

Lesley Griffiths welcomes publication of EU Exit scenario report

The [EU Exit scenario report](#) has been published by the Cabinet Secretary's Brexit Roundtable Stakeholder Group. The group was set up following the referendum result to provide a forum for engagement and collaboration between the Welsh Government and its key stakeholders across the portfolio in planning for Brexit.

Over a number of months, a sub-group examined a number of different Brexit scenarios to identify the possible impacts on the sectors. In its report, five scenarios were developed, including defaulting to WTO terms, an EU-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and complete access to the single market with new FTAs with third countries.

The report summarises the key findings of the work, which was developed with stakeholders across all of the sectors.

Key findings across the scenarios include:

- Opportunities arise for some sectors in some scenarios, but not in all.
- Food prices increase to some degree across all scenarios, particularly influenced by import tariffs, non-tariff barriers and higher labour costs.
- The potential impacts for Welsh fishing vary from collapse under WTO tariffs to no change if the trading arrangements with the EU remain unchanged.
- The importance of investing in 'added value' is a theme across all scenarios and with all sectors.
- The sheep sector faces severe challenges as it relies on export to balance seasonal production and to achieve carcass balance. The pressures from geographical constraints and workforce availability in abattoirs and processing mean lamb markets are likely to struggle in all scenarios.
- The dairy and poultry sectors are most robust because of their focus on UK internal markets and lower reliance on export. Beef remains viable with a buoyant dairy industry to supply calves, with a better carcass balance and a lower dependency on export.
- The Welsh environment sector remains a potential growth area in term of eco-tourism through landscapes and seascape. It is rich in natural capital but investment is needed to develop new markets and to develop the skills the sector needs.
- Government funding significantly impacts the rate of change but not the eventual outcome. For many of the most severely impacted sectors funding is unlikely to be able to prevent the impacts but it could help to facilitate change.
- Without Government transitional support, in scenarios of big change, specific sectors may collapse quickly which will have wider consequences on community health and well-being.

- Both farming and fishing businesses in Wales need to improve productivity and efficiency, and consider other income streams to stay viable. This will require improved business skills and investment in infrastructure.
- The challenges and opportunities of Brexit will be different for each agricultural, fishing, forestry or food business. Mechanisms to support businesses to make the right decisions need to be put in place.

Cabinet Secretary said:

“I welcome the publication of this EU Exit scenario report and would like to thank the stakeholders for all their hard work. My Brexit Roundtable Group is a key forum where we engage and work closely with key stakeholders across my portfolio to support a collective approach to Brexit in Wales.

“Leaving the EU brings a high degree of uncertainty, and poses both risks and opportunities across sectors including food, fisheries, farming, forestry and the environment. However, accurately predicting the impacts of Brexit is incredibly difficult.

“The Group has therefore considered a number of scenarios to explore the impact directly on key sectors and between the sectors to enable us to also consider potential wider impacts on our communities and our environment.

“Whilst today’s report makes for stark reading it will be an important resource for us as a government, as well as the sectors themselves, to inform our collective preparations for a successful future outside the EU.”

Net closing in on illegal fishing says Counsel General

A number of prosecutions for illegal fishing activity have been made since January for matters including fishing in a closed area, non submission of statutory information, and illegal cockle and whelk fishing.

The seas around Wales are blessed with a variety of nationally and internationally important species and habitats, protected under European, Welsh and UK law. These natural resources and the services they provide are crucial in helping our coastal communities thrive through fishing and tourism, as well as having important cultural significance.

Unfettered exploitation of resources can lead to unsustainable practices which can result in damage and degradation. That is why the Welsh Government closely regulates fishing, and other activities, in Welsh marine waters. Using a number of assets – including fisheries patrol vessels – Welsh Government marine enforcement officers actively enforce and seek compliance with a wide range of regulations at sea and onshore.

Prosecutions under fisheries legislation in Wales are taken in the name of the Counsel General.

Jeremy Miles said,

“Illegal fishing is damaging to the angling industry, which is worth more than £150m to the Welsh economy. Unrestrained exploitation of resources can lead to unsustainable practices which can degrade fishing stocks and cause damage to local economies.

“Where there is sufficient evidence against those who flout the law, we must take action to protect our seas and wider fishing industry. These latest convictions show that anyone breaking the laws, whether off shore or in the intertidal areas should expect to face prosecution and potentially severe penalties.

