

Have your say on plans to tackle waste crime

The [consultation, developed jointly with the UK Government](#), contains proposals in the following three areas. They aim to tackle waste crime to help protect the environment and human health and prevent criminal activity undermining responsible business:

- Reform the waste exemptions regime,
- Strengthen the requirements for people applying to operate a waste facility to demonstrate their competence,
- Introduce Fixed Penalty Notices for the offence of a householder passing waste to an unauthorised waste carrier or site under the Duty of Care provisions.

Minister for Environment, Hannah Blythyn said:

“We take the issue of waste crime very seriously. It significantly impacts our natural environment and can result in communities suffering from odour, litter, dust, vermin and fly infestations. Illegally deposited waste also creates a risk of fire adding to disruption to our infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. The cost of clean up often falls to the owners of the land or the public purse.

“The economic impact of waste crime is significant costing Wales at least £15 million in 2015. I am seeking views in this consultation to deliver environmental, health, social and economic benefits for Wales’ communities and future generations.”

The consultation builds on powers introduced in 2015, which strengthened Natural Resources Wales’ ability to take speedier and more effective action to tackle poor performing and illegal operators across the waste industry.

Kevin Ingram, Natural Resources Wales Interim Chief Executive said:

“As the regulator of the waste industry in Wales, our role is to ensure that waste is managed so that it does not cause pollution to the environment, harm to human health or detriment to our local communities. We want to support legitimate businesses in complying with the relevant legal controls and stop the activity of criminals who have no intention in complying with those rules.

“We believe these proposals will improve competence across the waste industry and allow us to target those waste operators who undercut legitimate businesses. They will also strengthen our ability to identify and bring those people acting illegally to

justice and recover avoided costs and taxes.”

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board meets for the first time

The purpose of the Board is to consider issues of teacher recruitment and retention to support a high-quality education workforce that is vibrant, engaged and committed to continuous learning for all and also able to meet the demands of curriculum and wider education reform.

The TRRB will provide the challenge, rigour and quality assurance to inform key areas of workforce planning policy development, including implications arising from the Welsh Language Strategy – Cymraeg 2050.

The Board will also provide expert advice to the Welsh Government on the continued progress of ITE reform and supporting the existing teaching workforce, taking into account excellent practice elsewhere in the UK and internationally.

The Board is chaired by Professor John Gardner, Deputy Principal (Education and Students) at the University of Stirling.

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams, said:

“Our teachers are absolutely integral to our National Mission. A profession that collaborates, is open to new ideas and is always learning – raising standards for all pupils so Wales can become a world leader in education.”

Members of the Board are as follows:

- Chair: Professor John Gardner
- Professor Furlong (Chair – Teacher Education Accreditation Board)
- Sir Alasdair MacDonald (National Academy of Educational Leadership Shadow Board)
- Eithne Hughes (Head Teacher)
- Sarah Lewis (ITE Inspection lead – Estyn)
- Anna Brychan (CSC representing all regional consortia)
- Hayden Llewellyn (CEO – Education Workforce Council)
- Geraint Rees (Education and Local Authority expert secondee – Welsh Government)
- Ty Golding (Curriculum Development secondee – Welsh Government)

Funding boost to complete Llangefni Link Road

Investment announced today will enable the delivery of section 3 with a further £1.028 million being invested this financial year and up to £2.5 million provided in 2018-19, subject to an updated business case. This brings Welsh Government contribution in the scheme to over £10.6 million.

The Link Road, which is being delivered in four sections, is a key part of Grŵp Llandrillo Menai's masterplan to develop their Llangefni Campus as an internationally-renowned Energy and Engineering Training Facility.

The Link Road will also be important in mitigating the impact of traffic in Llangefni town centre.

The Cabinet Secretary officially opened sections 1 and 2 of the link road in March 2017. Section 4, the construction of new roundabout junction of the A5114 and the Bryn Cefni Industrial Estate road was opened to traffic in December.

