

COUNCIL: 24 NOVEMBER 2022

LEADER STATEMENT

Pre-COP27 Reception

I was honoured to represent Cardiff at the pre-COP27 reception that was held at Buckingham Palace on 4 November 2022 by King Charles III. I joined colleagues from Core Cities in ensuring that the interests of leading cities in the UK were represented and, in particular, how cities like Cardiff are making a significant contribution to efforts to address the Climate Emergency by reducing carbon emissions and meeting Net Zero targets by 2030.

Living Wage Week

On 14 November 2022, I joined the Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance in attending the celebration event held at Cardiff University's sbarc|spark building to mark the start of this year's Living Wage Week. I was pleased to also speak at the event and to recognise both the efforts and success of the Cardiff Living Wage City Partnership in promoting the real Living Wage in the city and the impact this has had over recent years. There are now 186 accredited Living Wage employers in Cardiff, with around 67,500 people working for an accredited Living Wage employer, of whom over 11,000 have received a pay rise to the real Living Wage. This has put close to an additional £50 million into the Cardiff economy since 2012.

Cardiff Business Awards 2022

I attended and spoke at this year's Cardiff Business Awards at City Hall on 11 November 2022. Cardiff Council was, again, one of the awards sponsors and there was a high number of entries for this year's awards, with an excellent response from SMEs across a wide range of business sectors in the city. I was pleased to present the Outstanding Contribution Award to Alan Peterson OBE for his contribution to business globally, as well as the positive impact that his charitable work has had on the lives of disadvantaged members of the local community in Cardiff and the organisations that serve them. As ever, the evening provided an opportunity to celebrate the strength of Cardiff's businesses and the contributions they make to the local economy.

Armed Forces Community Covenant

On 14 November at Cardiff Castle, I was pleased to re-sign the Armed Forces Community Covenant on behalf of the Council. The re-signing of the Covenant, which was signed originally by the Council in 2013, reaffirms the Council's commitment to supporting our Armed Forces personnel, both serving and veterans.

The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces, which aims to encourage understanding and awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community. It is also an integral part of helping our Armed Forces community to readjust to civilian life.

The Council's advice service for veterans is delivered in Hubs across the city and can help former and current Armed Forces personnel and their families with a wide range of matters, including employment support, benefits, debt problems and housing. I would encourage all Members to raise awareness of this service. Further information is available at: <https://www.cardiffmoneyadvice.co.uk/advice/veterans-armed-forces-and-their-families/>

UNISON/APSE Report on National Care Service for Wales

I was pleased to attend and speak at an event held on 16 November 2022 to mark the publication of a report by APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence), commissioned by UNISON Cymru Wales, on '[A National Care Service for Wales](#)'. The report found that the private sector is a barrier to social care improvements in Wales, with people who receive care, as well as care workers, being let down by the current system of commissioning, outsourcing and the need to generate a profit, as well as years of underfunding. Cardiff Council supports the view that care services in Wales should be directly and democratically provided by local authorities and should be properly funded.

The Welsh Government set up an Expert Group earlier this year to produce a report and recommendations about the steps towards creating a National Care Service in Wales, which would be free at the point of need, with social care remaining a responsibility of local government and continuing as a public service. The Expert Group has also published its report this month, entitled '[Towards a National Care and Support Service for Wales](#)'. The report's recommendations will now be considered by the Welsh Government and the intention previously was for an implementation plan to be developed, supported by external engagement, by the end of 2023.

European Language Equality Network General Assembly

Cardiff recently welcomed representatives from across Europe for a meeting of the European Language Equality Network (ELEN) General Assembly, which was also attended by the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Fernand de Varennes. I welcomed delegates to Cardiff at a reception that was held at the Temple of Peace on 28 October 2022 where I emphasised the importance of Wales – and its capital city – continuing to maintain and develop its relationships with European nations, particularly those where minority languages are spoken, in the face of the challenges resulting from the UK's exit from the European Union. I also made clear the Council's commitment to supporting and growing the Welsh language in the capital city, as well as our proud history of cultural and linguistic diversity within the city's communities.

Parc Cefn Onn

On 2 November, I joined the Cabinet Member for Culture, Parks & Events at an event to celebrate the culmination of the Parc Cefn Onn 'Into the Garden & Beyond' project, which was part-funded from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The project has seen a total investment of £660k in the park, as well as improvements in infrastructure through the installation of a new boardwalk to improve accessibility, improvements to signage and wayfinding, installation of interpretation boards, upgraded toilets and changing facilities, car park improvements and conservation work to the Summerhouse. A 'tramper' service is also being introduced using electric mobility scooters in partnership with the not-for-profit organisation, Countryside Mobility Network. This will enable improved access to the park by individuals with mobility problems. The investment made at Parc Cefn Onn will result in an enhanced user experience and will add to the value of one of Cardiff's Green Flag award-winning parks.

Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader of the Council
18 November 2022