



Summary of an Inquiry Report of the:
Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee

Shaping Cardiff's Post - Pandemic Economic Recovery - SUMMARY

January 2023



Cardiff Council

“This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg” .

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FOREWORD

Post pandemic, our economy is refocusing, with changing work and retail patterns. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly evident that we need to ensure our economy supports efforts to respond to the climate and nature emergencies. There is a role for the Council here, to provide leadership and vision, to ensure the replacement Local Development Plan sets an appropriate placemaking and place management strategy, to engage with stakeholders to understand their needs, and to facilitate and convene conversations to address challenges.

In the first Inquiry report from our new committee, formed following the local elections in 2022, Members therefore decided to focus on the role the Council could play in shaping our economy post pandemic. We focused on areas already highlighted by the Council as areas in which it wished to assist, and we sought stakeholders’ views on how they wished the Council to help. We considered evidence on what has worked elsewhere and sought practical examples of actions the Council could take. Throughout all our work, we bore in mind that the Council faces huge financial pressures and therefore has limited funding to bring to bear.

I am grateful to all those who met with us, to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences of living and working in Cardiff and elsewhere. I am particularly grateful to FSB Cymru for undertaking a survey of Cardiff small businesses to inform this Inquiry, to Cardiff Research Centre for their work on the Ask Cardiff 2022 survey that included questions for this Inquiry, and to Scrutiny Researcher Gladys Hingco for her bespoke survey of remote worker, co-workers, traders and small businesses.

Half of our recommendations focus on how the Council can best implement its stated aim of Cardiff becoming a 15-minute city including, critically, the need to engage in dialogue with residents, communities and stakeholders. Our remaining recommendations focus on specific actions arising from the evidence we received; these include actions to help the city centre, local and district centres, small businesses, entrepreneurs and start-ups.

This Inquiry has been far-ranging and, as such, it has inevitably been high level in places. There are areas that warrant more detailed investigation, and I am sure that this committee will want to explore these at a later date. I would like to thank my fellow task group Members – Councillors Berman, Henshaw, Jenkins, Lloyd Jones and Robinson – for completing this Inquiry in record time, and Angela Holt, scrutiny officer, for her support.



Councillor Peter Wong
Chair, Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
January 2023

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- To explore with key stakeholders what the Council’s role should be in assisting Cardiff’s economy to recover post-pandemic, in the context of limited funding, looking in particular at:
 - Remote and co-working needs & requirements
 - Support for small businesses and independent artists
 - Role of Local and District Centres
 - Role of City Centre
 - 15-minute city model
 - Broadband provision.
- To reference good practice from other cities that have adopted the 15-minute city model, identifying key lessons that are applicable to Cardiff.
- To utilise the findings from the above to make informed recommendations to all relevant parties on the most appropriate approaches to take in Cardiff.

APPROACH TAKEN

- M1. Members undertook this Inquiry during October 2022 – January 2023.
- M2. Members received evidence from the following internal stakeholders who attended question & answer sessions and contributed to a panel discussion:
- Cllr Russell Goodway – Cabinet Member – Investment & Development
 - Cllr Chris Weaver – Cabinet Member – Finance, Modernisation & Performance
 - Cllr Caro Wild – Cabinet Member – Climate Change
 - Phil Bear – Head of ICT
 - Jon Day – Operational Manager – Tourism & Investment
 - Mandy Evans – Local Broadband Fund Project Manager
 - Andrew Gregory – Director of Planning, Transport & Environment
 - Gladys Hingco – Principal Scrutiny Research Officer
 - Rebecca Hooper – Operational Manager – Neighbourhood Regeneration
- M3. Members also received evidence from the following external stakeholders:
- Rob Bassini – FSB Cymru
 - Adrian Field – Executive Director - FOR Cardiff
 - Peter Hall – Business Owner – Llandaff High Street
 - Gareth Jones – Chief Executive – Town Square
 - Phil Kaye – Business Owner - Wellfield Road
 - Jess Mahoney – Creative Economy Unit/ Creative Cardiff
 - Richard Sewell – Head of Digital Infrastructure – Welsh Government
 - Adam Sparkes – Community Manager – Cwrt Coworking, Llanishen
 - Richie Turner – Incubation Manager, Stiwdio – University of South Wales
 - Roisin Willmott – Director – Wales & Northern Ireland - RTPi
- M4. Scrutiny Services paid for questions relevant to this Inquiry to be included in the Council’s Ask Cardiff survey, available for all residents to complete. The provisional results are shown at Appendix 7 and integrated where relevant in the report where relevant.