The project as a whole has received funding from the Welsh Government, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

Economy and Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

“The Llangefni Link Road is a vital development which will not only enable Grŵp Llandrillo Menai to expand, but also improve access to Anglesey Enterprise Zone businesses and support the area to realise its potential for economic growth.

“All of this has been made possible thanks to a close working partnership between Welsh Government, Anglesey County Council, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and is an excellent example of what can be achieved when everyone has the same goal in mind.

“I am delighted today's announcement will see this new route completed which will provide a big boost to the area and delivers on my commitment to improve our transport network to connect communities and businesses with jobs and services.”

Anglesey Council's portfolio holder for Highways, Waste and Property, Councillor Bob Parry, said:

“We’re delighted to have secured the funding needed to complete the final section of this important infrastructure project.

“The Llangefni Link Road will help secure significant economic benefits for Llangefni and Anglesey. It will provide a key driver for the expansion of the Grŵp Llandrillo Menai campus and further training opportunities for our young people. The project will also improve access to our Enterprise Zone sites and A55 expressway, and help overcome traffic constraints in Llangefni.

“I’d like to thank the Cabinet Secretary, Ken Skates, and the Welsh Government for their continued support in bringing this project to fruition.”

Dafydd Evans, CEO – Grŵp Llandrillo Menai said:

“The completion of the Llangefni link road will no doubt play an important role in the development of Llangefni, the Enterprise Zone and the surrounding region.

“For Grŵp Llandrillo Menai this project has already enabled us to embark on an ambitious plan to develop our campus in Llangefni.

“Construction of the new Engineering Centre is already well underway, it’s a development that will play a significant role in the future development and growth of the region and will ensure we have a skilled workforce to support the engineering and energy industry here on Anglesey for generations to come.”

Ruthin-based Jones Bros Civil Engineering UK will undertake the construction of final section after a competitive tender process with work expected to be completed towards the end of 2018.

Finance Secretary talks Brexit and Welsh/Irish trade links at Killarney Economic Conference

The Finance Secretary will join a panel of political figures, prominent academics and Irish business leaders including Arlene Foster, Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party and Micheál Martin, Leader of Fianna Fáil to discuss Brexit and the challenges it poses for business, the legal issues that will arise, how it will shape future politics and the impact it will have on daily life.

The conference will also provide an opportunity to discuss Welsh/Irish trade links post-Brexit and the progress being made with the current 2014-2020 Ireland Wales programme which is providing a €100m investment benefiting our businesses and communities.

Mark Drakeford said:

“We highly value our relationship with Ireland and are committed to deepening our engagement outside the EU given the close bond, common values, trade and cultural links between the 2 nations.

“As an outward facing nation, we want to maintain and build on our international networks through continued participation in co-operation programmes.

“We place great value on the European Territorial Co-operation (ETC) programmes, including our cross-border programme with our nearest neighbours. They provide the means to find real solutions to shared challenges which transcend borders.

“We must ensure that we do not lose, but rather sustain, the excellent and creative partnerships which have been built up across the maritime border with Ireland.”

Consider Credit Unions this January – Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans

The Minister has launched an open and competitive grant application process for credit unions in Wales to apply for over £840,000 of Welsh Government funding for financial inclusion activities. This work helps to ensure people aren't excluded from accessing safe savings products and affordable loans.

Minister for Housing and Regeneration Rebecca Evans AM said:

“Credit Unions in Wales deliver financial awareness education to adults and children in Wales; they help to equip people to make responsible financial decisions, and to avoid irresponsible high-interest doorstep, online and illegal lenders. Crucially, they also work to help people to overcome the problems that come with spiralling debt.

“This January, as people think about their finances after

Christmas, it's worth considering whether your local credit union can help you to meet your savings goals.

"I have launched a competitive grant scheme for credit unions in Wales to bid for £844,000 of Welsh Government funding from April this year for the next two years.

"We fund credit unions to deliver on our financial inclusion goals, so that everyone in Wales has access to appropriate and affordable financial services."