

TFT

CARDIFF:
**HOW PROPERTY IS HELPING THE CITY
RISE TO A NEW CHALLENGE**

ThinkBarn

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Tuffin Ferraby Taylor is a limited liability
partnership registered in England and Wales.
Registration number: OC306766.
Registered office 18 Holborn, London, EC1N 2LE

Published in May 2017

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Alan Pemberton
Managing Partner

FOREWORD

TFT – now in its 44th year – has been operating in Cardiff for twenty years. We have seen the challenges the city has faced and have been part of its vision for change. Projects, such as St Athan, GloWorks and Central Square, while of course professionally interesting for our team, also exemplify the vision and ambition for city.

We understand this city and see tremendous opportunity for the future. The beautiful and vibrant urban centre, the surrounding landscape and leisure opportunities all deliver a quality of life highly valued by our team. Cardiff's appeal to a growing number of high skilled workers and businesses is obvious to us, but this will present challenges for all living, working and operating in the city.

We are pleased to contribute to the vision for Cardiff with this paper and its discussion with stakeholders in the city. We look forward to working with developers, investors and lenders as this future unfolds.

I would like to offer my thanks to Sue Foxley at ThinkBarn, John Newton at TFT Cardiff, and colleagues in our marketing team for producing such an insightful piece of research at such a critical time for Cardiff.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Cardiff's long history as a capital and industrial city has submitted to global economic change in recent years. A period of relatively poor economic performance and business investment has spurred a period of introspection. The emerging vision for the city's future is ambitious and exciting. The face of Cardiff's urban fabric is changing: the delivery of new office space, the enhanced retail and leisure offer, and the opening up of new areas of the city reflect this ambition.
- As global economic, technological and social change has evolved, the drivers that dictate a city's future potential have also moved on. However, research and global evidence demonstrates that urban success can come in many forms and aspiring cities should focus on their core assets and strengths (Oxford Economics).
- Today, Cardiff's administrative functions as a capital city are being enriched by the addition of high value technology and media business sectors. The city's highly educated potential workforce, by virtue of the excellent local universities, is a key driver in this transition. Accessibility to London through the existing and improving rail links, combined with high-speed digital infrastructure are also important influencers of growth.
- However, to deliver the vision and realise a step change in economic growth potential, the city needs to attract more high value business. Critical mass delivers productivity gains and spurs creative growth, which translates to higher economic output. In order to achieve this, the city must attract and retain more high skilled staff.
- Cardiff's strengths as an affordable city, offering a high quality of life with a unique environmental backdrop are USPs to be deployed. High skilled millennial workers, are demonstrating differing values to generations that have gone before and also face financial challenges. Cardiff presents a holistic combination of entrepreneurship, accessibility and lifestyle for this generation.
- This will present opportunities and challenges for the city's property sector. Providing a range of high quality space at affordable rents will be essential to maintain Cardiff's competitive edge. Growth will also place demands on infrastructure, in particular its ability, through transport improvements, to open up residential areas to provide affordable housing for all of Cardiff's residents. This will be essential to ensure a cohesive culture is maintained during this next phase of the city's history.



» Cardiff Millenium Centre

CARDIFF'S ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Cardiff's economy is entering a period of change. In recent years the city has struggled to deliver the pace of economic growth experienced in many other UK cities. The city's headline economic indicators present a mixed picture, with productivity, average earnings and unemployment all below the UK average. But, global economic and business drivers are increasingly sifting the fortunes of cities and adjusting trajectories, both positively and negatively.

In Cardiff there are signs of positive change. Over the last five years, the rate of business start-ups in the city performed ahead of the national average. During this period there has also been a sharp increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Wales generally, narrowing the gap between other regions (EY's UK attractiveness survey, Positive Rebalancing, 2016). Reflecting this trend in improving business investment, Cardiff's employment market has strengthened.

Youth unemployment is below the national average, while the city has seen a relatively higher pace of growth in average earnings

over the last two years, to bring it close to the national average.

Cardiff is benefiting from robust growth in the number of younger millennial workers with high levels of educational attainment. This is reflected in the above average number of workers employed in professional occupations in the city. Reflecting its capital city position, Cardiff is home to a large number of administrative and support services activities. However, financial and insurance activities as well as education, professional services, scientific and technical activities are also present.

The city's universities help underpin these business growth sectors as well as being a significant local employer in their own right. Tourism also plays an important role, not only as a function of Cardiff's capital city status, but the Principality (formerly Millennium) Stadium and the Millennium Centre attracts spend from domestic and international visitors alike. Furthermore, the city's retail and leisure offer has changed dramatically. The extension of St David's Shopping Centre and the renaissance of the Arcades, have magnified the city's destination appeal.

However, there are more fundamental changes in play. Tech and creative industries have a growing presence in the city. Tech City UK, which is focused on accelerating the growth of the UK's digital economy, identifies Cardiff and Swansea as one of the UK's fastest growing digital tech clusters.

