

Brexit a year on: Devolved Administrations must play a key part in negotiations

Speaking at the conference, the Finance Secretary will say that the general election result means the UK Government does not have a mandate for a 'hard Brexit' and it is an opportunity to re-set the devolved administration's role in negotiations to leave the EU.

In a recent joint letter with the Scottish Government to David Davis, the Welsh Government put forward a series of practical steps to improve the engagement with the four devolved administrations, including the future role of the Joint Ministerial Committee set up to oversee negotiations.

The Finance Secretary is expected to tell the conference:

"The general election result sent a powerful message to the UK Government that it has no mandate for a 'hard Brexit', and that it must work differently to build a broad-based consensus across the UK on taking forward the Brexit process.

"We have been clear that this is an opportunity for the UK Government to reconsider their plans and their approach to the role of the devolved administrations in negotiations. With those negotiations beginning earlier this week, it is more pressing than ever for the UK Government to set out their approach.

"Brexit has big implications for the constitutional future of the UK which cannot be ignored. We can't just wind the clock back to pre-1973. Devolution is now an established part of the UK constitution and this must be respected.

"Only last week, we published our blueprint for a major constitutional renewal of the UK, which can meet the challenges Brexit poses for all devolved nations and the future governance of the country as a whole. It is clear that the existing inter-governmental mechanisms are not fit-for-purpose to enable agreement to be reached and these need to be overhauled as we prepare to leave the EU.

"The election result is also an opportunity to re-set the effectiveness of the current Joint Ministerial Committee set up to oversee the EU negotiations. That is why I have written jointly with the Scottish Government to David Davis setting out a series of practical steps to improve engagement and meet its original remit.

"At the centre of our proposals is the urgent need to resume the meetings at the earliest opportunity and agree a forward work

programme with meaningful input around negotiating meetings with the European Commission. We welcome the assurance in the Queen's Speech that the government wishes to build a broad consensus including with the Devolved Administrations – but now is the time to demonstrate that by urgent action.”

Wrexham's innovation hub opening soon

The new Business Wales Entrepreneurship Hub is being established to provide North Wales based entrepreneurs with the wrap around support they need to help their ventures grow.

The Economy Secretary announced in February that he was providing £1m funding to establish the new business hub and said he hoped it would support the creation of 100 new enterprises and 260 new jobs over the next two years.

The Hub, which is supported by the Welsh Government, will also work closely with Welsh ICE (Innovation Centre for Enterprise) to give start ups a bespoke package of support and the very best chance of making their businesses a success.

The new business hub will open in the heart of Wrexham town centre soon but while work to procure and prepare the new headquarters is being finalised, efforts are well underway to recruit the first set of entrepreneurs .

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“I am delighted the Welsh Government is supporting this excellent initiative in Wrexham. It will form an important part of our programme to support businesses across Wales and give start ups and budding entrepreneurs the space and help they need to get their ideas off the ground.

“Innovation and entrepreneurship are vital drivers for the economy and we know from the success of other incubators that this collaborative approach will bring a host of benefits to the wider Wrexham area. And the new Hub building will also provide a real focus to the ongoing regeneration of Wrexham town centre.

“Work is now underway to recruit the Hub's first set of entrepreneurs, with the next workshop being held in Wrexham on 12th July. I would urge local start up companies looking to get their business off the ground to come along to find out more about the potentially transformative help on offer.”

The next workshop for entrepreneurs will be held at Undegun, 9-11 Regent St, Wrexham on Wednesday, 12th July. It will provide local start up enterprises with the opportunity to see more detailed plans for the centre and learn more about the support on offer. To find out more you can call the Business Wales Helpline on 03000 6 03000 between 8:30am and 5:30pm (Monday to Friday) or contact us via www.businesswales.gov.wales.

[First Minister pays tribute to Armed Forces community](#)

The day is an annual opportunity for the nation to show support for the men and women who make up the armed forces community.

The First Minister will attend an event at the Owain Glyndwr Playing Fields in Caerphilly which will focus on the Welsh contribution to defence, past, present and future.

First Minister, Carwyn Jones said:

“We have a proud military history in Wales, and being here today gives us the opportunity to remember some of the anniversaries of previous conflicts in our nation’s history. This year will mark the centenary of the Battle of Passchendaele where amongst thousands of young men, Hedd Wyn our Welsh poet lost his life.

“Armed Forces Day is an opportunity to pay tribute to those that have served, are serving and to remember those that have made the ultimate sacrifice in defending our country and way of life.”

Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, Carl Sargeant, who has responsibility for the Armed Forces in Wales, added:

“I think it’s fantastic that we have a day to formally thank our service men and women. It is a chance to think about the sacrifices our Armed Forces gave during these conflicts, and all other conflicts that have taken place over the years.

“It also gives us the opportunity to celebrate and remind us of the importance of supporting and honouring our Serving men, women and Reservists.”

Construction of International Convention Centre Wales begins

Once complete in 2019, ICC Wales will provide total floor space for meetings, conferences, exhibitions and events of 26,000sqm – the equivalent size to nearly 4 international rugby pitches.

An £83.7m joint venture between Celtic Manor and Welsh Government, ICC Wales will accommodate 5,000 delegates and includes a 4,000sqm pillar-free main hall, a 1,500 seated auditorium, 12 flexible meeting rooms, a double-height glass atrium and a 2,500sqm outdoor plaza.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“The International Convention Centre Wales is vital to fulfilling our ambition of making Wales a leading international destination for business. In order to compete in a highly competitive international market, Wales needs a convention centre of this quality and size. A world-class venue such as this will allow us to capitalise on Wales’ growing reputation as a destination for major events. The Celtic Manor has already demonstrated its ability to host global events and I’m confident our partnership with them on this project will deliver significant economic benefits for Wales.”

Sir Terry Matthews, Chairman of the Celtic Manor Resort, said:

“ICC Wales will be a game changer for the country on the international business events scene. For far too long, Wales has not had the share of this lucrative market that the country deserves. This is going to change. I’m positive that we have begun a new era in staging major events in Wales and our new state-of-the-art convention centre will continue that momentum for decades to come. It’s an incredibly proud moment for me to see this amazing project start to come to life and I pay tribute to the leadership of our partners in both public and private sectors who have helped to make this dream a reality.”

Mark Drakeford congratulates new WLGA Leader Debbie Wilcox

Following the WLGA's Annual General Meeting in Cardiff earlier today, Mark Drakeford said:

"I'd like to send my warmest congratulations to Cllr Wilcox. I am sure she will lead the WLGA with the utmost professionalism and expertise in the years ahead.

"This is a very significant moment for the WLGA which today sees the election of its first female leader since the body was created in 1996.

"While it is clear we still have some way to go before our councils are fully reflective of the people they serve, it is encouraging to see women leading Anglesey, Ceredigion and Powys councils as well as Newport.

"We also now have a new generation of councillors in Wales – all of whom will bring new ideas, different ways of doing things and a fresh perspective.

"I hope to continue the constructive working relationship I've had with the WLGA since I took up this post last year.

"I have been encouraged by a willingness to engage on areas such as local government reform and have been pleased with the positive progress we've made.

"It is vital that we continue to make progress on reforming local government and I look forward to working with Cllr Wilcox and the leadership of the WLGA on the serious and credible set of proposals that the Welsh Government has put forwards."