

# News story: Michael Gove celebrates the best of Welsh at the Royal Show

Environment Secretary Michael Gove joined Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns at the Royal Welsh Show in Llanelwedd today, 24 July, experiencing the very best of Welsh food, farming and rural life.

They met with the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths AM, as well as representatives from the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, Farmers Union Wales and NFU Cymru, to discuss future farming policy once we leave the EU.

Earlier this month the Secretary of State welcomed the proposals from the Welsh Government to replace the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and make the most of the new freedoms provided by Brexit.

He also reiterated the need for Defra and the Welsh Government to work closely to reduce the bureaucracy faced by farms on the Wales-England border, addressing some of the points raised in response to Defra's public consultation.

Later in the afternoon he visited the Food Hall – sponsored by Food is GREAT – which celebrates fantastic local produce including:

- Snowdonia Cheese – The Snowdonia Cheese Company was established in 2001 and has created a luxury range of cheeses from around the lakes and mountains of North Wales
- Anglesey Sea Salt – the finest sea salt from the clean waters that surround Anglesey, produced by food company Halen Môn and used in some of the best restaurants worldwide
- Lochmeyler Farm Ice Cream – a family dairy farm making ice cream from its 350 free-range cows, with flavours including blackberry, ginger and Pembrokeshire salted caramel
- Blodyn Aur – translated as 'Golden Flower', this is Welsh rapeseed oil grown and pressed on a farm near the village of Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr
- Apple County Cider – award-winning ciders from orchards on the Monmouthshire hills

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

It is a pleasure to be here in this beautiful part of Wales for one of the biggest and best agricultural events of the year.

As we leave the EU we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform our food, farming and environmental policies. We expect to see more powers than ever before being granted to the Welsh government, and we are continuing to work closely to deliver a Brexit that will benefit Welsh farmers and consumers.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I am delighted to welcome the Environment Secretary to the Royal Welsh Show once again. It's a wonderful showcase for the quality of our livestock, food and drink and farm produce, highlighted by the hundreds of thousands of visitors who flock to Builth Wells year upon year to experience this showpiece event.

From multi-million pound investments in superfast broadband to supporting innovation in the agri-tech sector through our modern Industrial Strategy, we are delivering the measures needed to support the agricultural industry in Wales. As we move into the final stages of EU exit negotiations, we are stepping up our engagement to make sure the voices of the sector are heard.

To find out more about the Royal Welsh Show, which runs until 26 July, please see [here](#)

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## [News story: CMA publishes Annual Report for 2017/18](#)

The [report](#), which the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has laid before Parliament, looks back on work carried out during 2017/18, and highlights the impact the organisation has made over that year for households and businesses across the UK.

The CMA carried out competition enforcement investigations to protect vulnerable customers, crack down on cartels and tackle illegal online practices. It used its full array of powers flexibly and secured important enforcement outcomes across a range of sectors, including [online auction platforms](#), [residential estate agency services](#) and [supplies of household fuels](#).

Through its consumer enforcement, much of which focused on digital commerce, the CMA addressed unfair practices in markets as diverse as [secondary ticketing](#), hotel booking and car hire. This includes securing landmark [changes for online gambling players](#), with four leading operators formally committing to stop unfair online promotions.

The CMA built on previous years' improvements to its merger control, operating with increased pace and with more targeted interventions. It carried out several major merger investigations, including Tesco/Booker, Wood/Amec and [Fox/Sky](#). In the latter, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport accepted the CMA's recommendation that the

anticipated acquisition was not in the public interest due to media plurality concerns and has [required the sale of Sky News to Disney](#).

The CMA carried out an in-depth review into one market long central to people's lives and during a period of life when they can be at their most vulnerable (care homes), calling for urgent reform of the sector so that people get the support they need in their old age. This was alongside another review into a rapidly-evolving area of the economy ([digital comparison tools](#)), in which it set clear ground rules for all online comparison tools on issues such as communicating how they use people's personal data and clearly displaying important information like price and product description. Following both these market studies, the CMA launched enforcement action and [secured important policy changes](#) by major care home providers and over £2 million in compensation to a large number of residents who had paid significant upfront fees.

