

INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

Indoor Arena

This month Cabinet approved the funding strategy for the new Indoor Arena, which means that enabling works will be able to begin in the New Year, with an opening date earmarked for the end of 2026. The circa £250 million investment into Cardiff Bay will bring jobs and support our city's cultural ambitions. Notably, it will complete the jigsaw of our event hosting capability, giving Cardiff the ability to host any type of performance of any size.

The arena has been a longstanding ambition for Cardiff and will support not just jobs in our hospitality sector, but also support the wider development of our city's creative industries; all part of our wider Atlantic Wharf Masterplan. The arena will also support our ambition of increasing more people to visit Cardiff and for longer, filling our hotel rooms throughout the year, and supporting our vibrant hospitality sector.

The Cabinet Report outlined our indicative timeline for the arena, with enabling works beginning in January 2024, the signing of the lease agreement in May/June 2024, with the main arena construction then beginning next summer.

Cardiff Market

Members will also be aware that we have been working hard to invest in our city's heritage buildings. There are not many buildings more iconic than Cardiff Market, which sits proudly in the centre of our city. I am pleased to say that we have secured the full funding for the project following an award of £3.1 million from the Welsh Government Transforming Towns programme. This follows the £2.1 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, as well as some support from the Shared Prosperity Fund.

A total of approximately £6.5 million will be invested in the restoration of the 130-year-old, Grade II* Listed Victorian building that will future-proof it for years to come. Members will know the market remains a popular destination in the city centre, but that there is an urgent need to invest in the building to make sure it is there for the next 130 years. The project shows our commitment to supporting our city centre in a way that reflects and respects our city's heritage in a sustainable way, supporting a greener, fairer, stronger Cardiff.

Cardiff Capital Region Investment Zone

This month it was announced that £160m of funding from the UK Government and Welsh Government will be used to support economic growth in the Cardiff Capital Region as part of a new Investment Zone. The Zone within Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) will be based across Cardiff with its heavy research base and Newport with its compound semiconductor expertise, with the wider region designated as an area of benefit.

The intention for the Investment Zones is to catalyse high-potential, knowledge-intensive growth clusters across the UK, with each Zone driving the growth of at least one key future sector from among green industries, digital technologies, life sciences, creative industries and advanced manufacturing. In CCR's case, the world-leading compound semiconductor cluster will feature as part of this.

Cardiff Business Awards

The Cardiff Business Awards, which celebrate the achievements of our city's enterprises and entrepreneurs, continues to grow. This year saw over 400 people attend the annual ceremony, which took place at the Mercure Holland House Hotel. The Cardiff Business of the Year Award went to Afanti Media, one of our city's many thriving creative businesses. In addition, the Outstanding Contribution to Cardiff Award was won by Landsec Group Plc, which has been actively involved in the city for over 40 years and has a longstanding commitment to serving the community, particularly supporting local people facing barriers to entering the workforce.

Economic Update

We continue to see investment in Cardiff across a range of sectors in the city, from technology businesses to new hospitality venues. This includes the official opening of the new Legal & General Headquarters in Central Square that provides space for 2,000 jobs in a modern, sustainable building right next to Cardiff Central Station. This all aligns with our vision of a Stronger, Fairer, Greener Cardiff, providing well paid jobs in places that are accessible to all of our communities. The confidence of the commercial sector in the city is also shown by the opening this month of the new Veezu Headquarters in Hodge House.

Confidence in our manufacturing business can also be seen from Panasonic's recent announcement of investment of up to £20m in its facility in Cardiff. This will see it implement a net-zero power system at its Pentwyn site. This will be the company's first investment of its kind outside of Japan and reaffirms Panasonic's commitment to Cardiff and its 400 staff.

Shared Prosperity Fund

Following an open call for projects this summer, a number of new projects will also be delivered in Cardiff as part of the Shared Prosperity Fund. These projects include support for start-ups and entrepreneurs, backing for the circular economy and investment in new creative spaces. In addition, we continue to support businesses in our city through the Cardiff Growth Fund, which provides SMEs with up to £10,000 to invest in ways of making their business more productive, more sustainable, or to support more inclusive employment.

Councillor Russell Goodway
Cabinet Member for Investment & Development
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