M5. Scrutiny Research also undertook a bespoke survey targeting remote workers, small businesses, and city centre, local and district centre traders. The report is attached at Appendix 6 and integrated in the report where relevant.

M6. To inform the Inquiry, Members were provided with briefing reports ahead of each meeting. These have been synthesised in the report.

M7. The evidence has been used to identify suitable findings from the Inquiry.

KEY FINDINGS

In line with this Inquiry’s terms of reference, the key findings focus on the role of the Council in shaping Cardiff’s economy post-pandemic, in a time of limited funding, including how best to implement a 15-minute city, which is a key commitment of the current Administration.

Leadership

KF1. Politicians and senior officers need to provide leadership and ensure a vision for Cardiff’s economy, post pandemic; these are contained in the Corporate Plan, Recovery and Renewal Plan and City Centre Recovery Action Plan. There is now a need to build on these by articulating the vision for Cardiff being a 15-minute city, clarifying for residents, businesses, and investors what Cardiff wishes to achieve by being a 15-minute city and how it intends to realise this.

KF2. Clarity of purpose and leadership will help to ensure work is implemented to align resources, enabling behaviour changes in line with 15-minute city.

Strategy and Policy

KF3. It is important to recognise the economic role Cardiff plays as a capital city and regional centre and ensure that the 15-minute city model for Cardiff recognises this and enables Cardiff to continue with this role, whilst balancing this with the need to ensure access to local services.

KF4. Different areas of Cardiff will require different approaches to being a 15-minute city – it is not a ‘one size fits all’ approach.

KF5. The Council should review the Corporate Plan, Recovery and Renewal Plan and City Centre Recovery Action Plan annually and enable actions to be altered as required, given the fast-changing economic landscape.

KF6. It is essential the Council demonstrates that it is pro-small business, for example the strategic commitment to ensure its procurement process is small business-friendly.

KF7. It is critical that the 15-minute model for Cardiff is enshrined in the Local Development Plan policies, as this sets the approach for placemaking and place management, providing the framework for planning decisions.

KF8. Supplementary Planning Guidance is also important to expand on how the Council favours developments that meet the 15-minute model for Cardiff.

Regional Working

KF9. Several witnesses highlighted the need for the Council to work with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to optimise opportunities for Cardiff’s economy, including ensuring skills training and support addresses the recruitment issues facing Cardiff, marketing, tourism, and economic development overall.

KF10. The Inquiry heard that it will not be possible for Cardiff to deliver a 15-minute model without discussion with neighbouring local authorities, due to transport interconnectedness and provision of regional services in Cardiff e.g., health services. The yet-to-be-developed Strategic Development Plan should help with these discussions, providing a regional approach to planning.

Engagement

KF11. This Inquiry heard from several witnesses that it is important the Council communicates and engages with them to enable the Council to be aware of the needs and demands in various sectors. This included:

- a. District and Local Centre Traders requesting that the Council establish Traders Forums, to share information, address issues, and work constructively to promote centres
- b. Creative Cardiff/ Creative Economy Unit highlighting the need for specific, active consultation with the creative community at an earlier stage in respect of development sites, to help understand needs and opportunities and so inform the planning process
- c. RTPi Cymru highlighting that community engagement is key to successfully implementing the 15-minute city model.

KF12. Several areas in the UK are either consulting or have consulted with their communities regarding 15-minute cities; this report includes details of work in Scotland, including Edinburgh, and Ipswich.

KF13. When developing the 15-minute city model for Cardiff, it is important to try new ways of engaging and consulting, to build trust to ensure all voices are heard as opposed to dominant voices; this requires reaching out in different ways to connect with different audiences in different parts of the city. Whilst this takes time and is resource intensive, it means that plans are truly reflective of communities and more likely to be successful.

KF14. There are several participatory planning mechanisms that would assist the Council to engage effectively when implementing a 15-minute city, including place plans and work via Planning Aid Wales.

Financial Support

KF15. Several witnesses to the Inquiry highlighted the need for the extension of business rate relief programmes to support specific sectors of Cardiff’s economy. During the Inquiry, the Welsh Government announced it is extending business rate relief to eligible businesses in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors. Members heard that the following would also be helpful:

- a. Extension of discretionary Business Rate Relief programmes for creative sector business providing social or community value, with a sliding scale to support sustainability
- b. Extension of discretionary Business Rate Relief programme to Corp B companies, which have positive socio-economic and environmental impacts, which utilise empty units above retail, which encourages footfall.

KF16. Several witnesses to the Inquiry wondered whether there was scope to use some of the Shared Prosperity Funding awarded to the Council to:

- a. Have a lower-level enterprise fund for small businesses
- b. Support the reimagination of the city centre.