Millions of households and businesses are seeing the benefits from the CMA's market-wide reviews of the [£10 billion energy sector](#) and the [£35 billion retail banking sector](#), with a range of innovative and important remedies coming into effect. For example, four million energy customers on pre-payment meters are paying lower bills thanks to a price cap and smaller businesses are no longer trapped into expensive auto-rollover contracts. Banks must now support the tech-enabled Open Banking revolution, it is easier for customers to switch bank and banks must warn customers if they are about to slip into an unarranged overdraft.

Over the year, there was a step-change in the level of co-operation between the CMA and sector regulators, as shown in the latest [Annual Concurrency Report](#). The CMA has, or in some cases continues to carry out significant work alongside other regulators, including the market investigation into [investment consultants](#) following a referral from the Financial Conduct Authority. Almost all the regulators with powers to enforce competition law have now launched an investigation of their own since the start of the new concurrency regime in 2014.

The CMA remains a strong voice for competition, within the UK and overseas, and is preparing to play a bigger role on the world stage following the UK's exit from the EU. Planning for the new arrangements, which include a significantly increased merger and antitrust review role, as well as a new responsibility to enforce State aid rules, is an important priority for the organisation. The CMA is expanding to ensure it is ready for these new responsibilities, including by opening a larger office in Edinburgh.

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**[News story: Decision announced on the](#)**

# Hydraulic Fracturing Consent application by Cuadrilla Bowland Ltd

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry has today (Tuesday 24 July 2018) granted Hydraulic Fracturing Consent for shale gas operator Cuadrilla Bowland Ltd for the horizontal well, number 'PNR-1z' at its Preston New Road site in Lancashire, subject to certain conditions being met.

Hydraulic Fracturing Consent was introduced in the [Infrastructure Act 2015](#) as an additional step to the existing regulatory and permitting regime. It ensures a final check that all the necessary environmental and health and safety permits have been obtained and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is otherwise satisfied it is appropriate to grant Hydraulic Fracturing Consent.

Cuadrilla Bowland Ltd submitted an [application for Hydraulic Fracturing Consent](#) to BEIS on 18 May 2018 in line with the regulatory regime.

The government has been clear it is committed to ensuring a meticulous approach, rooted in rigorous evidence, is taken when reviewing applications to explore for shale gas.

Having given careful consideration to the evidence submitted and after scrutiny from the department, minister Claire Perry is satisfied the [13 technical requirements set out in section 4A of the Petroleum Act 1998](#) have been met.

In a [written ministerial statement](#) in January 2018, the Secretary of State set out that the financial resilience of shale gas operators would be looked at as a matter of policy. The Infrastructure and Projects Authority was asked to carry out an independent assessment and has confirmed its view Cuadrilla has satisfactory financial resilience to operate. The Infrastructure and Projects Authority concluded:

Cuadrilla Bowland Limited, as operator of the PEDL 165 Licence and equity investor in the Licence alongside AJ Lucas and Spirit Energy on a joint and several basis, combined with continuing financial support from its ultimate shareholders has an adequate level of financial resilience to undertake the project.

After reviewing all of the information, Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry confirmed she is otherwise satisfied to issue the consent, subject to certain conditions being met, which include the department receiving a copy of the unqualified audited report and accounts relating to the latest full financial year of Spirit Energy Limited, or a deposit in a suitable Escrow account in support of any potential Decommissioning Cost liability.

It is the government's view there are potentially substantial benefits from the safe and sustainable exploration and development of our onshore shale gas resources.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said:

Shale gas has the potential to be a new domestic energy source, further enhancing our energy security and helping us with our continued transition to a lower-carbon economy. It also has the capacity to deliver substantial economic benefits, both nationally and locally, as well as through the creation of well paid, high-quality jobs.

We already have an excellent, long-standing reputation for safe oil and gas exploration. Our world class regulations will ensure that shale exploration will maintain robust environmental standards and meet the expectations of local communities.

I have carefully considered Cuadrilla's application and I am content that Hydraulic Fracturing Consent should be granted in this instance.