“It’s important that we continue to crack down on illegal activity so that it remains sustainable for licensed fisherman.”

[The Fastest Passenger RIB in the World coming to north Wales during Year of the Sea](#)

The team at RibRide have set themselves a speed challenge to celebrate the ‘Year of the Sea’. A RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat) has been designed and specified for speed at sea. The RIB is named ‘Velocity’.

Skipper Phil Scott, owner of RibRide Adventure Tours, said:

“Adding to our fleet of RIB’s was an idea that sparked with the team. We could design a RIB which was fast, and I mean super-fast, to become the fastest passenger RIB in the world. We could design and build it in the UK and run it here in Wales.”

The RIB was designed at the end of 2017 and has already gone into production

in the UK. Delivery is expected by May 2018. This project has been supported by the Micro Small Business Fund (MSBF) through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

Skipper Phil said:

“Wales has the fastest Zip line in the world at Zip World, Bethesda called ‘Velocity’. Our friends at Zip World were enthusiastic about us using the same name for the fastest RIB in the world. Through this cooperation we are helping to build North Wales as a highly attractive proposition for the travel savvy adventure tourist.”

“I’m delighted that we’ve been able to support this innovative venture through our funding and that this development will continue to put north Wales on the map as an adventure destination. The Year of the Sea is our opportunity for Wales to make its mark as the UK’s top 21st century coastal destination by promoting our world-class products, activities, events and experiences – ‘Velocity’ will be another attraction over the summer.”

The ‘Velocity’ RIB has already created new employment at RibRide. It is hoped that the projected growth will bring economic advantages to the North Wales area. The RibRide team have been working with the marine regulators to help lay solid foundations for this and subsequent high-speed boats.

Skipper Phil said:

“We are working to build the fastest passenger RIB in the world. We hope we can claim a number of new world records. It’s great that we can share this excitement with passengers and our RibRiders will be a part of this challenge. ‘Velocity’ will travel to the speed of scream in 30 seconds. Our expert and highly trained Skippers will take you on two measured proving trips before the final and fastest run of the day is made, taking you to optimum ‘Velocity’.”

£8m EU-backed boost to roll out

initiative to drive groundbreaking research to support the manufacturing industry

Backed by £4m of EU funding, Swansea University's ASTUTE 2020 scheme will help to establish more research collaborations between participating Welsh universities and companies to address future manufacturing challenges and opportunities. The aim is to drive productivity and growth within the industry by developing new sustainable technologies and higher-value, competitive goods and services for the global market.

The project is already delivering in north and west Wales and the south Wales valleys. The additional EU funding will enable ASTUTE 2020 to be rolled out to support businesses across the rest of Wales, including Cardiff, Newport, the Vale of Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, Powys, Flintshire and Wrexham. The remainder of the funding will come from participating Welsh universities.

Professor Drakeford said:

“Investing in our manufacturing sector to drive innovation and develop pioneering technologies and products will lead to increased competitiveness within the industry and new employment opportunities.”

Professor Johann Sienz, ASTUTE 2020's operation director, said:

“We are delighted to be expanding the ASTUTE 2020 applied research which will enable transformational and sustainable growth across Wales in manufacturing industries. Focussed upon developing and adopting future manufacturing technologies, we are looking forward to collaborating with more companies aiming to stimulate and drive business growth in the region.”

To date, more than 30 companies have been involved with research collaborations through ASTUTE 2020, covering manufacturing component areas such as medical equipment, automotive and aerospace.

One such collaboration has been with the Aluminium Lighting Company (ALC), which has led to the development of a state-of-the-art electronic device, which can collect performance and maintenance data on lighting columns, such as those along roads, more efficiently and safely.

Currently, the performance and structural condition of lighting columns is assessed by visual and physical inspection, which can be time consuming and can cause service disruptions on roads, train lines, and to pedestrians. The

new device will enable the remote monitoring of lighting columns and condition and maintenance assessment, without the need for regular physical inspections. Such a device could become an integral part of ALC's future products and could be retro-fitted to existing lighting columns.

Craig Williams, ALC's managing director, said:

"The ASTUTE 2020 programme means we can access specialist knowledge that we do not have. Working with Swansea University we are looking to apply concepts of artificial intelligence, machine learning and neural networking in developing and refining our exciting new product and service."

ASTUTE 2020 is a £22.6m all-Wales scheme delivered in partnership between the Swansea, Aberystwyth, Cardiff and South Wales universities and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

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