

INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

Economic Outlook

Councillors will be pleased to learn that the city centre continues to outperform its rivals in terms of footfall, and there remains significant interest from an investment perspective with a number of new premises opening over the last month, including the likes of Proud Mary who have made a substantial investment in the city centre.

Cardiff is also beginning to promote the city centre for Christmas activity and, so far, the number of “hits” that have been received on the Visit Cardiff website has exceeded records. In promoting Cardiff as a Christmas destination, the Council will also work with the likes of Great Western Railway to promote the city as a shopping destination across their network.

I am also pleased to report that much of the hospitality trade is reporting a positive outlook up until Christmas, but concerns remain that the impact of the cost-of-living crisis will become more stark as we move into the New Year if the national economic picture gets worse.

Tech City

Councillors will also welcome the fact that Cardiff continues to see confidence in the city in sectors such as fintech and the creative industries. FinTech Wales’ latest report indicates that the sector has created over 1,000 jobs over the past year, concentrated in Cardiff with the likes of challenger banks like Starling doubling their headcount in the city. Digital challenger bank Tandem has also announced plans to create an additional 100 jobs in the city.

A survey of city centre businesses also suggested that most were looking at expanding their footprint over the next twelve months as most also reported an increasing number of people returning to the workplace.

Cardiff has seen home-grown businesses, like communications agency Freshwater, take up new space in the city centre as they seek to benefit from the emerging cluster that is being established around Central Square. Last month’s launch of Media.Cymru, a Council supported £50m collaboration that will invest in R&D in the media sector, will also help to solidify Cardiff’s creative and media cluster.

Councillors will no doubt share my view that these developments vindicate the Administration’s approach to supporting more and better jobs across the city confirmed by the analysis by the likes of Savills who cite that “Cardiff is home to one of the fastest-growing digital clusters in the UK”.

Supporting Local Business

The Council also continues to support the development of small business infrastructure, which includes recently helping Tramshed Tech to expand its co-working space in the city centre through the Transforming Towns scheme. This will provide additional space for knowledge-based businesses in Cardiff, helping to provide a platform for some of our most innovative and exciting new enterprises in the city to flourish.

Business Roadshows

The Economic Development Team is putting in place a Business Park Roadshow programme aimed at meeting local companies across the city and holding face-to-face sessions with local companies. Our first location of the Business Roadshow programme will be Cardiff Business Park in Llanishen, which will take place in a new electric bus on 22 & 23 November 2022 in the S4C car park on Parc Ty Glas.

Heritage Buildings

Councillors will be pleased to learn that the plans have been submitted for the development of Merchant Place and the Cory's Building in Butetown. This redevelopment will see those buildings, which have been vacant for over two decades, brought back to use and address what has been a blight on Bute Street for some time. The scheme will hopefully spearhead further investment in Bute Street and the James Street area, bringing more footfall and activity to the area.

Major Projects

The Council continues to progress the development of the International Sports Village with the development of the Full Business Case for the new leisure infrastructure, inclusive of the new velodrome and closed loop circuit and public event space, which is due to be brought to Cabinet in early 2023.

In addition, we are currently out to market seeking partners to take forward our wider vision for the ISV to deliver residential and commercial investment for the area. I am pleased to report that there has been significant interest and I remain positive about the prospects for securing the investment that will support our communities, create jobs and provide new public space and facilities for the people of Cardiff.

Councillor Russell Goodway
Cabinet Member for Investment & Development
18 November 2022