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## **News story: Funding from EU programmes guaranteed until the end of 2020**

Businesses, universities and local organisations were assured today (24 July 2018) that any funding they secure through EU programmes, from now until the end of 2020, will be guaranteed by the UK government even in a no deal scenario.

The implementation period agreed in March would see the UK continue to participate in all EU programmes until the end of 2020 – providing certainty for British organisations and their European counterparts.

The guarantee announced today (24 July 2018) will reflect this by underwriting the UK's full allocation for structural and investment fund projects, such as funding secured through the European Regional Development Fund, until the end of 2020.

In addition, the Treasury will also guarantee funding for UK organisations which successfully bid directly to the European Commission – through projects like Horizon 2020 – until the end of this EU budget period if no deal is agreed.

This will give potential applicants continued confidence to bid for funding

whatever the outcome of the negotiations, and ensure that UK organisations continue to benefit from funding post-Exit.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

We continue to make positive steps towards getting the best possible deal with the EU – one that works for the whole of the UK. The guarantee we are making today however means that, even in the unlikely event of a no-deal, our businesses, universities and local authorities can be confident that they will continue to receive the funding they successfully bid for from any EU programme.

In 2016 the government [committed to protect projects that were successful in securing EU funding before exit day](#). This new guarantee means that successful bids for EU funding until the end of 2020 will receive their full financial allocation and will continue to receive funding over a project's lifetime.

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## **Statement to Parliament: SoS, Dominic Raab statement on the White Paper on Legislating for the Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU**

With permission Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the White Paper which has been published today, setting out the Government's plans for legislating for the Withdrawal Agreement and the implementation period.

On Friday the 29th of March 2019, the UK will leave the European Union, giving effect to the historic decision taken by the British people in the 2016 referendum.

This Government is committed to delivering a smooth and orderly Brexit.

That's why we've already passed the EU (Withdrawal) Act through Parliament, so we are ensuring our statute book functions after... exit, whatever the outcome of the negotiations.

I am grateful to the House, and the other place, for the many hours of scrutiny devoted to that vital piece of legislation.

We are now embarking on the next step in the process of delivering that smooth Brexit for the people and businesses of this country.

Mr Speaker, since June last year, the UK has been negotiating with the EU to

decide on the terms of our withdrawal.

We have made substantial progress: protecting the rights of EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens in the EU, deciding on the terms of the financial settlement, agreeing a strictly time-limited implementation period.

Most of the Withdrawal Agreement, according to the EU side, around 80%, has now been agreed with our EU partners, and we have isolated outstanding issues for further focused negotiation.

I will be meeting Michel Barnier again on Thursday, to take forward these negotiations at this critical time.

We have already agreed a financial settlement, estimated at between £35-39 billion, well below the figures being bandied around by some when we started this negotiation.

The implementation period is finite, it allows for the negotiation and conclusion of free trade deals.

Many of these arrangements will require new domestic legislation to deliver them into UK law.

And that is why, last November, we announced our intention to bring forward a new piece of primary legislation to implement the Withdrawal Agreement in UK law.

So today, we are publishing a White Paper setting out our proposals for this important legislation, which will be introduced once the negotiations have concluded and Parliament has approved the final deal.

Our expectation is to reach agreement in October. And under the terms of the EU (Withdrawal) Act, Parliament will have its say on the final deal.

Our expectation is, if approved at that point, we will bring forward the legislation so that it can be in place for when we leave the EU on the 29th of March 2019.

So in setting out our proposals today, we are giving Parliament the opportunity to scrutinise the plans well ahead of the Bill's introduction, given the need to enact the legislation in the time available, mindful of the importance of maximum scrutiny in this House.

By publishing the White Paper today, the Government is providing further certainty to people and businesses here in the UK and indeed across the EU.

And it also sends a clear signal to the European Union that the United Kingdom is a reliable dependable, negotiating partner, delivering on the commitments it has made across the negotiating table.

Of course, while we are making good progress, discussions are ongoing in various areas.

And that means that some parts of the Bill will only become clearer as we settle the remaining parts of the Withdrawal Agreement.

In light of that, the White Paper we published today focuses on those parts of the Withdrawal Agreement where the text is already agreed.

Let me take them in turn.

