

Aled Roberts to develop Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

Local authorities have a statutory duty to prepare and submit Welsh in Education Strategic Plans to Welsh Ministers for their consideration. Plans must set challenging targets for developing Welsh medium education in their areas.

The first statutory WESPs covering the period 2014 to 2017 were submitted to Welsh Ministers in December 2013. The second statutory WESPs covering the period 2017 to 2020 were submitted to Welsh Ministers in December 2016. A full assessment of the plans was undertaken which found the plans didn't go far enough to ensure sufficient growth in Welsh medium education to achieve our goal of a million Welsh speakers.

In 2017, the Minister's predecessor, Alun Davies announced that Aled Roberts would undertake a rapid review of the plans and offer recommendations for the future of Welsh medium education planning. All eighteen of Aled Roberts' recommendations were accepted and he will now begin work to implement them. An independent advisory board will be established to provide the necessary scrutiny during this process.

Eluned Morgan said:

"The WESPs submitted in 2017 initially lacked ambition and vision, which is why Aled was originally tasked to assess the plans. This is clear evidence that the system must now be improved so that we develop the right foundation for the planning of Welsh medium education that better reflects the ambition set in Cymraeg 2050, and the recognition that education is a key catalyst for change.

"I am delighted that Aled has agreed to continue the important work that he started with the review of the WESPs last year and look forward to working with him to ensure we have a system that is fit for the future and will help us to deliver the ambitious targets set in Cymraeg 2050."

Aled Roberts said:

"The Cymraeg 2050 strategy defines the Government's ambition for the future of our language. It recognises the critical role that early years and education will play in achieving our goals. I am looking forward to this role and will work tirelessly with others to bring about the change needed so that our youngsters have the opportunity to learn and work in a truly bilingual Wales."

Wales confirmed as one of eight stops on Extreme Sailing Series™ global tour in 2018

Act 1 of the Extreme Sailing Series will begin next month in Oman and will then travel to Lake Garda, Italy, 24-27 May for the World Championship; followed by Barcelona, Spain, for the second time from the 14-17 June. The fleet head to Portugal from the 5-8 July, before St Petersburg, Russia, makes a comeback on the calendar from the 9-12 August.

Cardiff will welcome the fleet again as part of the Cardiff Harbour Festival over the UK August Bank Holiday weekend, 24-27 August. Always a firm favourite with the public and the sailors due to the accessible waterfront stadium and close racing, this year is expected to be even more spectacular as Wales celebrates its 'Year of the Sea'.

The event is supported by the Welsh Government and Minister for Tourism, Lord Elis-Thomas elaborated:

"2018 will be the seventh time for Cardiff Bay to experience the excitement of the Extreme Sailing Series. We're celebrating the Year of the Sea in Wales this year, which is a fantastic opportunity for Wales to make its mark as the UK's top 21st century coastal destination – with world class products, events and experiences – with this event playing an important part in the line up of attractions.

"Extreme Sailing Series provides Cardiff with a global position alongside other premium worldwide venues and gives us the opportunity to promote Cardiff Bay internationally as a world class sailing and water sports venue."

The fleet then leaves Europe behind and heads west to the USA, where San Diego will host the penultimate Act from the 18-21 October. The grand finale will take place in Los Cabos, Mexico.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Cllr Peter Bradbury said:

"The Extreme Sailing Series has become an integral part of the city's events programme, showcasing Cardiff Bay as a leading waterfront city and sailing destination alongside stops such as

Sydney and San Diego.

“Cardiff has proved a fantastic destination for spectators and crews alike since the global competition first visited the Bay seven years ago, offering a winning blend of stadium racing and a terrific atmosphere with crowds lining the waterfront.

“With the arrival of the Volvo Ocean Race this May, Cardiff Bay and the rest of the Welsh Capital can expect to be a hub for world class sailing action, entertainment and atmosphere, in what is set to be a very special year for Cardiff and Wales.”

Andy Tourell, the Extreme Sailing Series Event Director, who has led the development of this pioneering sporting property for the last six years commented:

“The Series will continue to deliver a busy menu of racing unrivalled by other events, which can see up to 32 races at every Act. This means more racing for the sailors and a better entertainment schedule for public spectators, VIP guests and media.

“We will also continue to build on the trend of the past four years that has seen the average size of racecourses grow, while maintaining the proximity of the foiling action to the shore.”

The world class standard of racing and unique corporate sponsorship platform offered by the Series, which is one of only seven World Sailing Special Events, will see both returning and new teams made up of some of the world’s best sailors.

2018 Calendar of Acts

14 – 17 March – Muscat, Oman

24 – 27 May – Lake Garda, Italy – World Championship

14 – 17 June – Barcelona, Spain

5 – 8 July – Portugal

9 – 12 August – St Petersburg, Russia

24 – 27 August – Cardiff, UK

18 – 21 October – San Diego, USA

29 November – 2 December – Los Cabos, Mexico

First Minister meets the Taoiseach to discuss trade post-Brexit

The First Minister will say the creation of a 'hard' maritime border between Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, because of the UK government's insistence on leaving the Single Market and the Customs Union, would be a very real threat to the Welsh and Irish economies.

