

City Deal project showcases technology for athletes

UK Government Minister David TC Davies has visited the £132 million Swansea Bay City Deal Campuses project to see how the technology for Smart Garments has been developed and was used by athletes, including medal winners, in last year's Tokyo Olympics.

The wearable technology was designed by Swansea University experts who invented a flexible heater using carbon-based stretchable graphene ink that can be directly attached to fabric. This keeps muscle temperature at a constant level which can improve an athlete's performance.

He also learned about a ground-breaking partnership between Swansea University academics, the local Health Boards and industry that studies the demands of elite, professional cyclists with Type 1 Diabetes in order to gain a better understanding of glucose management and develop recommendations for others with the condition.

The Swansea Bay City Deal Campuses project is supported by funding from the UK and Welsh Governments as part of the Swansea Bay City Deal. The investment will be used to promote innovation and business growth in the expanding Medical and Sports Technology sectors and lead to more products, like Smart Garments, being developed.

The project is planned to generate over 1,000 jobs in the Swansea area and is predicted to be worth over £150 million to the regional economy by 2033.

It is led by Swansea University, in partnership with Swansea Council, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Hywel Dda University Health Board, a Regional Collaboration for Health (ARCH) Partnership and key private sector partners. Delivered in two phases, the project is located in Singleton and Morriston.

Phase one, which will utilise City Deal funding over the next three years, will deliver 2000m² of dedicated research and innovation space within the Sketty Lane Sports Park at the Swansea University Singleton Campus. This will establish an environment which supports the development, testing and evaluation of medical, health, well-being and sports technologies, as well as commercial partnerships. In addition, phase one will also include the refurbishment of an existing building at Morriston Hospital. This site will create a 700m² Institute of Life Sciences space for commercial and academic collaboration alongside clinical research and development.

Once the first phase is complete, it will unlock the development potential of major expansion at both sites over the next 12 years. This will further establish the area at the forefront of health, sports, and science, whilst driving economic development and adding value to the region. This is expected to include a 55-acre Innovation Park with space for SMEs and large companies in the booming Sports Technology and Medical Technology sector. At the

Singleton Campus the second phase will allow for the creation of a centre of excellence within sport with world-class facilities for elite teams and community sports, along with sports technology and research.

Councillor Rob Stewart, Chairman of the Swansea Bay City Deal's Joint Committee, said

We are delighted to welcome Minister David T C Davies to Swansea University with the approval of the Campuses Business Case. Led by Swansea University, this project will build on regional expertise in life science, well-being, and clinical innovation which will help prevent ill-health, develop better treatments and improve quality of life. It will also create over 1,000 well-paid jobs, boost the economy and help attract significant additional investment.

The Campuses project is the final one in the Swansea Bay City Deals' portfolio to be approved, and we are very proud to achieve this significant milestone. We are now focusing on delivering the entire portfolio in order to build a more prosperous region for our residents as well as accelerating our economic recovery from the pandemic.

UK Government Minister in Wales, David TC Davies added

I very much enjoyed seeing the work that is already underway on this project. Everyone involved has huge ambition and drive, as well as some truly innovative ideas and it was a pleasure to meet all those working so hard to make it a success.

The UK Government is delighted to be funding this ambitious project, which will build on everything that I've seen, and will make Swansea University, along with their partners, leaders in 21st century Medical and Sports Technology.

As well as a huge boost to jobs and the local economy, the technology that will be developed will improve the health and wellbeing of people both in Swansea and beyond.

Professor Paul Boyle, Vice-Chancellor of Swansea University said

Swansea University is delighted that this major regional initiative, in collaboration with Swansea Council, our local health boards and key private sector partners has now been approved.

Harnessing the thriving health and life science ecosystem in the Swansea Bay City Region, this project will establish an international centre for innovation in healthcare and medicine

within the Sketty Lane Sports Park on our historic Singleton Campus, generating positive impact for population health and supporting the development of an innovative Sports Tech industry here in Wales. It will support our university in realising our regional ambitions for sport, enabling us to champion well-being and preventative health, and support public participation in sport across the lifespan.

The Campuses project exemplifies what can be achieved through effective cross-sector collaboration, and we are proud to partner with business and government for the wider benefit of our region.

Mark Hackett, Chief Executive Officer. Swansea Bay University Health Board said

The value of research and development to the health economy in the Swansea Bay region cannot be underestimated. Not only does this attract high quality jobs and investment to the area, but it paves the way for exciting opportunities for staff and patients to be involved at the forefront of exciting developments and innovative treatment.

This Swansea Bay City Deal Campuses project is just the start, and as our reputation as a high quality research and development grows, it will also help us attract even more high calibre staff. As a health board we are delighted to be able to accommodate a key part of this project on our Morriston Hospital site, bringing this cutting edge research into the heart of healthcare.

Welsh Government Economy Minister Vaughan Gething added

The Welsh Government has a clear focus on creating a stronger, fairer, greener economic future. We want Wales to be a country that's at the forefront of innovating new technologies that will benefit people in their day-to-day lives. The significant investment we're making as part of the Swansea Bay City Deal will further enhance Wales' leading role in advanced medical technologies and science. It will support businesses to exploit links with academia, bringing world-leading research out of the labs and industry and into society, for the benefit of our people and economy.

The Swansea Bay City Deal is an investment of up to £1.3 billion in a portfolio of nine major programmes and projects across the Swansea Bay City Region, which are together worth over £1.8 billion and 9,000 jobs to the region's economy in coming years.

Funded by the UK Government, the Welsh Government, the public sector and the private sector, the City Deal is being led by Carmarthenshire Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, Pembrokeshire Council and Swansea Council, in partnership with Swansea University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea Bay University Health Board and Hywel Dda University Health Board.