

Press release: Alun Cairns: “Cross-border collaboration is key to capitalising on North Wales’ economic aspirations”

- Alun Cairns will also speak at the CBI North Wales dinner in Deeside, where he will reinforce his commitment to protecting the UK’s internal trade market.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will explore the opportunities that Britain’s EU exit presents at a meeting with local authority leaders in Wrexham later today (Thursday 29 March).

The Welsh Secretary is set to gather leaders of North Wales’ councils at Wrexham Council’s Guildhall to update them on the latest EU Withdrawal Bill developments, and invite views on how the Shared Prosperity Fund should operate in the area.

The meeting comes ahead of the Secretary of State’s keynote speech to the CBI in Deeside this evening, where he is expected to reinforce his commitment to protecting the internal trade market as Britain leaves the EU, given that 80% of Welsh exports go to the rest of the UK.

The North Wales Growth deal will also feature on the agenda, as Mr Cairns seeks views from leaders on the best ways to further strengthen the region’s economy, improve rural digital connectivity and capitalise on connections to the Northern Powerhouse.

The proposals received from the region aim to create 5,300 jobs and attract £1bn of private sector investment to the area over the next 15 years.

Today’s meeting follows similar discussions with South Wales’ local leaders last year, as part of ongoing engagement by the UK Government with Wales’ most prominent economic sectors and authorities as Britain prepares to leave the EU.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Effective working relationships between the UK Government, the Welsh Government and local partners will provide the building blocks for economic growth in North Wales as the UK leaves the European Union.

This means grabbing the benefits of the Northern Powerhouse, ensuring growth and prosperity is felt right across a region known for its cross border collaboration.

The UK Government is supporting North Wales in every way it can; taking clear and decisive action to roll out superfast broadband, reforming and modernising the prison estate via HMP Berwyn, creating Industrial Strategy sector deals based on the area's strengths and backing local leaders to create jobs and generate growth via the North Wales Growth Deal.

I look forward to listening the thoughts of the leaders present and taking those views back to Westminster so that all voices in Wales are heard as we negotiate our exit from EU.

The message will be echoed in Mr Cairns' evening keynote speech to the CBI in North Wales, where he will highlight the value of Welsh trade and provide an update on the UK Government's EU exit arrangements.

Alun Cairns added:

Welsh exports are worth over £16 billion a year, but the vast majority of Welsh production stays within the rest of the UK.

That's why it's vital that we find routes to new markets outside of the European Union, but also work together to protect our thriving internal market in the UK.

The UK Government is committed to finding a deal that works for everyone, gathering the views from a broad range of sectors and areas in the UK to ensure everyone benefits.

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