

CITY CENTRE RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

**INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT (COUNCILLOR RUSSELL
GOODWAY and STRATEGIC PLANNING & TRANSPORT
(COUNCILLOR CARO WILD)**

AGENDA ITEM: 8

Reason for this Report

1. To approve the City Centre Recovery Action Plan, which outlines key initiatives and programmes that the Council and partners will work towards over the next five years as the city centre emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic to create long-term prosperity.
2. To respond to the Greener, Fairer, Stronger City Recovery and Renewal Strategy (November 2021), Key Mission 1: Reimagine the City Centre.

Background

3. The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on UK city centres, where at the peak of the restrictions almost all economic activity was stalled. Furthermore, trends that we were experiencing before the pandemic, such as the increasing prevalence of online retail, and the emerging model of hybrid working, have only been accelerated.
4. During the pandemic the city responded by putting in place measures to support city-centre businesses, specifically with the aim of maintaining future levels of employment given that the city centre accounts for circa 70,000 jobs in total. This included the creation of socially distanced public spaces, and closer city centre management among others. Additionally, the Council undertook measures to promote the city in a safe way as restrictions eased.
5. The Council also undertook an exercise to consider its development priorities in the post-COVID economy. As part of this work Dr Tim Williams, a leading city expert, was commissioned to undertake a review of the expected impact of the legacy of the pandemic on cities, and to consider that in the context of Cardiff. This work, as well as local research and an engagement exercise including residents, businesses and representative organisations contributed to the development of *Greener, Fairer, Stronger*, the city's recovery strategy that was approved by Cabinet at its December 2021 meeting.

6. The *Greener, Fairer, Stronger* outlined a number of key missions that underpinned the city's recovery strategy, namely:
 - Mission 1: Reimagine the city centre
 - Mission 2: A City for Everyone
 - Mission 3: A 15 Minute City
 - Mission 4: Culture and sport-led renewal
 - Mission 5: Tech City
 - Mission 6: One Planet Recovery

7. This report considers the first mission: *Reimagine the city centre*. This mission was considered critical in the strategy given the scale of jobs supported by the city centre, as well as the opportunities it afforded to support a more productive and more sustainable economic recovery. Notably the report including a number of key priorities for the mission, which were to:
 - Make sure our city centre is safe, clean, welcoming and attractive for people of all ages and backgrounds.
 - Accelerate the completion of the central business district to support continued jobs growth.
 - Support existing businesses to grow and become more productive.
 - Improve existing - and establish new – public squares, streets, green spaces and open up our waterfront.
 - Take a more direct role in managing the future of the city centre to reflect the needs of residents, workers, businesses and visitors.
 - Put culture and arts at the centre of the recovery, embracing the role the sector plays in shaping our city centre.
 - Create a city centre that is fully accessible to all ages, and people of disabilities underpinned by a fully integrated transport system.

8. The City Centre Recovery Action Plan sets out the Action Plan for delivering the *Reimagine the city centre* mission.

Issues

9. As the city emerges from the pandemic it is essential that we consider the steps needed to support the recovery, and new ways of working, whilst at the same time recognising that we need to support a more productive, equitable and sustainable recovery. In this regard, following development of the *Greener, Fairer, Stronger* report the City Centre Recovery Action Plan has been developed in line with the strategic priorities of the *Reimagine the city centre* mission. The action plan builds on the recovery work and identifies a number of key issues to be noted, including:
 - i. City Centres are crucial to community, cultural and social identity. In the middle of the pandemic the actions taken in the city centre were seen as important to the wider city community. The state and health of the city centre and local centres matter to residents and is critical

to the identity of Cardiff. In addition, it provides crucial meeting and socialisation space for residents, visitors and businesses.