Mr Speaker, the first priority of the UK in negotiating our withdrawal from the EU was to reach agreement on the rights of our citizens.

That includes the 3.5 million EU citizens that live in the UK and are valued members of their communities and play an integral part in the life of this country.

Likewise, the approximately one million UK nationals who currently live in the EU are equally valued by their host countries and communities.

The agreement reached on citizens' rights will allow EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU to live their lives broadly as they do now and will enable families who have built their lives in the EU and UK to stay together.

The most important next step will be to provide a continued right of residence for those citizens.

EU citizens lawfully residing in the UK on the 31st of December 2020 will be able to stay.

And this month, the Home Office published further details about how EU citizens and their families can obtain settled status in the UK.

And that statement confirms that the Settlement Scheme will be simple and straightforward for EU citizens and their families to secure their long-term status in this country.

The Bill will ensure EU citizens can rely on the rights set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, and enforce them in UK courts.

It will also establish an independent monitoring authority to oversee the UK's implementation of the deal on citizens' rights, providing further reassurance to citizens.

Mr Speaker, all EU Member States must implement the Agreement in full and provide certainty to UK nationals on the continent.

And, as the Home Secretary recently stated, we now need to know more of the details on how each Member State will fulfil their obligations and implement their side of the agreement.

And we will be pressing further on those details over the summer.

The next chapter of the paper deals with the strictly time-limited



implementation period that the UK agreed with the EU in March.

The UK will leave the EU on the 29th of March 2019.

After this, we have agreed an implementation period that will ensure that people and businesses will only have to plan for one set of changes as we move towards our future relationship.

From the 30th of March 2019 until the 31st of December 2020 common rules will remain in place, with EU law continuing to apply, and businesses will be able to trade on the same terms as they do now.

During this period we will not be a Member State, and will have the flexibility we need to strike new trade deals around the world, something many argued we would not be able to achieve in the negotiations.

In order to legislate for the implementation period, we must ensure that the statute book, the UK statute book, continues to reflect the relevant EU law, as it applies to the UK during this time-limited period.

As the House will know, the current mechanism for bringing EU law into UK law is the European Communities Act 1972. Under the EU (Withdrawal) Act, that will be repealed on the 29th of March 2019.

Therefore, as set out in the White Paper, the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill will contain a time-limited provision so that parts of the ECA are saved until the 31st of December 2020.

These changes will ensure that our statute book functions properly throughout the implementation period, according with the agreement we have made with the EU.

Turning to the financial settlement, the structure of that was agreed in December on the basis that it would sit alongside our future partnership.

And as we have said from the start, nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. That is in keeping with Article 50. It is in keeping with the guidelines that have been given to the EU for the negotiation.

We will have a Framework for our Future Relationship with the EU, alongside the Withdrawal Agreement.

And our approach to that future partnership is set out in our White Paper published earlier this month.

There must be a firm commitment in the Withdrawal Agreement requiring the framework for the future relationship to be translated into legal text as soon as possible.

It is one part of the whole deal we are doing with our EU partners.

And of course, if one party fails to honour its side of the overall bargain, there will be consequences for the deal as a whole, and that includes the

financial settlement.

In addition, we have agreed an obligation for both parties to act in good faith through the application of the Withdrawal Agreement.

And the White Paper published today explains that the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill will include a standing service provision to allow the Government to meet the commitments of the financial settlement.

In the interests of transparency and oversight, it also includes proposals to enhance the existing scrutiny for the payments made to the EU.

Mr Speaker, this White Paper sets out our approach to delivering the Withdrawal Agreement and implementation period into law.

I look forward to discussing all of the proposals with Honourable Members across the House.

It is a necessary part of leaving the European Union and ensuring a smooth and orderly departure.

It provides the clarity and certainty to EU citizens living here and UK nationals abroad that their rights will be properly protected.

It will enact the time-limited implementation period, giving businesses greater certainty, giving the public finality with respect to our relationship with the EU.

And it provides for the appropriate means for paying of the financial settlement.

Above all, with 80% of the Withdrawal Agreement settled with our EU friends the White Paper is another key milestone on the UK's path to leaving the EU.

And I commend this statement to the House.