

Prime Minister gambling with nation's future – Jeremy Miles

With the Prime Minister facing the prospect of a heavy Commons defeat and the threat of a no deal Brexit increasing, the Counsel General also announced further funding from the European Transition Fund would be made available to help Wales prepare for the possibility of the UK crashing out of the EU.

The Welsh Government's white paper, Securing Wales' Future, sets out an alternative to the PM's deal, which would prioritise the Welsh economy and protect jobs and services.

We are continuing to press the UK government to work with us to secure a deal which provides the best possible outcome for the whole of the UK.

Jeremy Miles said:

"We are scheduled to leave the EU in just over 70 days and we have no agreed deal in place. We have been led to this cliff-edge by an inept government more interested in its increasingly-desperate attempts to hold its own party together than the national interest.

"The UK government has been playing dice with this country's future. It took 2 years to come up with the Chequers proposals – effectively the government's opening gambit on the long-term relationship – which should have been in place when we triggered Article 50 almost 2 years' ago.

"This was vital time lost posturing over red lines instead of developing a viable strategy and building coalitions of support, including those, like the Welsh Government and this National Assembly, which advocated a sensible withdrawal based on respect for the European Union and the vital interests of this country.

"There is no avoiding the serious reality of the difficult position we now face. No deal is a very possible outcome and as a responsible government we must do all we can to work with others to prepare and mitigate where possible.

"Through our European Transition Fund we have been able to help hundreds of Welsh businesses, as well as public service organisations and other partners, plan and prepare for the impacts of Brexit."

Finance Minister Rebecca Evans will today confirm 3 more projects have received funding from the £50 million European Transition Fund.

These are:

- The Police Partnership Resilience – £435,000 to support the police services' preparations for Brexit. The funding would provide dedicated capacity and capability to support local resilience forums in planning and responding to adverse scenarios and civil emergencies, particularly in the context of a no deal scenario.
- ADSS (Association of Directors of Social Services) Cymru Brexit support – £150,000 for ADSS Cymru to provide professional advice and intelligence about the potential impact of Brexit on the delivery of social care in Wales.
- Preparations for successor arrangements to EU structural investment funds – £590,000 to support the implementation of a post-EU regional investment model for Wales. This includes external support for project development and evaluation of the preparations for a new multi-annual, multi-billion pound regional investment system. This work will help ensure that Wales has the strongest possible approach to secure full replacement funding and autonomy over successor arrangements for EU structural funds.

She said:

“As the threat of ‘no deal’ looms, we have focused our attention on bids which address immediate priorities in a no deal scenario.

“None of us wants to be in this position; but we will work to protect Welsh businesses, the public sector and our communities wherever possible from the worst impacts of a no deal situation should it arise.”

And Jeremy Miles added:

“We will find out soon how the UK government and Parliament intend to resolve this position. We have already called for the Article 50 deadline to be extended.

“The UK government has perplexed its friends, undermined our country's interests, caused anxiety to Europeans in our community and exacerbated deep division among its own citizens. If the UK government cannot bring forward a deal that commands strong support then it should stand aside. The current chaos cannot continue.”