

**COUNCIL: 30 JUNE 2022**

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## **LEADER STATEMENT**

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### **New Administration & Vision for Cardiff**

In the local government elections on 5 May 2022, Cardiff Labour was re-elected for another five-year term. Winning 55 of 79 Council seats, this Administration has received a clear mandate for our policy agenda and vision for Cardiff.

We have made great progress since first launching Capital Ambition in July 2017 and a renewed vision in February 2020; however, the world has changed significantly over this period. The Covid-19 pandemic has created new problems and exacerbated existing challenges and, more recently, the war in Ukraine has threatened to prolong the current cost of living crisis. While creating great hardship, these world-changing events have also forced the Council to innovate and created opportunities to deliver lasting improvements to our city. With the worst of the pandemic behind us, thanks to the incredible success of the mass vaccination programme, we are now focused on leading a city-wide recovery, for which we are setting our ambitions for Cardiff even higher.

In light of the current climate, my Administration is preparing to launch a new five-year policy agenda for the city to build on Capital Ambition – to be considered by Cabinet next month – which will set out our vision for making Cardiff a stronger, fairer and greener city. Realising this vision will involve:

- **Stronger:** Attracting new investment and businesses into the city, boosting economic productivity, creating good-quality jobs in our high-value and foundational sectors, and boosting our resilience to climate change and associated environmental threats.
- **Fairer:** Delivering excellent education, training, into work and social services, as well as transport connectivity, to ensure that all our citizens are able to benefit from our growth and the new opportunities it creates.
- **Greener:** Delivering a robust network of active travel and public transport, making Cardiff a '15-minute city', generating renewable energy and enhancing local biodiversity, ensuring that our growth is sustainable and aligned with our commitment to becoming a Carbon Neutral City by 2030.

Stronger, Fairer, Greener, our new policy agenda, will be launched at City Hall on Tuesday 12 July; all Members are invited.

As we prepare to begin delivering for the people of Cardiff who have given us their trust, I remain confident that we can emerge even stronger post-Covid-19, and deliver a better future for our citizens, our businesses, the Cardiff Capital Region and Wales.

## **'Move More Cardiff' Physical Activity & Sport Strategy 2022-27**

On 8 June, I attended the launch event for the 'Move More Cardiff' Physical Activity & Sport Strategy 2022-27 at Glamorgan County Cricket Club. I also spoke at the event about our ambition to make Cardiff one of the most active cities in the UK. Cardiff is an ambitious sporting city with excellent facilities and a network of key partners involved in delivering physical activity and sport services. The development of this new strategy enables us to consolidate the resources of partner organisations around our shared goals. I am pleased that the Council will be working with Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and Cardiff Metropolitan University to implement the strategy. Our shared vision is no less than for Cardiff to become the best city in the UK to be physically active, from walking, cycling and activity in daily life through to internationally renowned sport, and I am confident that the unique partnership between our three organisations has given us the platform we need to deliver on our ambitions for all our communities.

## **Core Cities Cabinet**

The first meeting of the Core Cities Cabinet since the local government elections took place on 1 June. Work on the future of urban Britain was discussed; this work will focus on Core Cities and their role in driving growth, but will also be inclusive, placed firmly in the context of well-functioning city regions and regions, understanding the relationships between places as interdependent, not hierarchies. An update on the UK Cities Climate Investment Commission (UKCIC) was also provided. UKCIC aims to solve the challenge of getting major private investment into Net Zero projects across cities (over £200billion for the founding members), also creating jobs, growth and securing a 'just transition' (i.e. moving to a more sustainable economy in a way which is fair to everyone – including people working in polluting industries). The work of the Commission ties into the Council's work to deliver our vital One Planet Cardiff agenda.

## **Shared Prosperity Fund**

Members will be aware that a regional plan is being developed in response to the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund by the ten local authorities of the Cardiff Capital Region. This regional plan is a requirement to unlock the funding, but the expectation is that this will be mostly delivered and managed by local authorities, supporting activities in our communities, investing in local businesses, and enhancing our skills provision. Working with our colleagues in the region, we will ensure that the plan allows sufficient flexibility to deliver the Council's own priorities.

## **Opening of New Ogi Offices**

On 16 June, I attended the official opening of Ogi's new headquarters in Cardiff, where I spoke about Ogi's ambitious plans to roll out ultra-fast full-fibre broadband across South Wales, as well as our shared vision of the benefits and opportunities that digital technology presents for our local businesses and communities. With their resources and expertise, they will be an invaluable partner in unlocking the potential of digital technology within the Cardiff Capital Region. Their work to expand high-speed broadband infrastructure across the region will create new digital opportunities for businesses and communities, help drive up economic productivity, and reduce the digital divide holding back certain communities within South Wales.

Furthermore, the opening of Ogi's new offices in Hodge House on St Mary Street will not only create good-quality jobs in the heart of Cardiff, which are accessible to our residents and to the wider city-region, but it will also give a major boost to our broader recovery plans for the city centre. I am clear in my view that talk of the death of cities post-pandemic is greatly exaggerated and opening a new HQ in Cardiff reinforces my belief. This important development will bring life to one of our listed buildings, whilst also supporting our hospitality and retail businesses whose success depends on the return of office workers to the city centre. My Administration therefore looks forward to working with Ogi to ensure that the digital transition helps to build a stronger, fairer and greener capital city-region in the post-Covid world.

### **'Betty Campbell: A Journey Through Butetown'**

As part of this year's Refugee Week (20-26 June), the first performances of a new play, entitled 'Betty Campbell: A Journey Through Butetown', have taken place. The play has been developed by In Character Production, with support from Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru and Butetown Arts & Culture Association. The one-woman show takes school children on a historical journey through Butetown, from the building of the docklands through two World Wars and onto modern-day Cardiff Bay – all told through Betty's eyes. I was delighted to attend the first performance of the play on 20 June at St Mary The Virgin Church and to meet Kimberley Abodunrin who stars as Betty Campbell. Recognising the impact of inspirational figures such as Betty Campbell is a vital part of shaping a fairer Cardiff for the future.

### **Falklands War 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration**

I joined the First Minister of Wales, Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan and the Lord Mayor, as well as veterans and their families, at the National Service of Commemoration to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conflict in the Falkland Islands at Llandaff Cathedral on 16 June. The service was led by the Acting Dean and Archbishop of Wales and also featured a video message sent by HRH The Prince of Wales.

**Councillor Huw Thomas**  
**Leader of the Council**  
**23 June 2022**