Between 2011 and 2015, the number of digital tech jobs in the cluster grew by 29 per cent, compared with an average of 17 per cent across the UK as a whole (Tech Nation, 2017). A host of home-grown SMEs, as well as relocating businesses, have joined occupiers including BBC Wales, Amplyfi and IQE. In 2015, the new tech business creation rate was 28 per cent and as such rated 10th in the country (excluding London), ahead of the UK's tech cluster average of 15 per cent (Tech Nation, 2017).

However, at present the city's concentration of tech jobs is relatively low when compared with many other tech clusters around the country. It is in the city's economic interest to see this concentration grow. The economic impact of agglomeration through productivity and creativity gains is well proven, while the expansion of high value employment boosts incomes and increases local Gross Value Add (GVA).



» Cardiff Arcades

Raising the city's economic output is essential. Over the period 2017-19 EY forecast the city will see a 1.6 per cent rise in GVA marginally ahead of the its 1.5 per cent forecast for the UK as a whole. A 0.1 per cent forecast increase in employment over the same period is marginally above the expectation for no growth on average across the UK. EY note that Cardiff is expected to benefit from strong growth in digital and professional services, as well as benefiting from its capital city status. However, Cardiff can set its sights higher and achieve a step change in the pace of growth.

.....
MAJOR OCCUPIERS

- Admiral Group
 - IQE
 - BBC Wales
 - Amplify
 - GE Aircraft Engine Services
 - MotoNovo Finance
 - Deloitte
-

LIFE AND WORK STYLE CHANGE

The challenges and opportunities presented by business and social change are common to all cities, well beyond the UK shores. Local geography, industrial legacy, funding and governance will drive how this plays out in specific cities. In this section we consider some of these key drivers, which may provide Cardiff with traction in its economic future.

THE CORPORATE CHALLENGE – CONTAINING COSTS AND TEMPTING TALENT

As technology, pharmaceuticals and creative industries have joined finance, insurance and professional services as the core drivers of the UK economy, the shape of the business ecosystem and its workforce has also evolved. However, post-financial crisis, businesses continue to face severe pressures to manage costs in order to compete in the global marketplace. This has implications for decision-making on business space, headcount and investment for the future, whether R&D or creative

innovation. The cost of business space is one of the key fixed costs and as a result there has been greater openness in location decision-making, both in terms of all or part-functions, but also staff working practices in order to reduce core space.

Across all high value industries, access to talent is a determining factor, although it is also one of the most costly. As businesses compete internationally for the best talent, while also seeking to manage costs, a range of strategies have emerged. These include the use of offshore high skilled workers, home workers and freelancers. Moves towards dynamic but lower cost locations within the UK are an increasingly inviting option for a range of businesses, particularly those in London and the south-east.

GENERATION POOR

The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates the average income of a 22 to 30 year-old remains below the pre-recession levels, while the median UK household returned to pre-recession levels in 2014, albeit still at just 3.7 per cent ahead in 2015/16. At the same time, millennials (broadly defined as the cohort born between 1980 and 2000) are seeing disposable income further

eroded by student debt and higher living costs. According to the Office for National Statistics, the average under 30-year-old spends almost a quarter of monthly outgoings on rent, with a significantly higher proportion in London and much of the south east.

The high cost of living associated with global cities such as London eats away at disposable income, even for high skilled workers commanding well above average salaries. Housing costs are a key component, which has a knock on impact on quality of life when affordability pressures extend commute times or undesirable residential choices. Millennial workers are less likely to have achieved home ownership prior to the endemic house price rise in London and many south east towns.

A number of studies have suggested that millennials are less wedded to the concept of home ownership and prefer the flexibility and lower responsibility offered by rental accommodation. This may be the case to an extent, although it also possible that homeownership is so far from financial reality

for most in this cohort that it is not even on the agenda. While Help-to-Buy has helped many achieve this aspiration, even those on well above average incomes struggled to get on the housing ladder in London and the south east as residential value growth moved sharply ahead of incomes. As a result, even high skilled workers find themselves priced out of markets their predecessors would have enjoyed in their early working lives.

CHANGING PRIORITIES

There is some evidence that suggests millennials are presenting somewhat different values and priorities to previous generations, partly in response to the particular challenges they face. This is the first generation growing up with environmental issues on the agenda, while also being exposed to a range of social and political issues through their online lives.

Research by the iOpener Institute (2012) suggests the digital generation values job fulfilment over financial reward. This less financially driven stance is perhaps easier to achieve in more affordable locations where

it does not come at the cost of quality of life. An enhanced emphasis on environmental issues and life satisfaction is also being seen in a greater emphasis on wellbeing. Various research studies, including a survey by PwC (2013), have found that millennials put a premium on work-life balance and is a “primary reason this generation of employees may choose a non-traditional professional career track.” This translates not only to demand for a sustainable and healthy workplace, but also in decisions on where and how to live. It is notable that some of the highest ‘quality of life’ ratings for tech clusters in the UK were recorded in towns by the sea or with other natural amenities (Tech Nation, 2017).

