

COUNCIL: 21 JULY 2022

LEADER STATEMENT

'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' Policy Statement

My administration's policy statement, entitled 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener', was approved by Cabinet on 14 July 2022. These are the themes that have defined the work of the Council over the past decade, and they will be at the heart of everything that we do over the next five years. The document sets out an ambitious programme for government, with deliverable policy commitments across all Cabinet portfolios, that will now need to be translated into the Council's policy, partnership and budgetary framework over the year ahead. In a change from my Council Statement last month, I will be speaking about our new policy statement at an event that is being held at the Parkgate Hotel in Cardiff on Tuesday 19 July (4.30pm-6.00pm).

Levelling Up Fund

The next round of Levelling Up Fund applications is due to open this month and, following previous reports to Cabinet in June 2021 and March 2022, the Council intends to submit two major projects – Cardiff Crossrail Phase One and a further bid to support infrastructure and public realm improvements around the regeneration of Atlantic Wharf. These two projects will deliver for Cardiff and deliver for our communities, creating jobs, but also crucially investing in the transport infrastructure and the places and spaces that our residents will use for decades to come.

If successful, these projects should leverage over £100m of investment for Cardiff and leave a lasting legacy for our communities. The Cardiff Crossrail project is the starting point for further investment in our transport infrastructure, with the aim of ultimately bringing forward new stations in the east of the city. The public realm improvements linked with the regeneration of Atlantic Wharf will make sure that the new Arena, as well as the wider investment taking place, links in with our communities, and provides both better active travel and public spaces to create a city destination in its own right.

Linked to the UK Government's 'levelling up' agenda, I have also recently contributed an article to a future publication by the High Speed Rail Group, which aims to focus on the 'levelling up' benefits of a truly national high speed rail network within the UK. This could include spreading the benefits of HS2 and improving connectivity by developing a new high speed rail route running from Birmingham to Bristol and Cardiff. Of course, none of this will happen without strategic investment in the rail network serving South Wales and the West of England, as well as a transformation in the current attitudes of policy makers in Whitehall. Cardiff Council will continue to lobby the UK Government for future investment in high speed rail infrastructure in the rest of the UK through our membership of the Western Gateway partnership.

Shared Prosperity Fund

The Council has begun planning for the new Shared Prosperity Fund and is working closely with colleagues within the Cardiff Capital Region on this. The first stage requires the submission of a regional investment plan, being led by colleagues in Rhondda Cynon Taf Council. We have indicated the areas where we would like to see interventions take place at a broad strategic level based on our recovery strategy. However, we do expect to include a significant allocation to support local businesses in Cardiff. The aim is to make them more productive – and therefore pay more – as well as more sustainable. We will also invest in city and district centres to make them more attractive places to visit and do business. Over the summer, we will engage with key stakeholders to develop a more detailed delivery plan, with a specific element focussed on ensuring that we provide the appropriate support for business.

Cardiff Public Services Board

I was pleased to be re-appointed as the Chair of the Cardiff Public Services Board (PSB) on 12 July 2022 at the first meeting of the PSB since the council elections in May 2022. The Chair of Cardiff & Vale University Health Board was also re-appointed as the Vice Chair of the PSB. We discussed a number of agenda items at the meeting, including the city's partnership response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in Cardiff as part of the Homes for Ukraine, Family Visa and Welsh Government Super Sponsor schemes, as well as receiving updates on the Cardiff Youth Justice Service, the 'Move More Eat Well' Plan and community safety issues.

Following a review of partnership priorities and structures, the Cardiff PSB is currently seeking to identify new partnership priorities for the city, based on the Local Well-being Assessment, which will inform the new Local Well-being Plan that needs to be agreed by PSB partners by May 2023. Partnership working and public service collaboration, which takes forward the momentum and lessons from the city's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be fundamental to tackling the major challenges facing the city over the next five years.

Wales National Srebrenica Commemoration

The 2022 Wales National Srebrenica Commemoration event, which marked the 27th anniversary of Srebrenica Memorial Day, was held on 6th July 2022 at Cardiff and Vale College. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend and perform my role in reading out the 11 pledges of remembrance at the event due to me testing positive for Covid-19; however, I am grateful to my group colleague, Councillor Ash-Edwards, for attending the event in my place, alongside the Lord Mayor, particularly following his role in proposing the motion about the Srebrenica genocide that was agreed by Council last month.

Councillor Huw Thomas

Leader of the Council

15 July 2022