KF17. Other witnesses to the Inquiry highlighted that relatively small sums of monies (£2,000) make all the difference to start-ups that are seeking to grow and wondered whether the Council could:

- a. Set up a scheme with selected private sector lenders to underwrite small loans (£2,000) for start-ups, enabling lenders to offer more affordable rates
- b. Set up an endowment scheme for entrepreneurs.

KF18. The Inquiry also heard there may be scope for district centres to establish Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) that would raise monies to go towards community events and other activities deemed priorities by the local traders.

Understanding Needs and Demands

KF19. With changing patterns in work locations and retail, this Inquiry heard it was important the Council uses data to understand these changes and target actions accordingly:

- a. Use mobile phone usage data to understand behaviour patterns in the city centre, enabling businesses, event management and marketing to be more effectively targeted
- b. Undertake research to clarify changing habits of residents re use of city centre and use of local and district centres

- c. Map 15-minute walk/cycle areas and overlay with remote working and coworking provision to identify gaps
- d. Use available Council databases to ask about remote and coworking needs to help clarify demand.

KF20. The successful implementation of 15-minute city principles is underpinned by a thorough understanding of usage patterns and residents’ needs. This requires comprehensive gathering of data to understand usage patterns, spatial analysis, and qualitative research to understand residents’ needs.

Public Transport

KF21. Both FOR Cardiff and Creative Cardiff/ Creative Economy Unit highlighted the need for a strong public transport network later into the night, to help Cardiff’s economy longer-term. This would enable visitors and employees to get home safely. They highlighted this would help employers who are struggling to attract staff to work late, for example in the hospitality and leisure sectors, as well as those already working late, including creatives.

KF22. FOR Cardiff highlighted that it was important to plan any extension carefully, to ensure any extension operated for a sufficient time to influence behaviour change and create the footfall required to meet the costs of late-night public transport. They added that now might not be the right time to trial an extension, given the economic pressures facing consumers, but that this is definitely something that needs addressing in Cardiff longer-term.

Active Travel

KF23. The provision of active travel routes is central to a 15-minute city. Responses to the Ask Cardiff survey indicate that only 26% of respondents felt there were safe cycling lanes and/ or routes to enable access to their local neighbourhood services and amenities, and only 48% of respondents felt there were safe walking routes.

KF24. The RTPI Cymru highlighted that the Welsh Government 21st Century Schools guidance does not cover active travel and it is therefore incumbent on the Council to ensure there are active travel routes that enable pupils, teachers and staff to access schools safely.

KF25. This Inquiry heard that businesses require advice and support to show them how some of them could utilise active travel and to share good practice amongst businesses on how best to reconfigure workspaces to provide active travel facilities.

KF26. FSB Cymru highlighted that some businesses require a vehicle to carry their tools/ equipment. They called on the Council to work with UK and Welsh Government to ensure those businesses that do require a vehicle are supported to use an electric vehicle by installing infrastructure and providing advice and guidance and lobbying for incentives for electric vehicles for businesses.

Congestion Charge

KF27. Both FOR Cardiff and the FSB Cymru highlighted the need to clarify whether or not there is going to be a congestion charge and how this would work.

Responding to Changing Work Patterns

KF28. Whilst Cardiff has provision of many types of workspace, this Inquiry heard that:

- a. Cardiff does not have the same level of coworking provision as other cities such as Amsterdam and London
- b. there is a shortage of affordable follow-on space with the right support networks to enable start-ups to grow
- c. there is a lack of suitable small industrial units in good locations, with low insurance premiums.

KF29. The Council has an important role to play in facilitating and convening conversations around the needs arising from changing work patterns. Equally, it has an important role to play in enabling the provision of appropriate workspaces.

KF30. This Inquiry heard that, through its planning role, the Council could assist workspace provision by:

- a. Including the need for coworking provision in new developments
- b. Supporting the integration of cultural and creative use buildings in long-term development plans
- c. Adopting an Affordable Workspace Policy
- d. Having more dynamic and imaginative use of Section 106.

KF31. This Inquiry heard the Council could also assist workspace provision by:

- a. Unlocking assets – its own and those of public sector partners
- b. Developing a space register
- c. Developing a risk register
- d. Utilising incentives/ disincentives to encourage landlords to bring vacant high street units back into use
- e. Buying empty warehouses across Cardiff and turning them into smaller units.