GEOGRAPHY JUMPING

Businesses have found themselves able to counter the ‘global city pull’ if they can offer the revered combination of job opportunities and quality of life. In the US, there is some evidence of millennials opting for smaller more affordable cities with a strong quality of life offer. The Tech Nation survey found that while the average tech salary in London



» The Senedd, Cardiff Bay



“Transport infrastructure is equally important to enable client and team interaction.”

is markedly higher than recorded in other tech clusters around the UK, its quality of life rating was distinctly poorer.

This flexibility of location, whether for an individual freelancer or a business has been made possible by improvements in both digital and physical infrastructure. Towns across the UK have seen massive improvements in high-speed broadband connectivity, which not only provide links with clients perhaps in London or abroad, but also facilitates remote working. Transport infrastructure is equally important to enable client and team interaction.

“Capital status and other public sector functions provide a robust foundation to Cardiff’s economy.”

CARDIFF’S HOLISTIC POTENTIAL

Against this backdrop of evolutionary change for business and the workforce alike, Cardiff is well positioned to capture opportunities to

achieve a step change in the city’s economic performance. We consider the factors that together have the potential to support this shift.

EXPOSURE TO HIGH GROWTH SECTORS

Inevitably, the economic base of a location will drive growth and Cardiff’s emerging economic composition presents a positive backdrop. The city’s capital status affords it both administrative functions and tourist benefits. The city is home to many of the devolved Government offices, but is also attracting national government functions.

The city will be the new home for the HMRC headquarters at Rightacres and Legal & General’s Central Square regeneration scheme. The UK Government Property Unit also plans a second phase of development to create a new public sector hub in the centre of Cardiff for non-devolved civil service departments in Wales. While there are still many unknowns on how the UK will be managed after Brexit, it seems likely that the Welsh Assembly will take on some responsibilities that were formerly held in

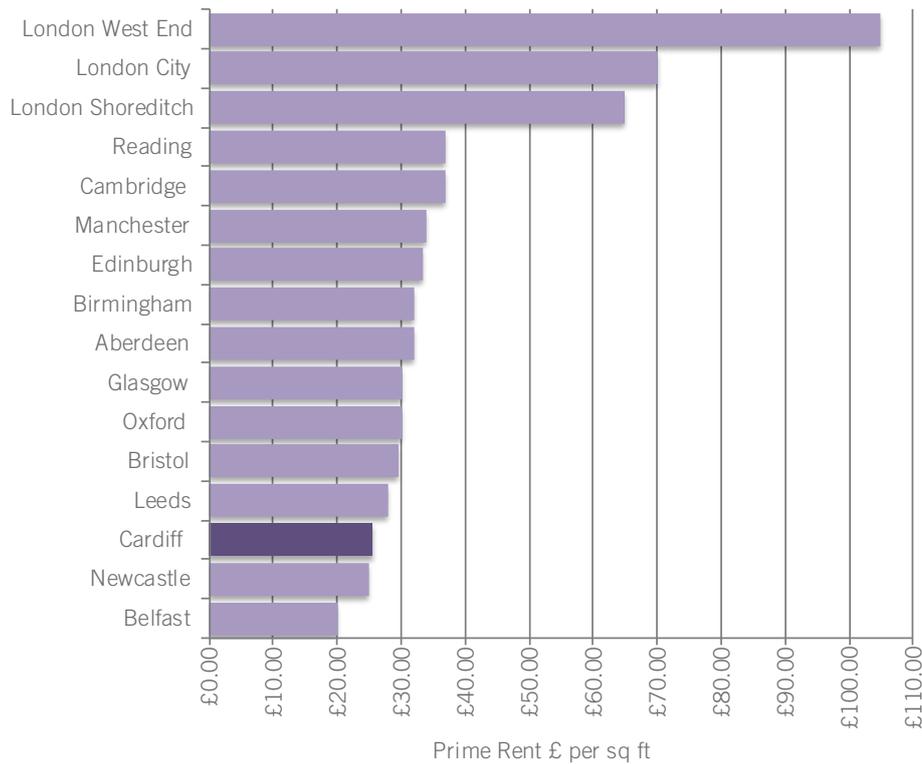
Brussels, with space implications for Cardiff. Capital status and other public sector functions provide a robust foundation to Cardiff’s economy. However, recent trends show an acceleration growth in the financial services sector in the city, as well as professional and business services support (ONS). This is reflected in the growth of companies such as Admiral and Deloitte, the latter opening its new office in the city centre in 2015. The city is also the hub for Welsh media, the impact of which will grow with the opening of the new BBC Wales HQ, again at Central Square, in spring 2018.

While currently relatively small as a proportion of the economy overall, the science and tech sector is showing dynamic growth and will be essential to the city’s long term ability to attract high GVA business and high skilled jobs. Growing momentum in this sector is illustrated by Aston Martin’s decision to choose the nearby former Ministry of Defence site at St Athan, from 20 potential global locations, for its second UK manufacturing plant. The redeveloped site will create a large number of direct and indirect high skilled roles for the production of the company’s new SUV, the Aston Martin DBX.



