

COUNCIL: 21 JULY 2022

FINANCE, MODERNISATION & PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award

Cardiff Council has received the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Award, the highest honour available for organisations that employ and support serving members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families. Only 140 organisations were awarded the prestigious Gold Award last year in recognition of their outstanding support as employers for the Armed Forces Community, with only 11 of those being in Wales. Currently, only 85 Local Authorities in the UK hold the award and only 493 organisations in total hold the award as of 2021. The Veterans Advice Team within Housing & Communities has helped to identify staff who are from an Armed Forces background, and have worked with HR People Services to implement internal HR policies, such as special leave policies for Reservists.

Fair Work (Long Term Agency Worker) Policy

Decent work can help achieve a stronger, modernised, more inclusive economy. It contributes to national growth and prosperity and assists in addressing inequality, reducing poverty and promoting well-being. In March 2019, The Fair Work Commission published 'Fair Work Wales', which defines fair work, identifies levers for promoting it, and includes recommendations to help deliver it in Wales. Fair work is defined in Wales as being where workers are fairly rewarded, heard and represented, secure and able to progress in a healthy, inclusive environment where rights are respected.

The Council has made the commitment in the Corporate Plan 2022-25 to be a 'Fair Work' employer by reviewing long-term agency placements and taking appropriate actions to reduce the use of agency workers on long-term assignments. As a result, the Council has now developed a policy that all services will be required to follow. The Fair Work (Long Term Agency Worker) Policy sets out new commitments with regard to agency workers with continuous assignments in service areas of more than four years and more than two years. Agency workers with more than four years continuous assignments (with breaks equivalent to annual leave) in the same service area, will be offered a permanent contract, subject to relevant pre-employment checks. Agency workers with more than two years continuous assignments (with breaks equivalent to annual leave), but less than four years, a temporary contract will be offered, subject to relevant pre-employment checks. Officers and Cabinet Members have worked closely with the Trade Unions on this policy, which is fully supported by the Trade Unions.

Website

www.cardiff.gov.uk had 200,000 visitors in June 2022 who viewed 679,000 pages of information. Last month, 67% of website visitors used a mobile device and 21,000 online payments were made via the website totalling £2.8million. Visits to the Benefits and Grants pages of the website have risen 273% in Quarter 1 of 2022/23 compared to the same period last year, with 52% of the visits being made to our Cost of Living Support pages. In addition, 90% of graffiti reports were completed online using the new web and app service that was launched in June, and 96.8% of appointment bookings for our recycling centres were completed online, which is the highest online percentage achieved to date.

BOBi Chatbot

The Council's chatbot, BOBi, had 6,289 conversations last month, bringing the total amount of conversations since its launch to nearly 130,000. We continue to receive good feedback scores on use of the chatbot, with 90% of those customers who provided feedback rating their experience as positive. The main topics of conversation continue to focus on Council Tax and benefits, customers looking to discuss fines, appointment bookings for our recycling centres and the ordering of waste bags. An update to enable the ability to report graffiti via the chatbot is due to be released shortly following the completion of the final round of testing.

Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2022

As I confirmed in my Council Statement last month, Cardiff Council's entry, on behalf of the Cardiff Living Wage City Partnership, is one of nine entries that have been shortlisted in the Public/Private Partnership category of this year's LGC Awards, with the winner due to be announced on Wednesday 20 July 2022. Members will be aware that the Council has worked successfully with partners such as Cynnal Cymru, Citizens Cymru, Cardiff Third Sector Council, Cardiff University and Cardiff Business School to promote the Real Living Wage in Cardiff and I believe that we have entered a very strong submission to this year's awards, backed up by what I felt was a very positive presentation to the award category's judges, which took place last month.

Wales Pension Partnership – Joint Governance Committee

In my role as Chair of the Cardiff and Vale Pensions Committee, I am part of the Joint Governance Committee (JGC) of the Wales Pension Partnership (WPP). The JGC is the governing body of the pooled investment arrangements of the eight Welsh Local Government Pension Funds, and made up of the eight Chairs of each fund, with a Scheme Member Representative in attendance in a non-voting capacity. Our first meeting since the elections was held on 8 July, and I was elected as Chair of the JGC, having been Vice-Chair over the last year. Including the Blackrock Low Carbon Tracker Fund investment, 86% of the Cardiff and Vale Pension Fund investments (approximately £2.3 billion) are now held in WPP sub-funds.

Councillor Chris Weaver

Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance

15 July 2022