

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr NH

Date: 18 November 2021

Councillor Huw Thomas
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Dear Councillor Thomas,

Draft City Recovery & Renewal Strategy - Engagement Update

Our thanks to you, Neil Hanratty and Jon Day for attending Committee on 16 November 2021 to discuss the above item and provide an opportunity for the Committee to shape the proposed report to Cabinet in December 2021.

This Committee considered the draft City Recovery & Renewal Strategy at our committee meeting in May 2021 and were supportive of proposals to consult on the proposals and use the feedback to finesse the final Strategy. Members are pleased to see that a range of engagement events have been held, with child-friendly events, stakeholder events including the business, art and culture sectors, and an open survey for all.

Members wish to thank Jon Day for his presentation that clearly set out the key themes emerging from the engagement events. Members note that the following elements were repeatedly highlighted by respondees: the need for Cardiff to be clean, green, open, safe, and accessible. Members also note that public transport improvements are a key theme running through responses. Members note that children and young people highlighted that the cost of accessing some of the city's facilities is excluding them from being able to participate fully in Cardiff's opportunities.

During the meeting, Members explored a range of issues. In terms of those that cut across the 6 missions set out in the draft strategy, members explored public transport, cleanliness, green spaces and public realm, and hospitality sector issues. Members note the following:

- That the Council is consulting on a Bus Strategy that aims to increase passenger numbers and improve air quality and that an announcement will be made shortly regarding buses over the Christmas period
- That issues regarding bus routes and ongoing active travel improvements are discussed weekly by the City Centre Recovery working group
- That the number of blitz cleansing teams is being increased by 2

- That there is an ongoing restructure of the cleansing team and information on this will be shared with the Environmental Scrutiny Committee
- That the emphasis is on protecting green spaces and improving the public realm
- That various teams, including Into Work, have worked with the hospitality sector to deliver bespoke information and training events to encourage take-up of opportunities and reduce vacancy rates.

During our way forward discussion, Members also raised the following regarding transport:

- The need to publicise clearly where the bus station is and when it will be opening – the suggestion made at the meeting was that a banner could be sited on the bus station, which would be visible to commuters using Cardiff Central and people walking through Central Square.
- The need to ensure drop off and pick up access for taxis at Cardiff Central and platform zero, via Fish Quay, is maintained and promoted.

Regarding mission 2, a City for Everyone, Members highlighted the engagement responses had underlined the need for improved wheelchair access. Members wish to accept the offer for Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transport and Environment, to provide further details on work to provide and improve wheelchair access, including, but not only, disabled parking and pavement enhancements.

Regarding mission 3, a City of Villages, Members are supportive of the concept but are seeking assurance that this will cover the whole of Cardiff and that there is recognition that differing approaches will be needed for the differing areas of Cardiff. Cardiff includes rural villages, such as Creigiau and St. Fagan's, as well as suburb villages, such as Whitchurch and Rhiwbina, and inner-city areas that operate as 15-minute neighbourhoods. The needs of these areas will be different, and Members accept the principle of equity as opposed to equality of provision. However, an assurance that all areas of Cardiff will be included in the City of Villages work, with appropriate approaches taken to meet their differing needs, would be appreciated.

Regarding mission 5, a Tech City, Members sought confirmation regarding 5G coverage. Members wish to accept your offer to provide further details on 4G and 5G coverage rates in Cardiff and would also like comparator information with other core cities.

Overall, Members are supportive of the proposed approach to recovery and renewal and pleased there is recognition of the need to improve links with the City Deal, Welsh Government and UK Government, to align external funding and develop place-based models. Members were interested to see the latest data regarding the recovery of the city following lockdowns, in terms of increased footfall, hotel occupancy and unemployment rates. The proposals will put Cardiff in a good place to

respond positively to demands whilst building a sustainable, inclusive, and accessible future.

Finally, at the meeting Councillor Gordon raised concerns regarding pedestrian access through Bute Park as it appears a Christmas Lights event in Bute Park has led to some paths being closed and through routes between the city centre, Cathays Parks and Llandaff/ Pontcanna being closed. We appreciate the offer by Neil Hanratty to investigate this quickly and to respond directly to Councillor Gordon.

The letter requires a response, please, to the following requests:

1. Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transport and Environment, to provide further details on wheelchair access provision and proposed improvements
2. Assurance that all areas of Cardiff will be included in the City of Villages work, with appropriate approaches taken to meet their differing needs
3. Further details on 4G and 5G coverage rates in Cardiff, with comparator information from other cities.

Thank you again for attending Committee. Members look forward to seeing the final Strategy and how it has taken on board the points made during the engagement and our scrutiny. It is clear a lot of work has taken place to develop these proposals and we thank all involved for their work and contributions.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS
CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
Neil Hanratty Jon Day
Andrew Gregory
Clair James Imelda Seymour Cabinet Support Office