Responding to Changing Retail Patterns

KF32. Several witnesses raised the need to improve the experience of those using the city centre and local and district centres, as follows:

- a. Improve the street scene
 - i. Enable more benches, tables and chairs on pavements, to provide space for socialising and create a community feel
 - ii. Brighten up streets by providing planters, rubbish bins and lamp post banners
 - iii. Introduce a busking strategy and byelaws to promote good busking that adds to the ambience and tackle poor busking that is detrimental to nearby businesses.
- b. Have visitor attractions/ events
 - i. Introduce a city centre visitor attraction
 - ii. Support local and district centres with community events
- c. Address begging and shoplifting
 - i. Liaise with Police regarding PCSO patrols and Radio-Net
 - ii. Appraise the use of Public Space Protection Orders in Newport and whether these would work in Cardiff
- d. Tackle homelessness
 - i. Assist FOR Cardiff to market and promote their ‘Give *DIFFerently*’ homelessness project

KF33. For local and district centres, parking was also identified as an area the Council could assist in, by identifying suitable areas to provide additional spaces. This ties into the responses received to the Ask Cardiff survey, where poor parking facilities were the highest rated barrier, at 24%, to accessing local neighbourhood services.

Improving Interface with the Council

KF34. FSB Cymru highlighted that there are many aspects of the Council that interface with small businesses including planning and licensing. They highlighted their members’ view that planning and licensing processes need to be reviewed to simplify and speed-up processes, particularly at the moment when costs are increasing rapidly, and projects may become unaffordable if it takes too long to get relevant permissions.

Business Support

KF35. FSB Cymru highlighted their members view that there is a need to provide advice and guidance to small businesses. They stressed that this did not mean that the Council needed to

provide the business support but be able to signpost to organisations that can provide support to business, particularly about how small businesses can become more sustainable.

Marketing/ Publicity

KF36. Several witnesses to the Inquiry highlighted the Council could use its marketing and social media channels to assist post-pandemic economic recovery:

- a. Use Council social media to promote local and district centres and promote ‘shop local’
- b. Use Council social media to generate ideas and interest in local communities to support local and district centres
- c. The Council to be involved in a publicity campaign to raise awareness of different workspaces and their benefits.

KF37. FOR Cardiff informed the Inquiry that they could take on the Destination Marketing role for Cardiff, as happens elsewhere, and that this could produce savings for the Council.

Role of Planning in implementing 15-minute city model

KF38. The Council’s planning function is key to successfully developing and implementing a 15-minute model for Cardiff. RTPI Cymru stressed it is therefore important to ensure there are sufficient resources in planning, to deal with the required detailed mapping, planning and community engagement.

KF39. At a strategic level, the Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance need to articulate the Council’s vision, objectives and requirements regarding Cardiff being a 15-minute city, thus setting the framework for planning decisions.

KF40. Planning can assist in making Cardiff a 15-minute city, via urban retrofitting and in new developments, by undertaking spatial analysis, modelling potential interventions to restore/ ensure connectivity, pursuing facilities that benefit existing and new communities, and avoiding car dependent developments.

KF41. This Inquiry heard that, for new developments, it is important the Council negotiates key infrastructure provision – such as public transport and roads – is provided up-front and before residents move in, so that residents’ habits are shaped from first occupation.

KF42. This Inquiry heard that, with regard to density and viability, the Council needs to ensure developers are given clear upfront guidance on the expectations for developments, so these are planned in from the start. Usually, more dense developments are able to meet 15-minute city

principles, as population densities will support local commercial facilities and, for new developments, raise more monies for negotiation for community facility provision. However, this does not need to be high-rise development, low-rise density can be sufficient.

KF43. At a specific level, this Inquiry heard that it is important the Council consider the provision of childcare when planning Cardiff being a 15-minute city, so that working parents are supported, particularly entrepreneurs.

KF44. RTPI Cymru suggested Cardiff Council consider signing up to the Placemaking Wales Charter, which can assist in bringing together all the elements required to ensure sustainable communities.

KF45. RTPI Cymru highlighted their outcome focused toolkit, [RTPI | Measuring What Matters: Planning Outcomes Toolkit](#), would be a useful tool to monitor successes in new provision, and whether Cardiff Council is building better places.

Broadband

KF46. The majority of Cardiff has access to broadband and the recent Ask Cardiff survey found 80% respondents are fairly or very satisfied with their level of connectivity.

KF47. Welsh Government has identified 20,000 properties in Cardiff that are not included in commercial plans for Full Fibre to the Premises Gigabit roll-out. Cardiff Council has been successful in a £7.7m Local Broadband bid for funding to help address this.

KF48. The Local Broadband project runs till 2025 and should go a long way to tackling poorly served premises in Cardiff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having considered the evidence presented to this Inquiry, the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee makes the following recommendations.

