

Economy Secretary announces Digital Innovation Review

The Economy Secretary, working with the Cabinet Secretary for Education, the Leader of the House and the Minister for the Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, has ordered a review into digital innovation that will also consider artificial intelligence and automation.

The review will be led by Professor Phil Brown, Distinguished Research Professor at Cardiff University School of Social Sciences and will be undertaken within the context of the Welsh Government's Economic Action Plan, which was launched in December.

The plan recognises the close relationship between automation, artificial intelligence and other forms of digitalisation and identifies the transformative effect these emerging fields are likely to have on Wales' economy, its wider public service, and on the structure of its future labour market.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

"As set out in our recently published Economic Action Plan I am determined to ensure that Wales is in the best possible position to respond to the fourth industrial age and the next phase of digital and data innovation.

"This review will help us ensure we have the evidence base to future proof the skills of our workforce here in Wales but also go beyond that and effectively support new employment opportunities and drive grassroots innovation within businesses and our wider public services.

"This review will play an important part in helping us build an economy fit for the future, providing us with the most up to date evidence, information and research and identifying the opportunities and challenges offered by this rapidly evolving sector.

"I want to develop the potential of our regions so we can increase the availability of good quality jobs for everyone and empower communities with the skills and economic infrastructure that will support better jobs closer to home. That means preparing now for the scale of the digital changes ahead.

"I want the review to take an international perspective of digital innovation and examine what Wales can learn from other countries and explore how, working together, we can respond positively to areas of challenge."

The review will work closely with the Welsh Government's Digital Group being led by Leader of the House Julie James, examining the opportunities of big data as well as the digital opportunities in public service delivery.

Terms of reference for the review will be published in the coming weeks.

The review into digital innovation will reflect the Welsh Government's National Strategy: Prosperity for All, its Economic Action Plan, and the well-being goals and ways of working referenced within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

It will work with social partners in Wales and international experts with an interim report to Welsh Government later this year and a final report delivered in the first quarter of 2019.