- ii. The City Centre is also essential to Cardiff's' response to the Climate Emergency, the One Planet Strategy and the 10 yr. Transport Strategy. The centre is the most accessible location in the city, the focus of public transport and active travel networks, and as such supports the most efficient low carbon focus of the city.
 - iii. The City Centre is also essential to business, both in terms of a location for many large and small employers but also a place for meetings and interaction, many supporting hospitality industries, and finally as a key source of brand recognition.
 - iv. The city centre also provides Wales' best opportunity in addressing its significant productivity gap with the UK, with a widely recognised weakness in the Welsh economy that its fails to deliver the benefits that accrue from agglomeration associated with knowledge-based businesses. The onset of increased hybrid working provides both an opportunity and threat in this area. Specifically, the work undertaken by Dr Tim Williams identified that smaller cities such as Cardiff could benefit from a movement away from the world's megacities.
10. The recovery strategy notes that we must maintain the momentum of our current projects, driving direct jobs through construction, but also improving our overall city infrastructure in the long term. In addition, the maintenance of the city centre in terms of cleanliness, public safety, air quality, street greening and overall appearance and quality is consistently recognised as critical to users. Also, the response to shape the long-term future of the city centre needs to include measures to re-activate the night-time economy, to improve the cultural offer, animate public spaces and diversify public transport options.
11. The Action Plan also recognises that over the longer term, cities will need to respond to this challenge by taking a more active role in the management of their centres. This enhanced proactive management role is termed 'curation'. The action plan does not seek to replicate existing work, but rather bring about improvements in the way the city centre operates both now and in the future. By bringing together the range of city centre activities into a single five-year plan. There are nine key themes to the action plan:
- i. A Fully Curated City Centre – clean, safe, attractive, well managed for all
 - ii. A Dynamic Business and Employment Hub
 - iii. A World Class Transport Network
 - iv. A City Centre of World Class Urban Design and Public Realm
 - v. A Green and Biodiverse City Centre
 - vi. A Blue City Centre of Rivers and Canals
 - vii. A Great Inclusive Place to Live and Play
 - viii. A City Centre of Culture and Animation

- ix. A Great Quality Experience for Visitors
12. Furthermore, it is considered essential to establish a stable and robust funding regime in terms of revenue and capital. This will clearly need to be considered in the context of wider corporate and directorate commitments and the need for value for money services and robust business planning. In this regard, a key recognition is that the most successful cities will those that are able to develop and sustain highly successful city centres.
 13. Cardiff has a strong tradition of working in partnership with private, voluntary and other public sector organisations to achieve this ambition. Over recent years major projects such as St David's Centre, the Principality Stadium and more have been developed to assist in transforming the city.
 14. However, notwithstanding the high quality of management and programmes in place, this plan recognises the fact that city centres across the UK are facing a potential crisis and more will need to be done to ensure not just long-term stability but success.

Consultation and Engagement

15. In May 2021 Cabinet resolved that the draft 'Greener, Fairer, Stronger City Recovery and Renewal Strategy' (focusing on how the city should respond to the global pandemic) be approved for engagement purposes. This engagement process was undertaken during the summer, with the results being reported to Cabinet in December. Mission 1 related to the reimagining of the city centre post pandemic. Feedback from the engagement process is summarised below and has been incorporated into the preparation of the City Centre Recovery Action Plan:
 - Cleanliness, safety and accessibility were key issues raised in both engagement sessions and the survey feedback.
 - Investment in public open space, including green space, was welcomed by all groups.
 - Transport remains a critical component of the city centre.
 - Recruitment and skills issues were raised as important issues in the business engagement sessions.
 - Supporting local home grown businesses was also seen as a way of making the city centre more interesting.
 - There were some differing views regarding transport, with support for improved cycle infrastructure, whilst some were advocating for improved road infrastructure.
 - Responses also showed conflicting views regarding development, with some raising concerns over city centre developments.

Scrutiny Consideration

16. The Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee are due to consider this item on 19 January 2022. Any comments received will be circulated at the Cabinet meeting.

Reason for Recommendations

17. To provide an action plan that brings together and promotes key initiatives and projects that the Council and partners will work towards over the next five years as the city centre emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic.
18. To respond to the Greener, Fairer, Stronger City Recovery and Renewal Strategy (November 2021), Key Mission 1: Reimagine the City Centre.

Financial Implications

19. The report sets out an Action Plan to Reimagine the City Centre which will include a number of actions and priorities. Where funding for these initiatives has not been identified then the development of robust business cases, including fully costed option appraisals, will need to be considered prior to the implementation of any of these initiatives. This will be necessary in order to assist the Council budget setting process for 2022/23, for both Revenue and Capital budgets, and to ensure that appropriate levels of funding are in place and initiatives are affordable. In the event of any funding gaps being identified, then consideration should be given to the likelihood of successfully obtaining external funding and the timing of the costs incurred. Where actions and priorities have been identified as requiring additional costs beyond 2022/23 then those matters should be contained and considered within the overall Medium Financial Plan and the Council's overall strategy for financial resilience. Robust risk registers should be held at the appropriate service / project / programme level with a regular review in order to ensure that risks remain time appropriate along with the right risk mitigations being in place and being developed.