» Aston Martin, in partnership with Legal & General Real Assets, is developing a new manufacturing facility at St Athan

PRIME UK OFFICE RENTS, Q1 2017



» Source: ThinkBarn

The digital sector is also establishing critical mass. The Cardiff and Swansea digital tech cluster employs over 17,000 people and has a GVA of nearly £400m. The composition of the cluster is diverse and has seen a particularly high level of new business start-ups in the tech sector over recent years (Tech Nation). The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) ranked the city as fifth in the UK in 2016 in terms of being business friendly for small high growth businesses. The CEBR league table considered the key factors of finance, connectivity and talent needed to grow high growth businesses.

HIGH SKILLED WORKERS AND EXPERTISE

The talent factor is critical. As is the case in the majority of tech clusters, local universities in Cardiff are a key underlying dynamic. Cardiff University's National Software Academy provides a supply of graduate engineers. The university, in collaboration with IQE, leading global supplier of advanced semiconductor wafers, and with funding from the Welsh Government, is also playing a central role in

the development of a centre of excellence for the development and commercialisation of next generation Compound Semiconductor (CS) technologies. The new cluster illustrates the form of growth that can have transformative economic impact over the long term.

The fact the city is the beneficiary of four universities; all providing differing focus and expertise is a key strength. Tech Nation's survey found 57 per cent of local tech businesses reporting this as a key benefit of the Cardiff and Swansea tech cluster. Despite this, 46 per cent of tech sector businesses in the area note the lack of highly skilled workers as a significant challenge. Access to talent is essential, not only to facilitate growth from the expansion of indigenous businesses as highlighted by the CEBR study, but also in attracting firms relocating out of London, or other parts of the country or indeed outside the UK.

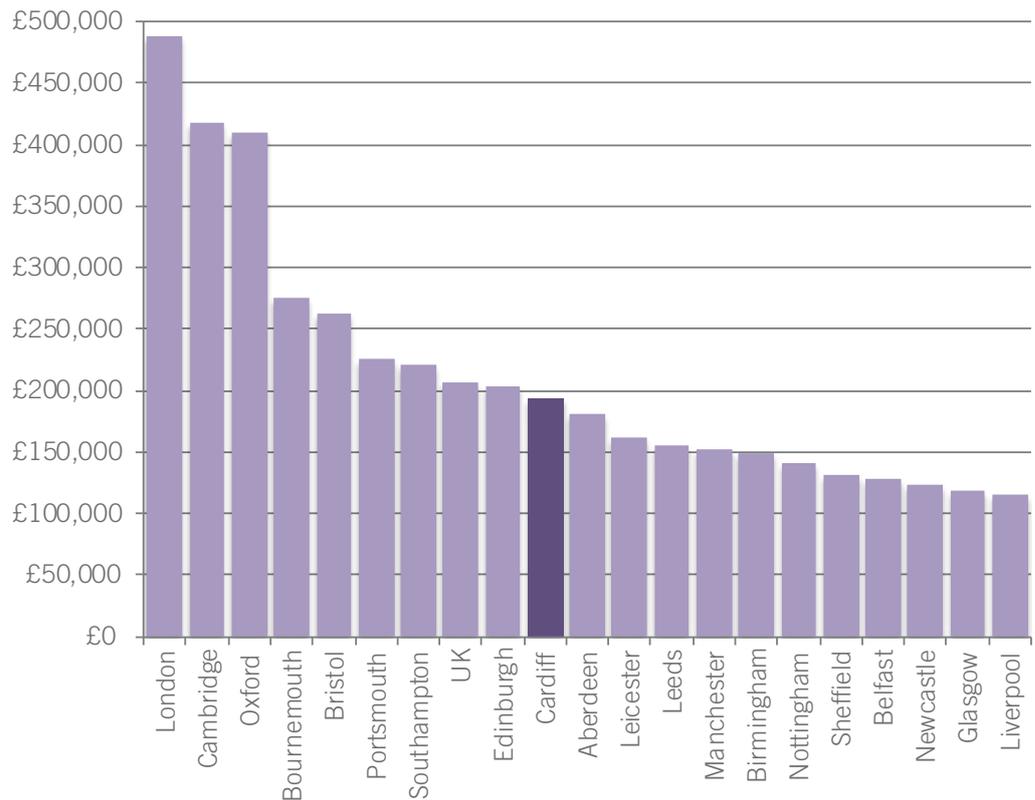
Cardiff is forecast to be one of the fastest growing cities in the UK over the next two decades, with an increase of 48,000 people by 2039, up 32 per cent on 2014 levels. This will be positive for business and the city if the highly skilled are well represented

in this growth. This will depend on the performance of the local education system; the retention of university graduates, as well as attracting experienced workers with in-demand skills.



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 "The Cardiff and Swansea digital tech cluster employs over 17,000 people and has a GVA of nearly £400m."

AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE IN UK CITIES



» Source: Hometrack, February 2017

A NETWORKED AND COLLABORATIVE CITY

Strong local networks are a central factor in both creating a dynamic environment attractive to high skilled workers and supportive to start-ups and relocating businesses. Cardiff has strength in this area in the tech sector in particular, again highlighted by the Tech Nation survey.