- R1. *Within 6 months, the Cabinet articulates its vision for Cardiff as a 15-minute city, explaining how this will take into account the economic role Cardiff plays as a capital city and regional centre and that different areas of Cardiff require different approaches to being a 15-minute city.*
- R2. *Within 9 months, the Cabinet shares their vision for Cardiff as a 15-minute city with residents, communities and stakeholders by:*
- a. *tasking officers to use the evidence gathered by this Inquiry regarding participatory planning mechanisms to develop an approach to engage residents, communities and stakeholders, which ensures all voices are able to be heard*
 - b. *engaging in dialogue with residents, communities and stakeholders to help develop and refine local implementation plans.*
- R3. *Within 6 months, the Cabinet sets out how its vision for Cardiff as a 15-minute city will be embedded in Council strategies and policies.*
- R4. *Within 12 months, the Cabinet ensures the 15-minute city for Cardiff is enshrined in the Local Development Plan and future Supplementary Planning Guidance, utilising the recommendations of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee’s Supplementary Planning Guidance Inquiry (October 2022).*
- R5. *Within 12 months, the Cabinet tasks officers to ensure that future masterplans and planning policies clearly articulate the expectation for developments to support Cardiff being a 15-minute city, in terms of infrastructure and community provision, to enable developers to bear these in mind as part of their viability calculations.*
- R6. *Within 12 months, the Cabinet tasks officers to work with stakeholders to address the public transport needs of a 15-minute city, including consideration of the need for late-night public transport provision.*
- R7. *Within 12 months, the Cabinet tasks officers to ensure that, where sustainable transport infrastructure is negotiated to support Cardiff being a 15-minute city - including active travel and public transport - this is provided upfront and prior to residents moving in, so that residents’ habits are shaped from first occupation.*

- R8. *Within 12 months, the Cabinet signs up to the Placemaking Wales Charter, which supports 15-minute city neighbourhoods.*
- R9. *Within 12 months, the Cabinet considers whether an outcome-focused planning approach would assist Cardiff in its journey to be a 15-minute city.*
- R10. *Within 6 months, the Cabinet commences an annual review of the Recovery and Renewal Plan and City Centre Recovery Action Plan, to ensure actions are altered as required to respond to the fast-changing economic landscape.*
- R11. *Within 12 months, the Cabinet tasks officers to work with local and district centre traders to find ways to establish trader forums, including investigating the feasibility of establishing Business Improvement Districts in some District Centres.*
- R12. *Within 3 months, the Cabinet passes on to Welsh Government the views expressed to this Inquiry regarding extending the discretionary Business Rate Relief programme, as set out in KF15 of this report.*
- R13. *Within 3 months, the Cabinet tasks officers to explore the benefits of utilising more modern ways of using data to understand usage and behaviour patterns in the city centre, local and district centres and 15-minute neighbourhoods.*
- R14. *Within 3 months, the Cabinet considers the suggestions for improving the experience of those using the city centre and local and district centres, as set out in Key Finding 32a-c, clarify whether resources allow for any of these to be implemented, and report back to the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee on the proposed way forward on these suggestions.*
- R15. *Within 3 months, the Cabinet task officers to support FOR Cardiff to market and promote their ‘Give DIFFerently’ homelessness project, as set out in Key Finding 32d.*
- R16. *Within 6 months, the Cabinet tasks officers to undertake a cost/ benefit analysis of the different models for providing Destination Marketing for Cardiff, to determine the best way forward for this service, as highlighted by KF37.*
- R17. *Within 6 months, the Cabinet tasks officers to explore the viability of setting up a scheme to provide small sums of monies to support entrepreneurs and the growth of start-ups in Cardiff, similar to the scheme operated by Newport City Council.*
- R18. *Within 3 months, the Cabinet tasks officers to work with key active travel stakeholders – such as Sustrans Cymru and Living Streets Cymru – to address the issues set out in Key Finding 25 and 26.*

R19. Within 12 months, the Cabinet tasks officers to prepare an Affordable Workspace Policy, for inclusion in the replacement Local Development Plan, which includes consideration of the efficacy for Cardiff of space and risk registers as well as vacant unit incentives and disincentives for landlords.

This Committee will also flag the following key finding to the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee:

KF 24 – the need for the Council to ensure there are active travel routes to enable pupils, teachers and staff to access schools safely. This Committee believes this should be extended to all schools not only those in the 21st Century School programme.

Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Councillor Peter Wong (Chairperson)

Councillor Rodney Berman

Councillor Catriona Brown-Reckless

Councillor Stephen Cunnah

Councillor Jane Henshaw

Councillor Peter Huw Jenkins

Councillor Helen Lloyd Jones

Councillor Daniel Naughton

Councillor Leo Thomson