Legal Implications

20. The report seeks approval of the City Centre Recovery Action Plan. Legal Services have not considered the Action Plan in detail but understand that the plan contains a number of potential schemes and initiatives. Legal advice should be obtained on each such scheme and initiative prior to being implemented to ensure the same can be achieved within legal constraints.
21. It is understood that the Action Plan incorporates feedback received from an "engagement process" undertaken. It should be noted that such engagement (consultation) gives rise to a legitimate expectation that the outcome of the consultation will be taken into account in determining the way forward. Accordingly, it is important that all feedback has been duly considered.
22. It is noted that the report recommends that matters be delegated to the Directors of Economic Development and Planning, Transport & Environment. This is a wide delegation.
23. The Council is statutorily responsible for the promotion of economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the city.

24. To the extent that any of the proposed schemes and initiatives are dependant on the making of any orders or the obtaining of any consents or the like then it will be necessary to follow the appropriate statutory processes. By way of example only if a scheme is dependent on the making of a traffic regulation order (TRO) then the outcome cannot be guaranteed as individuals have the right to object. Due and proper consideration would need to be given to any such objections in determining how to proceed.
25. If any proposed scheme involves the procurement of works, goods or services then the Council must comply with its Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Rules and procurement legislation.
26. In considering the way forward the decision maker will need to be satisfied that the proposals can be achieved within the budget and policy framework
27. The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). 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:
 - Age
 - Gender reassignment
 - Sex
 - Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
 - Disability
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Sexual orientation
 - Religion or belief – including lack of belief
28. As such decisions have to be made in the context of the Council's equality act public sector duties. Vulnerable people with respiratory and other illnesses are more likely to be affected by poor air quality. Accordingly an Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out the purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure that the Council has understood the potential impacts of the proposal in terms of equality so that it can ensure that it is making proportionate and rational decisions having due regard to its public sector equality duty. The decision maker must have due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment in making its decision.
29. The Council has to be mindful of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards when making any policy decisions and consider the impact upon the Welsh language, the report and Equality Impact Assessment deals with all these obligations.

30. The decision maker should also have regard when making its decision to the Council's wider obligations under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In brief the act makes provision with regards promoting/improving wellbeing.
31. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the Act") places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales – a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and is globally responsible.
32. In discharging its duties under the Act, the Council has set and published well being objectives designed to maximise its contribution to achieving the national well being goals. The well being objectives are set out in Cardiff's Corporate Plan 2021-24.
33. The well being duty also requires the Council to act in accordance with 'sustainable development principle'. This principle requires the Council to act in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Put simply, this means that Council decision makers must take account of the impact of their decisions on people living their lives in Wales in the future. In doing so, the Council must:
 - Look to the long term
 - Focus on prevention by understanding the root causes of problems
 - Deliver an integrates approach to achieving the 7 national well-being goals
 - Work in collaboration with others to find shared sustainable solutions
 - Involve people from all sections of the community in the decisions which affect them
34. The decision maker must be satisfied that the proposed decision accords with the principles above; and due regard must be given to the Statutory Guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers, which is accessible using the link below: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/statutory-guidance/?lang=en>.
35. The Council has to consider the Well-being of Future Guidance (Wales) Act 2015 and how this strategy may improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

HR Implications

36. There are no direct HR implications from this report and action plan.

Property Implications

37. There are no direct property implications or recommendations from this report. It is important to understand the significant impact property may have to either deliver or support the delivery of the City Centre Recovery Action plan. Should recovery proposals specifically require the use of

Council assets or require property transactions, this should be undertaken in consultation with Strategic Estates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) approve in principle the City Centre Recovery Action Plan: and
- (ii) delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development and the Director of Planning, Transport & Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member Investment and Development, Cabinet Member Strategic Planning and Transport, Cabinet Member Finance, Modernisation and Performance, s.151 Officer and Director Governance and Legal Services to bring together and promote key initiatives and programmes that the Council and partners will work towards over the next five years, subject to any proposals being within the budget and policy framework

SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Andrew Gregory
	14 January 2021

The following appendix is attached:

- Appendix 1: Cardiff City Centre Recovery Action Plan

The following background papers have been taken into account

Draft Greener, Fairer, Stronger City Recovery and Renewal Strategy (May 2021)

<https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Your-Council/Strategies-plans-and-policies/covid-recovery-strategy/Documents/Draft%20City%20Recovery%20and%20Renewal%20Strategy.pdf>