



CARDIFF CITY CENTRE: **A MANIFESTO**

APRIL 2022

In 2021 FOR Cardiff produced **A Recovery Manifesto for Cities and High Streets**, calling on the next Welsh Government to secure a sustainable future for our urban centres. Now we're looking at those recommendations and zooming in on Cardiff – outlining our suggestions for delivery over the next council term. We believe that Cardiff Council should focus on:

Setting: create a public realm to be proud of, upgrade the street scene and create a safe and accessible city centre

Culture: celebrate what makes Cardiff, Cardiff and give our cultural venues and creative minds the tools they need to succeed

Transport: use the post-pandemic opportunity to create a transport system that works for patterns beyond the Monday-Friday 9-5



Image: Holder Mathias Architects

SETTING:

Create a public realm to be proud of, upgrade the street scene and create a safe and accessible city centre

Here's what we think Cardiff Council can deliver operationally to support our asks of Welsh Government:

We asked Welsh Government

to: Maintain the benefits of good office environments whilst transitioning to a blended and accessible working dynamic...

So we're asking Cardiff Council

to: Invest in a safe and engaging city centre environment, which welcomes workers on the occasions that they do come to the city centre and encourages them to spend time outside of work in the city centre.



Work strategically with transport agencies to encourage a shift in the city dynamic beyond the 9-5 model which will allow for the city centre to evolve into a hybrid destination for work and for play.

Work with local partners to establish co-working hubs and other multi-functional spaces

in the city centre to allow for knowledge sharing, networking, and skills development across the breadth of the city's industries – use these opportunities to focus on creating a diverse pipeline for the future of the city's workforce.

Establish a specific focus on good green jobs in economic regeneration and development strategies rather than simple employment figures. Alongside existing inward investment strategies engage existing local businesses and anchor institutions in economic



development and regeneration practices – commit to strengthening local supply chains and multiplier effects continue to support local businesses to become accredited Living Wage Employers.

We asked Welsh Government

to: Empower communities to take charge of neglected or mismanaged spaces and prevent the destruction of historic and socially relevant structures...

So we're asking Cardiff Council

to: Work with the community, landlords, and other partners such as FOR Cardiff to bring neglected and vacant

spaces back into interesting and productive use wherever possible. Provide opportunities through meanwhile use for the full community to participate in developing the future of the city – be open to community as well as commercial uses in the city centre.

We asked Welsh Government to: Supercharge the Town Centre First approach and bring public services into vacant central properties...

So we're asking Cardiff Council to: pay particular attention to Welsh Government's Town Centre First approach and acknowledge the city centre's role as a regional hub and a community centre for the increasing density of city centre residents. Capitalise on the transport interchange and the developing South Wales Metro making the city centre a key strategic location for public services accessible to all.

The Council must ensure that the city centre is an attractive, welcoming and fully accessible destination by providing appropriate levels of services such as street cleansing and taxi ranks whilst also ensuring the highest standard of public realm. In particular, we draw attention to the poor, and potentially dangerous, paving quality of Queen Street.

Ensure planning policy and action engages with the full breadth of city centre uses rather than focussing on narrow definitions such as the weekday 9-5 and weekend retail.



CULTURE:

Celebrate what makes Cardiff, Cardiff and give our cultural venues and creative minds the tools they need to succeed

We asked Welsh Government to:

Position, protect and strengthen cultural institutions in city centres...

So we're asking Cardiff Council

to: Engage proactively with the grassroots Cardiff music community to deliver the relevant recommendations of the music strategy whilst challenging received thinking around the city as a music destination – expand the scope and understanding of live music in Cardiff beyond the current narrow focus on Womanby Street.



Ensure the revised Local Development Plan provides a robust framework for maintaining and nurturing the city's heritage and identifies and prioritises the needs of the existing business and residential communities

Work with existing city centre cultural venues and other non-owner-occupied assets of community value to secure sustainable futures now and

mitigate the threat of eviction and long term detriment to the city in the name of immediate capital gain. Alongside short term 'meanwhile' uses prioritise long term safe sites for the full cultural and artistic spectrum.

Balance the requirements of a growing city centre residential population with existing cultural uses of space, particularly live music venues, and fully enact the Agent of Change principle to ensure that existing venues are not adversely impacted by new residential developments – encourage and allow the city centre to be a place of noise and life.

Work with FOR Cardiff to engage the business community in nuanced and sensitive conversation around any tourism tax powers which are developed by Welsh Government during the coming council term

We asked Welsh Government

to: Defend free to access spaces and space for young people in particular...

So we're asking Cardiff Council

to: invest in a welcoming and accessible public realm in which all sectors of the community are safe and comfortable. Welcome young people for unstructured activity through the ambitions of the Child-Friendly City initiative as well as via specific events and interventions.

Commit to maintaining the castle grounds as a free to access public

space and ensure a welcoming and biodiverse environment in all public green spaces.

Expand access to vital amenities within the city centre such as public toilets and accessible seating – do not rely on the private sector to provide the necessities of a pleasant experience.

Prioritise pedestrians and visitor experience over the monetisation of the public realm, remove unnecessary advertising and infrastructure clutter where possible, for example, the Queen Street plastic flagpoles.

Work with businesses and city centre organisations to create a coherent and enjoyable street scene that reflects the unique character of Cardiff as a place to live, work, and visit.

We asked Welsh Government to: Conduct a large-scale review of business rates...

So we're asking Cardiff Council to: Protect Cardiff's retail and hospitality sectors by making full and fair use of discretionary powers in regard to business rates relief in the ongoing aftermath of Covid-19. Monitor and be sensitive to the impacts of the lifting of rates relief for these sectors and be prepared to intervene in significant cases, particularly in relation to powers relating to the employment prospects in an area and an overall adverse effect on taxpayers as well as general discretionary powers.



TRANSPORT:

Use the post-pandemic opportunity to create a transport system that works for patterns beyond the Monday-Friday 9-5

We asked Welsh Government to:

Continue to invest in developing integrated high-quality public transport infrastructure...

So we're asking Cardiff Council

to: communicate proactively and responsively with the business community whilst rolling out active travel infrastructure work, bringing the private sector along on this vital journey.

Expand on the £1 bus fare concept by considering longer-term

incentives and engage employers and public transport partners in a meaningful program of change to encourage a long-term transition toward public transport and active travel commuting that is inclusive of all patterns of work and the emerging hybrid working model. Explore integrated ticketing options to realise this ambition.

Work with partners such as South Wales Police on active solutions to city centre cycling and e-scooter issues in areas such as Queen Street – look to address issues and provide viable solutions rather than following an intermittent enforcement procedure.

Reopen Station Terrace to traffic.



Cardiff city centre is filled with potential. FOR Cardiff look forward to working closely with the council over the next term to help the city centre be the best that it can be.

For questions about this manifesto
or if you think you can help, please
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