

COUNCIL: 20 JULY 2023

TRANSPORT & STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT

Constructing Excellence in Wales Award

I am pleased that the Council's work to transform Wood Street as part of the Central Square development, which includes a new road layout, new bus lanes, rain gardens to manage surface water drainage, improvements to the public realm and a highway network that gives priority to buses, has been recognised by winning the Civils Project of the Year at this year's Constructing Excellence in Wales (CEW) Awards.

The transport scheme includes additional planting and 'bee bus stops' installed to increase biodiversity in the city centre. The Council has also worked very closely with disability groups to install a bespoke pedestrian crossing that has been built specifically to assist blind and partially sighted people. I know this has been warmly welcomed by the RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) and put forward as a model of best practice for when other new pedestrian crossings are implemented across the city.

Active Travel to School

Gwaelod Y Garth Primary School has started a 'bike bus' for pupils travelling to school. The inaugural ride between Taffs Well and the school took place on 23 June 2023 and saw a solid turnout from pupils, parents, and school governors. This initiative follows the successful development of a popular walking bus.

Data from the latest School Health Research Network's Student Health and Wellbeing Survey in Wales has indicated that, in Cardiff, 48.6% of respondents in Years 7 to 11 said they chose an active form of travel to school in 2021. That is significantly above the Welsh average of 35% and is an improvement on previous data for Cardiff, recorded at 47.5% in 2019 and 43.3% in 2017. This underlines the importance of the great work being done by the Council's Active Travel Schools and Road Safety Teams to enable more young people to walk, cycle and scoot to school.

The Council's Road Safety Team offers free cycle training to anyone who lives, works, or studies in Cardiff. Since January 2023, they have also trained 14 Police Community Support Officers to National Standard Cycle Training Level 3, and this has allowed them to use bikes in their patrols in the community.

Registration Service

The Fraud and Disclosure Unit and the Public Protection and Counter Fraud Teams, who operate across the UK under the General Registry Office, have singled out Cardiff's Registration Service for thanks and praise in stopping a significant fraud. Colleagues in the Cardiff Register Office were able to prevent incorrect details being included in a birth registration after they identified the mother was being coerced by the father into agreeing to include a false father's details on the child's registration. Due to the staff members' training, diligence and quick thinking, they were able to recognise multiple discrepancies within the information being provided, as well as acknowledging potential safeguarding concerns and unusual behaviour, which led to police interception. Subsequently, two males pleaded guilty to making a false statement for financial gain and immigration advantages, and have both received imprisonment sentences.

The Registration Service is in the final testing phase for customers to be able to apply and pay for copy certificates online. Currently, customers can only order online and an officer then has to call them back to take payment. This new online ordering and payment facility will reduce call handling and free up staff to undertake face-to-face appointments and deal with those customers who are unable to use the online facility.

A second phase of this project will be the creation of a marriage & civil partnership portal, which will bring all documents and payments into one online 'account' that couples can access 24/7 at a time and place that suits them. This will again reduce call handling and improve accessibility for those wanting to 'self-serve' online, thus freeing up phone lines for those who need to speak to an officer.

Both of these innovative improvements will improve customer service and form part of the digital transformation strategy for the Registration Service.

Councillor Dan De'Ath
Cabinet Member for Transport & Strategic Planning
14 July 2023