

TRANSPORT & STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT

Winter Operations

The winter weather has continued to present challenges for the Highway Maintenance Operations Teams, especially the adverse weather service. Extended periods of wet and cold weather take their toll on the city's roads, with potholes becoming more prevalent. In December 2023 alone, 1,225 potholes were identified across the city and made safe (903 on carriageways and 322 on footways).

Much of the adverse weather has been associated with the unusually high number of named storms that we experienced at the end of 2023 and at the start of this year. During this period, the Council has responded to over 200 reports of localised flooding, monitored river levels at Ely Bridge due to the potential impact of flooding on adjacent homes, and closed Michaelston Road in St Fagans following a flood warning. Extensive work was also undertaken prior to Christmas, attending to known high-risk locations to help minimise the threat to properties and disruption on the highway network. Since the beginning of 2024, adverse weather resources have been focused on responding to the threat of ice and frost, with 58 precautionary salting treatments being carried out on 13 routes across the city in the first week of January alone.

Enforcement of Cycling on Queen Street

There has been a huge reduction in the use of pedal cycles on Queen Street in the city centre thanks to effective partnership working by the Council's City Centre Warden Team and South Wales Police to enforce the no-cycling rule along Queen Street as part of Operation Castor. In Quarter 3 of 2023/24 (October-December 2023), a total of 14 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) were issued and two Section 59 notices were issued to e-scooter riders. These low FPN figures demonstrate the successful impact that this partnership work has achieved in Queen Street over the last two years or so. In addition, 98 stolen Nextbikes were seized and officers stopped 504 cyclists, engaged with them and instructed them to dismount when using Queen Street.

Canal Quarter

Following on from the soft launch and opening of the Dock Feeder Canal on Churchill Way in November 2023, a bespoke lights installation was placed within the canal during the festive period and will remain in place until the end of the half term school holiday period next month. The lights installation was commissioned by FOR Cardiff and designed by artist Grant Radford of Accent London, with music by Cardiff-based composer Ella Roberts. The installation combines light and sound to mimic reeds and is interactive through a series of accessible ground pads on the canal viewing platform.

Bus Stop Improvements

Recent improvements to bus stops include new Real-time Passenger Information displays, which have been installed in 138 bus shelters across the city. The remaining 32 installations will be completed early next month. Council officers have been working closely with Transport for Wales to achieve real-time arrivals information at bus stops, which now includes 99% of bus operations in Cardiff on the new displays (including Cardiff Bus, Newport Bus, Adventure Travel, Stagecoach, Mid Wales Travel, and Edwards Coaches). In addition, to date, 28 bus shelters have been raised higher to accommodate the new displays and a further five are being worked on. Buildouts and disabled access improvements have also been made to 20 bus stops within the Llanrumney, Rumney and Trowbridge wards.

Nextbike Scheme

Members will be aware that the Nextbike on-street cycle hire scheme in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan has ceased to operate this month. Whilst the scheme was Nextbike's most successful in the UK in terms of usage, with two million rentals across both council areas during the life of the scheme, it has been adversely affected by regular incidents of theft and vandalism in Cardiff. Despite the scheme being well-used and liked by residents, the decision was taken to close the current scheme due to the rate of vandalism experienced in 2023/24, which meant that it was unfeasible for Nextbike to continue and offer a good service. Despite its challenges, the scheme has been immensely popular with a significant number of users and I want to thank its dedicated and loyal customers for their support over recent years.

Work is currently ongoing continuing to remove Nextbike stands from across the city. The Nextbike contract was also due to end in early 2025 and was an ageing scheme that was coming to the end of its lifespan. As a result, the Council had already started work in summer 2023 to review the current micro-mobility market and best practice schemes in the UK and internationally, and to consider and assess potential options for a replacement scheme. The Council wants to see a new cycle hire scheme return to the city as soon as possible and we hope to soon be able to go out to the market for a replacement scheme that is fit for the future, subject to funding.

Christmas Designated Driver Campaign

For the second year running, the Council was pleased to support South Wales Police's Designated Driver campaign, which saw the police team up with 19 pubs and restaurants in Cardiff during the Christmas period. These licensed premises offered free draught soft drinks to 'designated drivers' who abstained from drinking alcohol and acted as the responsible driver for groups of drinkers and diners as part of an initiative to promote responsible drinking and road safety in Cardiff and across South Wales.

Councillor Dan De'Ath
Cabinet Member for Transport & Strategic Planning
19 January 2024