

COUNCIL: 27 JANUARY 2022

FINANCE, MODERNISATION & PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Real Living Wage

Cardiff's Living Wage City Steering Group is continuing to oversee our transformation into a Living Wage City, and 2021 was an incredible year for this initiative in Cardiff. A record 42 employers employing 8,000 residents gained Living Wage accreditation as Living Wage employers last year, meaning that over 64,000 residents now work for 160 accredited Living Wage employers in Cardiff. This work has had a significant impact on our city and residents, with Cardiff University calculating that an additional £39 million has gone into the Cardiff economy as a result of wages being uplifted to the real Living Wage.

Looking to the year ahead, a key focus will be the expansion of the real Living Wage to the social care sector, which has long been a priority of the Administration. On 21 December 2021, the Welsh Government announced an additional £43m in their budget for councils and local health boards to enable the payment of the real Living Wage for social care staff from April 2022, recognising the very important role that they play in supporting our most vulnerable citizens. The Council welcomes this decision, and I am very proud of the role that the Living Wage City Steering Group and Living Wage Leadership Groups, of which both the Leader and I are members, have played in lobbying for this much-needed change.

The Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru is currently working with the Welsh Government to develop initial guidance for local authorities that will set out expectations around implementation of the real Living Wage in the social care sector. This guidance document is due to be discussed at a meeting of ADSS Cymru Directors on 26 January 2022.

The Living Wage City Steering Group also met on 20 January 2022 to discuss its priorities for the next three years. There will be an increased emphasis on Living Wage campaigns around St David's Day, May Day, and Living Wage Week and, in anticipation of these events, I would strongly encourage all councillors to help get the message out that paying the real Living Wage is good for businesses, good for employees and good for Cardiff.

Covid-19 Business Support Grants

The Council is working closely with the Welsh Government to deliver a further round of Covid-19 Business Support Grants due to the impact of Covid-19. These grants are application based and available to businesses in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors. Grants of £2,000, £4,000 and £6,000 are payable depending on the rateable

value of the company. A discretionary scheme is also available with grants of £500 and £2,000. Full details of the January 2022 round of grants available as part of the Economic Resilience Fund, along with the application forms, are available on the Council's website: [COVID-19 Support for Business \(cardiff.gov.uk\)](https://cardiff.gov.uk/covid-19-support-for-business)

CardiffWorks Update

The CardiffWorks Ready project is a new employability support project that has been developed to assist potential candidates in overcoming barriers that they face to entering CardiffWorks. The project is focused on supporting under-represented candidates by linking closely with the Into Work Advice Service and community groups.

New Senior Advice Officers are working hard to provide a personal and professional service to members of the public who have been referred through to CardiffWorks from the Into Work Advice Service and who have either been unsuccessful at the CardiffWorks assessment or have contacted the service directly for assistance. Into Work mentors can also refer their own clients directly onto the scheme. A range of services are currently offered such as assessment feedback, digital literacy skills and CardiffWorks Ready courses hosted by the Adult Learning Team, which include modules on skills and qualities required, communication skills, business correspondence, numeracy and a final assessment. The team also works in partnership with other teams and organisations, including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Remploy, Working Wales, Bright Futures, Veteran Support Team, Volunteering Team and the Youth Service.

Whilst the renewed Covid-19 restrictions have led to some of the face-to-face events that were planned for January 2022 being postponed, the CardiffWorks Team is pursuing engagement through new promotional material and encouraging attendance at any future events. These events include a hot desk in the Queen Street Job Centre Plus, a presence at the Council's Job Clubs throughout the Hubs, a bespoke training course in conjunction with the Adult Learning Team and managers in various call centre environments, as well as a new scheme to subsidise placements for those with little work experience. This year will also see the team expand its reach by working in partnership with more community groups thanks to a newly appointed Community Coordinator post, which will provide support with accessing temporary roles within CardiffWorks that can lead to sustainable employment by Cardiff Council.

Kickstart Application Support Events

In partnership with the DWP, the Into Work Gateway Team organised a number of Kickstart Application Support events throughout December 2021. The events highlighted Kickstart opportunities across a variety of sectors. The team assisted young people with tailoring their CVs to match roles and applying for Kickstart positions. Kickstart application support was also offered in a number of Hubs across the city. In addition, a member of the team attended Cardiff's three job centres to provide application support. A total of 27 young people were supported to complete applications.

BOBi (Chatbot)

BOBi finished the year with a total of over 96,000 conversations since it was launched. Feedback from users was positive once again last month, with 89% of feedback received being rated as Very Good, Good or OK. Our corporate trainees have continued their excellent work to investigate any negative feedback and ensure that BOBi is retrained and redesigned to help residents as effectively as possible.

Last month saw the launch of the missed waste collection feature on the bot, which now allows residents to check the status of a waste collection and report it missed without having to leave the bot. The Development Team is currently looking at system upgrades for the bot platform, which will allow us to experiment with new features such as banners. Work to develop graffiti reporting and digital parking permit features is also ongoing.

CardiffGov Mobile App

At the end of December 2021, the total number of downloads of the CardiffGov mobile app since its launch in 2018 reached 53,493. The latest update in November 2021 delivered a link for checking parking permit types by property as the Council moves toward digital parking permits for residents. Other work included updates to the accessibility statements and several technical changes in the background to improve existing services. The next release for the app, which is planned for February 2022, will include a new service for reporting graffiti across the city, which will enable residents to upload photos along with their reports. Further changes and additions planned include additional work to improve accessibility and the development of a new service for reporting problem parking.

Website

The Council's website (www.cardiff.gov.uk) had 200,000 visitors in December 2021 who viewed 622,000 pages of information. 70.5% of website visitors chose to access the site using a mobile device, which is the highest ever percentage of mobile users.

In total, the website received 8.5million page views last year, together with an additional 4.9million on other websites created by the Council's Web Team. The most visited pages last year were 'When are my bins collected', 'Recycling centres' and 'School term dates', which accounted for almost 20% of the total page views for the year.

Our compliance of webpage content against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA and AAA standards remains at 93%. Cardiff is currently third in Wales on the Silktide Index and we are working towards increasing our compliance score.

Councillor Chris Weaver
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance
20 January 2022