There are a number of organisations and departments that focus on supporting new businesses in the city, both providing expertise and funding. These include Cardiff Start and Business Wales, which provides a digital development fund. Funding is also available through Entrepreneurial Spark,

a NatWest start-up support hub located at Central Square, and Finance Wales.

The supportive business community makes it an appealing place for new start-ups, for whom community and collaboration can be more significant than physical location. This is a key to achieving an inflow of relocating established businesses. The digital ecosystem has also been aided by the development of space such as GloWorks, the new creative industries centre at Porth Teigr in Cardiff Bay, which opened in 2014.

AN AFFORDABLE CITY

In order to facilitate high value business growth and attract companies from other parts of the country, or indeed

internationally, the relative cost of business space, and homes, is crucial. The city offers a range of low cost secondary space, but more significantly, new high quality space such as that under construction at Capital Quarter and Central Square, at affordable rents. The Enterprise Zone designation in the city centres is significant. Not only does it facilitate a strategic approach to the city's evolution, but also reduces the already affordable occupational costs further relative to other cities.

The availability and cost of commercial business space was reported as a key strength of the city, by tech occupiers based in the Cardiff and Swansea tech cluster. The Tech Nation survey also noted the importance placed on the overall cost of



“The availability and cost of commercial business space was reported as a key strength of the city.”



“In 2013, a survey by L&G found Cardiff to be the best UK city for young adults because of its low cost of living, good job opportunities and relative wages.”

living. While present salaries are, on average, lower than found in other core cities in the UK, residential values and living costs are also lower. This balance positions the city well, given the emerging mood swing among millennials towards affordability.

QUALITY OF LIFE ON OFFER

Affordability is not enough on its own to attract high value business and skilled workers. The increasing importance placed on the quality of life offered, by millennials in particular, dictates these factors go hand in hand. Evidence from multiple sources indicates Cardiff is performing well in this respect with ambitious plans: ‘To become Europe’s most liveable capital city’. In the Cardiff Public Services Board Wellbeing assessment, residents report the city to be a relatively safe, attractive, prosperous and healthy city, particularly noting the culture, sport and green spaces as strengths. The

range of outdoor leisure activities, including access to the beaches of West of Wales and mountains of mid-Wales are a major draw for workers across the generations as well as potential visitors.

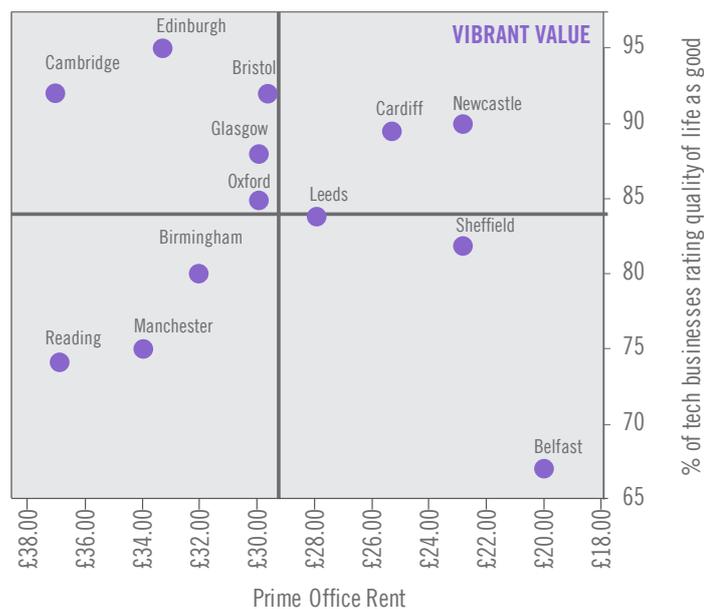
The Quality of Life in European Cities Survey (2016), which gathers the opinions of residents in EU member states, focussing on quality of life and levels of satisfaction with various aspects of city living, recorded Cardiff as third on the list, the first of all UK cities. In 2013, a survey by L&G found Cardiff to be the best UK city for young adults because of its low cost of living, good job opportunities and relative wages. Clearly, such surveys adopt differing methodologies, but a general theme is clear.

The Tech Nation survey corroborates this view. 89 per cent of the city’s digital tech community gave the Cardiff and Swansea tech cluster a positive quality of life rating,

which compares with a national cluster average of 83 per cent. However, the city’s strength is the combination of this and a supportive environment for small business. Our analysis of prime office rents and quality of life assessment by tech businesses positions Cardiff in the quadrant we have identified as ‘Vibrant Value’. From this position the city has the potential to attract new and growing businesses.

Certainly, the depth of the urban culture, combined with the leisure opportunities presented by the city’s surrounding natural environ is a particular strength for high skilled millennials seeking an affordable and healthy lifestyle. At present, the city’s commanding position as a Vibrant Value location is only diminished by the challenge of an insufficient supply of high skilled labour, which is essential for sustained growth across all business sectors.

WINNING COMBINATION: QUALITY OF LIFE HIGH, BUSINESS COSTS LOW



» Source: ThinkBarn, Tech Nation
 » Note: Quadrants defined by average of office rent and quality of life rating respectively.
 » London omitted from analysis due to distorting effect of high office rents.



