

COUNCIL: 30 JUNE 2022

INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

The Cardiff Economy

Councillors will be pleased to learn that the latest unemployment figures for Cardiff continue to fall, with fewer than 10,000 claimants in the city. This is down from over 16,000 during the height of the pandemic. Cardiff now has one of the lowest unemployment claimant rates of UK cities, and the lowest of all but one of the UK's Core Cities.

This reflects the Council's focus during the pandemic on supporting those sectors most at risk – as outlined in the Administration's recovery strategy adopted last December. This has led to footfall in the city centre quickly returning to pre-Covid levels, and sectors such as hospitality and retail recovering quickly.

This recovery has, however, raised additional issues relating to recruitment, reflecting the national picture where vacancies now exceed the number of people unemployed. The Council's Into Work Service is working tirelessly to help both those out of work to get into employment, as well as supporting those in employment to upskill and meet the needs of local businesses who are struggling to recruit.

City Recovery and Investment

Cardiff also continues to see confidence return to the city's economy, especially in the key sectors identified in the Administration's Economic Strategy including the fintech, creative and digital sectors. I anticipate the announcement of two major investments relating to the creative industries and cyber security in the near future that will bring a large number of well-paid jobs to the city. The Cardiff Capital Region has also recently announced a £1.6m investment in Fintech Wales, an investment that will provide further support to the development of a thriving Cardiff cluster.

In addition, Cardiff has seen investment in the city centre, including the opening of new hotels and hospitality venues, with the launch of a new boutique hotel this month.

The Administration continues to promote the city as an investment location across the UK and globally, most recently in May attending the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum in Leeds.

An important element of the Administration's economic recovery strategy relies on a significant events programme. Councillors will be pleased that the city has recently been able to attract a number of events ranging from the large multi-national events such as WWE, to specialist events such as Dreamachine where the organisers have singled out Cardiff for the support they have received from the local Council.

Cardiff has also recently secured a major creative industries conference to the city, details of which will be announced shortly. This fits neatly with Administration's strategy of attracting business events to the city that align with our wider economic aspirations.

Development

Councillors will welcome the high level of business confidence that remains in the city reflected in the continuing high levels of investment in developments in the city.

Councillors will be aware that planning permission was granted for a new development at Central Quay earlier this month, which alongside the commercial and residential development will see the opening up of the riverfront south of Central Station.

The Administration continues apace to take forward key elements of the city's development agenda, including the Arena, the International Sports Village and the link between the city centre and Cardiff Bay. I will bring further updates on these projects as they progress.

Councillor Russell Goodway
Cabinet Member for Investment & Development
23 June 2022