree of unfettered access to the private sector market to attract new jobs and opportunities to South Wales with the associated private sector investment. I believe that initiatives like these could help persuade our neighbours that Cardiff is about affecting real positive change to their communities and help avoid the perception of an arrogant, over bearing city neighbour which is somehow strangling prosperity elsewhere.

I want Cardiff to help secure that real and positive change for valleys communities as well as for Cardiff itself and I would like that ambition to be part of our economic development agenda going forward. I would like to use the Green Paper consultation exercise to establish whether that idea has any measure of support for that aim and for the ideas to achieve it.

I could go on – but we said we have come to listen and that's what we are now going to do.

Councillor Russell Goodway
Cabinet Member, Investment and Development
25 January 2018