

Date: 19 November 2021



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Neil Hanratty,
Director of Economic Development,
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Dear Neil,

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 17 November 2021

Thank you for attending Committee with an opportunity for policy development scrutiny of the forthcoming Corporate Property Strategy 2021-26. Would you also please pass Members thanks to Donna Jones and Matt Seymour, who also attended in support of this item. The Committee looks forward to full pre-decision scrutiny of the Strategy at its December meeting, however, Members had some concerns and comments they wish to pass on as you finalise the Strategy and agreed that I relay the following.

In your presentation you clarified that the new Corporate Property Strategy will address three key issues for the Council that have emerged over the past year, the move to a Hybrid/locality working model, One Planet Cardiff, and management of the non-operational Leased Estate. We note it will set targets for a reduction in carbon (30%), running costs (£5m), and maintenance backlog, and an increase in Capital Receipts (£30m) and rental income (£600k).

Corporate Property Strategy- One Planet links

The Committee was keen that you elaborate on the linkage between One Planet Cardiff and the Property Strategy 2021-26. Specifically, how the Council will assess the carbon impact of its decisions. We note that the final version of the Strategy will contain the detail of exactly how carbon reduction will take place. You were clear that the business case for any new property will include One Planet aspirations. Members referred to projects such as Cathays High School and the Velodrome and stressed the importance of all options (new build or refurbishment) being costed, analysed and in the public domain to evidence the validity of the final decision taken by the Council. Members were assured that this is the Council's intention moving forward.

Historic buildings

Members highlighted the scaffolding on a number of historic buildings in Cathays due to crumbling sandstone and enquired whether you plan to examine all historic buildings in the City. We note that you are in the process of developing a list of buildings and it is the intention that the strategy will reference historic buildings and the stone maintenance required. We note work is underway to address this issue, including business cases, and that cost is an issue so a capital funding bid is under development.

Core office space

This Committee is familiar with work underway to explore the potential for Hybrid working. Members observed that should this model progress as anticipated the Council might expect a reduction in the size of its core office. We heard that currently you cannot answer that question but that the results of detailed condition surveys for County Hall and City Hall will form a part of confidential papers attached to the Corporate Property Strategy next month. The plan would then be to develop an outline business case.

Leased income

The Committee enquired about the viability of a target of £600k of leased income. We were reassured that it is achievable given that the target is based on commercial market rental rates.

My sincere thanks once again for the early briefing on the Corporate Property Strategy. I would be grateful if the Committees observations inform your final Strategy and look forward to seeing you in December. As there are no recommendations at this point, I will not expect a response to this letter.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR DAVID WALKER
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Russell Goodway, Cabinet Member Investment and Development
Donna Jones, Assistant Director, County Estates
Matt Seymour, Operational Manager, Asset Management
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations
Jeremy Rhys, Assistant Head of Communications and External Affairs
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Officer
Andrea Redmond, Committees Services Officer