» David Morgan department Store

The quality of life on offer in Cardiff can be utilised to attract in-demand skills, which has been aided by new residential schemes in the city centre. The strong demand in 2013 for apartments in the David Morgan department store conversion highlighted the appetite for central Cardiff living and set the scene for further city centre and edge of centre schemes, such as the former Churchill's Hotel site and Bayscape at the Marina. The Metro will open up a wider commutable area, creating demand in settlements along the route as well as spurring new schemes.

The quality of life offer also helps to boost and extend tourist income into the city. The city has seen record levels of spending over recent years, with expectations that 2017 will follow suit.

The historic and cultural offer, combined with events at the Principality Stadium, including the 2017 Champions' League Final, are central to the tourist industry. However, the city's increasingly vibrant urban backdrop, with evolving retail and leisure offer, as well

as the natural landscape, holds appeal for tourists just as it does for business.

ACCESSIBILITY AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Cardiff's public transport connectivity, in particular its access to London, presents a key advantage over other Vibrant Value cities in the UK. The electrification of the mainline to London in 2018, taking the journey time to 1 hour 45 minutes, breaks the two hours psychological barrier for businesses with clients or networks in the capital. The short commute can also assist in tempting high skilled millennial workers away from the capital.

Ongoing improvements to the airport are helping to extend the city's influence internationally. In April, Qatar Airways chose the airport as its only UK hub to operate its new service to Doha, which is likely to provide a spur for further investment.

The £1.28 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, agreed early 2017, includes funding for the improvement in accessibility in around the city. The South Wales Metro will improve connectivity to not only spread the economic impact, but also extend the commuter hinterland to provide a diverse and skilled workforce. In addition to the physical accessibility of the city, the digital infrastructure in Cardiff is considered a key strength by tech businesses in the city (Tech Nation).

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 "The city has seen record levels of spending over recent years, with expectations that 2017 will follow suit."



» Principality Stadium

PROPERTY MARKET IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Research by Oxford Economics (2014) on trends and opportunities for cities across the globe found there to be differing models for urban success, recommending that aspiring cities should look to their core assets and USPs and draw on their comparative advantage. This process of introspection has been underway for some time in Cardiff.

In this report we have outlined the USPs on which Cardiff could build. It is an accessible and affordable city offering a highly regarded quality of life to its resident base. Its high

skilled population is growing gradually through in-migration and the retention of students, attracted by the expanding range of employment opportunities in the city and the lifestyle on offer.

This is the first stage to achieve a virtuous cycle of growth, particularly from indigenous start-ups who value the local business network and ethos. Public sector players, local universities and private sector organisations are putting in place the foundations and stepping stones to enable the city to capitalise on its areas of comparative advantage to achieve a structural gearshift.

This is needed to ensure the city is robust and dynamic enough to adjust not only to

global economic change, but also change in the UK in a post Brexit environment. The role of property is essential to the delivery of this vision.

