

LEADER STATEMENT

Community Plan for Ely and Caerau

Following the tragic deaths of Harvey Evans and Kyrees Sullivan on 22 May 2023 and the disorder that followed in the Ely area of the city, I attended a meeting that was held in the Ely ward on 26 May 2023, which was convened by the Welsh Government First Minister and Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS, and involved representatives of the local community, Action in Caerau & Ely (ACE), Kevin Brennan MP, the South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner, the Council's Chief Executive and local councillors.

Following that meeting, the Minister for Social Justice issued a [Written Statement](#), which confirmed that all the agencies that attended the meeting have committed to jointly sponsor a grassroots-led partnership initiative to create a Community Plan for Ely and Caerau. This will be developed in genuine partnership with the people of Ely and Caerau and aims to respond to the long-term needs and concerns of residents by focusing on actions and outcomes for people in the local community, and drawing on the strengths and local knowledge of residents.

The Minister provided a further update in a [Written Statement](#) issued on 19 June 2023, which confirmed that ACE will lead on coordinating work to develop the Community Plan and work closely with local organisations as part of a local steering group and by engaging widely with residents of all ages. This approach will ensure that the Community Plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the people of Ely and Caerau. The Written Statement also set out more details about the establishment of a Community Reference Group, which will include public service and community representatives and support the work of the local steering group led by ACE. This will be chaired by the Minister for Social Justice and I will be the Vice Chair. The first meeting of the Community Reference Group will be held early next month.

The Minister for Social Justice is due to attend the next meeting of the Cardiff Public Services Board (PSB) on 28 June 2023 to discuss the response by PSB partners to the events in Ely last month and how the Council and public service partners in Cardiff can work with the local community and the Welsh Government to help develop the Community Plan. The Welsh Government, Cardiff Council and the South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner have committed to provide funding to support services within the local community and the development of the Community Plan.

Stuttgart Visit

I was invited to visit Cardiff's twin city of Stuttgart in Germany by the city's Mayor, Dr Frank Nopper, and attend both the Sister Cities Conference (18-21 June 2023) and Urban Future Conference (21-23 June 2023) that were held in the city. Whilst in Stuttgart, I met with the Mayor of Stuttgart to further knowledge exchange and identify potential areas of future collaboration between our cities. I also met with representatives from a number of potential investors in Cardiff.

The Sister Cities Conference involved Stuttgart's twin cities and focused on cultural urban development. In 2023, Cardiff is also supporting Stuttgart with the Urban Diplomacy Exchange programme, which is an important twin city activity.

The Urban Future Conference was attended by over 125 city mayors and debated a range of urban issues, including decarbonising the built environment, cities' carbon emission strategies, and mobility in cities and regions, that are relevant to Cardiff's One Planet Cardiff priorities.

UKREiiF Conference

I was pleased to represent Cardiff and the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) and lead the Western Gateway delegation at the UK Real Estate, Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) that was held in Leeds on 16-18 May 2023. UKREiiF is the UK's biggest real estate and investment event, with circa 10,000 attendees. The event included representatives from the public sector, including from every UK Core City, UK Government, investors, funders, developers and housebuilders. In addition to holding meetings with a number of potential investors, I gave a welcome speech at the CCR reception, which was held at the Western Gateway stand, in my capacity as the Vice Chair of the CCR Regional Cabinet. I also spoke as part of a panel discussion about Green Energy Super Clusters, alongside colleagues from the Western Gateway area.

Cardiff Capital Region

I was pleased to attend and join Regional Cabinet colleagues from the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) at the Unleashed Conference, which was held at ICC Wales in Newport on 26 April 2023. In my capacity as the Leader of Cardiff Council and Vice Chair of the Regional Cabinet, with portfolio responsibility for Economic Strategy and Inward Investment, I chaired a keynote session on unleashing tech capability to help unlock the high growth potential of businesses within the city-region. This included speakers from Tech Nation, Alacrity Foundation, Trovalo and PureCyber Ltd, and focused on the scaling up the use of technology, the power of data-driven machine learning and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools across businesses, government and society.

The conference was followed, on 3 May 2023, by the launch of a new Cyber Innovation Hub in Cardiff, which aims to transform South Wales into a leading cyber security cluster by 2030 by creating a world-class pipeline of new cyber security products, high-growth businesses and technically skilled talent. The Cyber Innovation Hub is led by Cardiff University and funded by the Welsh Government and CCR, alongside partners including Airbus, Alacrity Foundation, CGI, Thales, Tramshed Tech and the University of South Wales.

On 25 May 2023, I joined my Cabinet colleague, Councillor Dan De’Ath, at a site visit by members of the CCR Regional Cabinet and Regional Transport Authority to Cardiff Central Station, which was organised by officials from Transport for Wales. The visit provided an opportunity to update CCR members on the Metro Central project and the developing Cardiff Central Enhancements Programme, including work to develop the full business case in readiness for consideration in 2024. This significant regional transport project is funded jointly by the UK Government Department for Transport, CCR and Welsh Government. The visit also highlighted the critical interfaces between the Cardiff Central enhancement works, the new bus interchange to the north, and the Cardiff Crossrail scheme and redevelopment of the south side of the station.

On 30 May 2023, a delegation of Cabinet Members from Cardiff Council visited the former Aberthaw Power Station site in the Vale of Glamorgan to learn more about future plans for this strategic regional site, which has been acquired by the CCR. The decommissioned site comprising circa 489 acres is subject to a long-term process of demolition and remediation, and the visit provided a useful opportunity to see for ourselves the scale of the works required, and to learn more about the planned regeneration of the site and future economic development opportunities for the CCR, including plans for a major green energy park.

Welsh Language Careers Fair

I was pleased to attend and speak at a special careers fair, Gyrfa Gymraeg, which was held at Cardiff and Vale College on 23 June 2023 for Year 9 pupils from Ysgol Bro Ederm and Ysgol Plasmawr. The event highlighted the value of Welsh language skills and promoted opportunities to study and work in Welsh. In my speech at the event, I also emphasised to those young people present the wealth of opportunities that exist in Cardiff for Welsh speakers and the importance of encouraging Welsh speakers to stay in Wales to progress their education, training and careers.

The 2021 Census showed a further increase in the number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff, and the percentage of the population they represent. It is vital that opportunities are provided to the city’s young people to use their Welsh language skills in education, training and the workplace to ensure that this positive trend continues.

In addition to the Council, a range of other employers took part in the event from a variety of sectors, including BBC Wales, Ansh Burgers, Cardiff Metropolitan University, ARUP, Screen Alliance, Transport for Wales, RWE, Sherman Theatre, Arts Council for Wales, Welsh Language Commissioner, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Cardiff Third Sector Council, Careers Wales, Rent Smart Wales, Sgil Cymru, Business in Focus and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board.

Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader of the Council
23 June 2023