Ports make a huge contribution to the Welsh economy, supporting around 11,000 jobs and providing an economic hub and trade gateway with Europe and the rest of the world.

80% of goods carried in Irish registered HGVs between the Republic of Ireland and Europe pass through Welsh ports. In 2016, 524,000 lorries passed through major Welsh ports to and from the Irish Republic.

The First Minister recently launched the Welsh Government's post-Brexit trade paper, which set out the challenges facing Welsh ports. It identified the most pressing issue for Welsh ports is maintaining the efficient movement of goods and people via seamless customs arrangements.

The First Minister said:

"Changes to customs rules that add cost, time and regulation at Welsh ports would greatly reduce their efficiency and might encourage goods to be diverted away from the sea routes between Wales and Ireland. This would be hugely damaging to our economy.

"The Welsh Government is fully committed to playing its part in supporting the Good Friday Agreement, but I cannot support any outcome which would divert traffic away from Holyhead, Fishguard and Pembroke Dock in favour of other parts of the UK.

"There must be a level playing field between Britain and Ireland. I don't want to see a hard border on the island of Ireland but neither do I want to see customs posts at Welsh ports.

"That is why the best option is for the whole UK to have continued participation in the Single Market and membership of a customs union. This removes this problem entirely. It is also in the best interests of the Welsh and the Irish economies and, indeed, the economies of the whole of the UK. And, as we have been clear, leaving the EU must not affect the arrangements for the Common Travel Area.

"I look forward to meeting with the Taoiseach to discuss this

issue, as well as the importance of maintaining close links between Wales and Ireland as the UK prepares to leave the EU.”

Ireland holds a key position in terms of Welsh inward investment, with over 50 Irish-owned companies in Wales employing 2,500 people. Ireland is also a top Welsh export destination with Welsh exports to Ireland worth £902m in 2016.

While in Dublin, the First Minister will also attend a round table on Infrastructure and Brexit chaired by the British Irish Chamber of Commerce and hosted by Trinity College Dublin Business School, visit Irish Ferries and meet with British Ambassador, HE Robin Barnett CMG and British Irish Parliamentary Association Members.

[Traffic Officers to begin patrolling A483](#)

Welsh Government Traffic Officers currently cover the A55/A494/A550 corridor from the A55 Britannia Bridge through to the English border at Sealand and Broughton.

The service is now being extended and will now be patrolling the A483 between Junction 1 and Junction 7 from 7am-7pm every day of the year.

North Wales Traffic Officers currently deal with around 1,000 incidents per month including road safety issues, breakdowns, clearing debris and traffic management. More than 92% of incidents dealt with by the Traffic Officers have resulted in there being no impact upon journey times. In 2017, they moved 2,067 vehicles to safety.

Traffic Officers also help to ensure a safe working environment on the roads for the fire and rescue service, police and ambulance service to carry out their duties effectively.

Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Our Traffic Officer Service plays a vital role in maintaining the resilience of the network. Officers are out patrolling every day of the year in all types of weather carrying out a range of duties to ensure our roads are safe and moving as smoothly as possible.

“Last year I asked that we examine the potential to extend the service to cover the A483 and I’m delighted we are now making this happen on what is a very important route which connects North and Mid Wales as well as with regions across the border.

“This is a great example of how the Welsh Government is delivering to improve the travel experience and minimise the impact of incidents and breakdowns.”

[Economy Secretary congratulates made in Wales Journey's End on rave reviews](#)

The film which opened in early February is enjoying rave reviews from a wide range of publications including The Times, UK Film Review, Empire and The i. It is the work of production company Fluidity and was filmed in Pinewood Studio in Cardiff with financial support from Welsh Government.

Journey's End is based on the classic play by R. C. Sherriff and is set in the trenches in 1918. It follows a small group of soldiers as they wait for an enemy offensive and anticipate their imminent death.

The production features a host of household names including Sam Claflin, Paul Bettany, Toby Jones and Asa Butterfield. It was adapted by Simon Reade and directed by Saul Dibb whose previous films include Suite Francaise, The Duchess and Bullet Boy.

The Economy Secretary said:

“I am delighted that made in Wales production, Journey's End is wowing critics and the public alike, and being heralded as one of the best films about the First World War.

“It is a huge credit to the hard work and creativity of the production team, cast and crew and I would like to congratulate every one involved in its success.

“I am extremely proud that the Welsh Government is associated with such a first class production and the positive press coverage has been great for promoting Wales' talented crew, our locations and studio facilities.

“The film is helping to elevate our growing reputation as a premier production location and I hope we will the opportunity to work with Fluidity again in the future.”