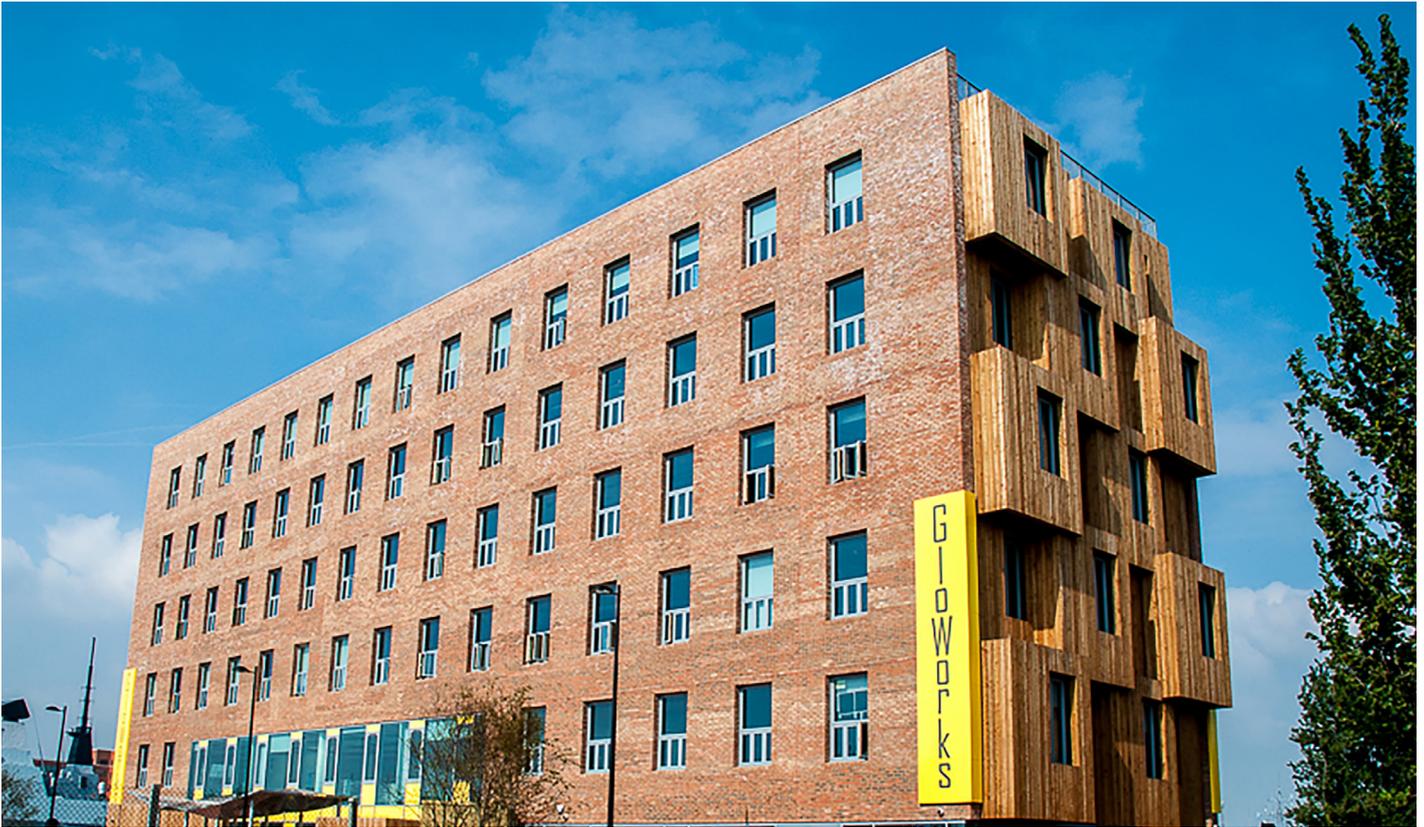
CREATIVE CRITICAL MASS

High quality and affordable office stock is being delivered across the city centre and in Cardiff Bay, with strong take-up activity across a range of business sectors. Further provision will be needed to ensure the city's Vibrant Value status is retained in order to attract start-ups and relocating businesses.

This will achieve scale, which is needed to facilitate the transfer ideas and creativity, essential to new business and product creation across all businesses. Significant

“High quality and affordable office stock is being delivered across the city centre and in Cardiff Bay, with strong take-up activity across a range of business sectors.”





» Gloworks, Porth Teigr

occupiers such as the BBC or Deloitte serves as an agglomeration magnet, which enhances opportunities for business and professional services companies, ranging from marketing, accountancy to legal services.

Establishing this critical mass will provide long term value for Cardiff's economy and its investors. The challenge for the city will be to ensure that during the forthcoming period of high population growth, economic wellbeing is achieved across the city in order to maintain a positive and cohesive culture.

This will include the provision of more housing, appropriate to a range of tenures, demographics and household incomes, with the underlying infrastructure such

as schools to match. Given the relatively limited scope for the delivery of large scale residential development within the city centre, the Metroline will assist in opening up more affordable residential areas for commuters.

SPACE FOR ALL

Critical mass in itself is not the full answer however. A range of business space types and price ranges are needed to accommodate a dynamic business ecosystem. At one end of this ecosystem, large floorplate space is essential to accommodate expanding or relocating businesses. OECD research shows that young, or growing, companies produce 100 per cent of the net new jobs across Europe. It is, therefore, essential that

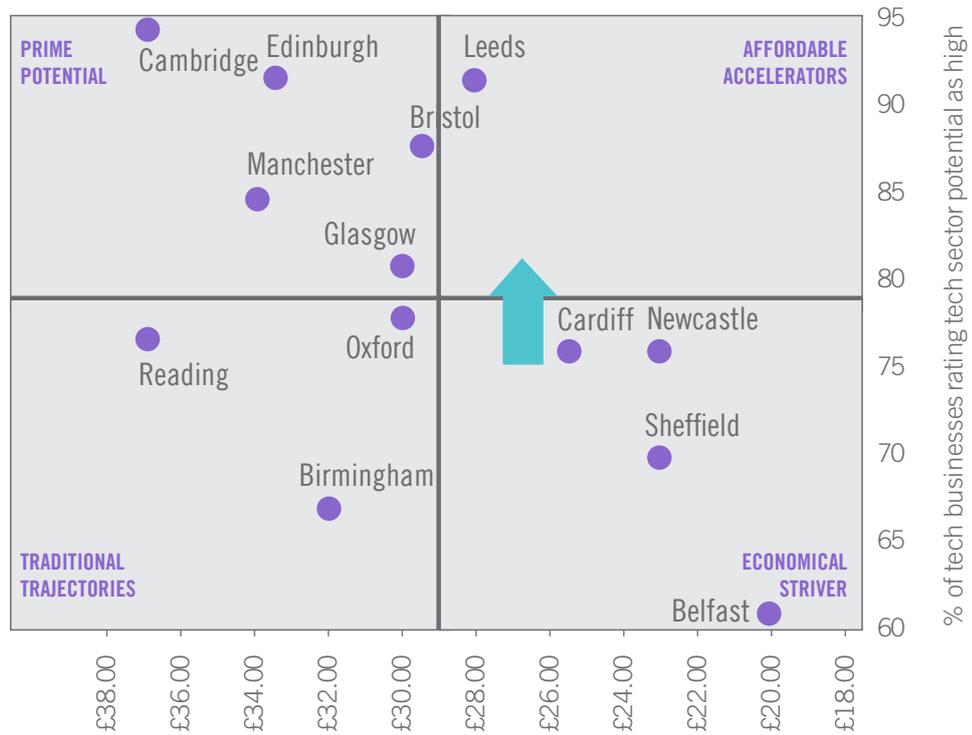
the space and terms on offer is conducive to companies that are growing. Space is also needed for small companies and freelancers that, while staying small, are important to the wider ecosystem in the provision of their expertise.

It is notable that in the tech sector, companies gain the most value from co-working space and are highly likely to use this if available (Tech Nation). This offers not only networking and business development opportunities, but also support systems. Where this has formal or informal links with funders and universities so much the better.

Co-working space, illustrated by GloWorks, but can take many forms in terms of style and location, and may of course include



THE NEED TO BOOST PERCEIVED TECH POTENTIAL TO CAPITALISE ON CARDIFF'S AFFORDABILITY



» Source: ThinkBarn, Tech Nation
 » Note: Quadrants defined by average of office rent and quality of life rating respectively.
 » London omitted from analysis due to distorting effect of high office rents.

traditional floorplate designs. It is the activities and opportunities within that count.

QUALITY OF LIFE SELLS

The Tech Nation survey found that Cardiff's 'limited talent supply' to be an issue for local tech businesses, despite the supply of creative and technical skills generated by the city's universities. This has implications for the perceived growth potential of the tech sector in the city. The challenge is to shift perceptions by attracting and retaining talent across all business sectors, illustrated

in the chart above as a move from what we have defined as an 'Economical Striver' to an 'Affordable Accelerator'.

With increasing emphasis on affordability and quality of life among millennial workers, the city must ensure it can deliver a lifestyle vision for this talent so it may be retained in the region and attracted from elsewhere. The importance placed on the sustainability credentials of the GloWorks scheme underlines its importance in attracting millennial entrepreneurs. However, developing and enhancing Cardiff's highly rated quality of life and environmental offer

is a responsibility for all involved in the city's urban fabric and surrounds.

MAXIMISE THE INFRASTRUCTURE ADVANTAGE

Cardiff is about to embark on a significant programme of transport infrastructure improvement, with both the electrification of the mainline and the development of the Metroline. At a time when many cities are struggling with overburdened public transport, this investment is a differentiator for the city. It changes perceptions on



“Cardiff is about to embark on a significant programme of transport infrastructure improvement.”



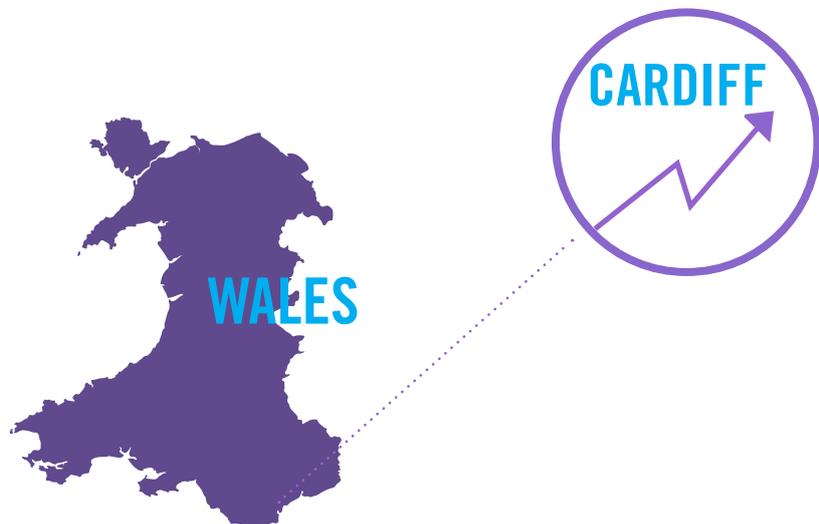
» Central Square

Cardiff's relationship with London and other cities along the mainline, opening up the city to labour and business, as well as having a direct impact on productivity. Just as significantly, it sends a message about the willingness to invest and take the city forward.

This progressive stance to infrastructure delivery must continue. Consultation on a new six-lane motorway scheme prepared that travel around the south of the city, is inevitably contentious, but must be addressed. The current network is acknowledged as a weakness for existing and relocating businesses, not only in their ability to reach national networks, but also for staff to commute and access the leisure opportunities on offer.

Finally, the Superfast Cymru programme, which provides access to next-generation broadband, is a key strength for the city, perhaps understated, given the fact that many UK cities for the moment remain well behind. It is also important that the continual improvement of digital connectivity within the city, includes areas outside the prime core, so all businesses are able to benefit from the productivity gains it affords.

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 "The progressive stance to infrastructure must continue."





ThinkBarn

■ T F T I ■