

Chancellor's first Budget brings £360 million boost for Welsh Government

- £360 million in additional funding from the UK Government to the Welsh Government
- £55 million for a Mid Wales Growth Deal
- Treasury establishing a presence in Wales to ensure Welsh priorities are central to decision making
- Budget brings tax refund for broadcaster S4C

Wales will benefit from a £360 million boost to support its economic growth and level up opportunities, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced.

Delivering his first Budget, Rishi Sunak outlined the additional funding for the Welsh Government, allowing it to deliver on the priorities of people in Wales.

The Chancellor also announced a package of measures to tackle the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on the UK economy, with the Welsh Government to receive additional funding to support public services, vulnerable people and reduce the costs for businesses.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

We made a promise to the people of Wales to build a fairer, more prosperous and more united country – and this Budget will deliver by laying the foundations for a decade of economic growth across the whole UK.

We are giving the Welsh Government significant extra funding, exploring how to more successfully link the economies of Wales and the West of England, investing in transport and ensuring Wales has enough resources to support public services and businesses in the face of the Covid-19 outbreak.

At the core of this Budget is an ambition to further strengthen the ties that bind us together as a United Kingdom and ensure everyone has the same opportunities in life, whichever part of the country they live in.

Today's announcements for Wales also include:

- £360 million in additional funding for the Welsh Government;
- Support to develop A483 Pant Llanymynech bypass;
- £55 million for the Mid Wales Growth Deal;
- The rollout of gigabit capable broadband to the hardest to reach areas, as well as plans improve 4G connectivity across the UK;
- Accessibility improvements for Newtown railway station in Powys;

- South Wales and Pembrokeshire have successfully bid for £12 million and £4 million respectively to fund full fibre broadband;
- Supporting an independent economic review of the Western Gateway which stretches across Wales and the West of England;
- A commitment from the Treasury to establish a presence in Wales to ensure Welsh priorities are central to economic decision making.

In support of the ambition for one million people to be able to speak Welsh by 2050, the Budget includes a commitment to legislate for Welsh public service broadcaster S4C to be awarded the same VAT status as the BBC and ITN, worth approximately £15 million per year.

The UK Government will explore how to improve improving transport links between North Wales and England by developing the A483 Pant Llanymynech Bypass, supporting an independent economic review of the Western Gateway and providing practical support to help businesses in the Gateway region access international markets. Also included in the Budget is a £55 million investment in Mid Wales, taking investment in growth deals in Wales to almost £800 million.

This year's Budget delivers on the promises made to the British people and lays the foundations for a decade of growth by giving everyone the same opportunity to thrive wherever they live. With commitments to increase the National Living Wage, National Insurance thresholds and the Employment Allowance across the UK, today's Budget means someone working full time on the minimum wage in Wales will be over £5,200 better off than they were ten years ago.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

This Budget shows that the UK Government is keeping its promise to level up the nations and regions of the UK and deliver prosperity for Wales.

From the financial support for city and growth deals, the focus on critical infrastructure projects to the additional spending power for the Welsh Government, this is a Budget with Wales' economy at its centre.

The UK Government is also supporting Welsh culture with £15m a year in VAT relief for S4C, boosting the creative economy in Wales.

We are also supporting the Welsh Government in the exceptional challenges it currently faces, providing significant extra funding to help tackle Coronavirus and for flood relief to affected communities.

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[Fishing Minister visits Peterhead](#)

Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis experienced first-hand the outstanding work undertaken at the UK's largest fishing port during a two-day fact-finding trip to Peterhead.

The Ministerial visit started yesterday (Thursday, 11 March) with a tour of the [Macduff Shellfish](#) factory, where Director of Sustainability & Public Affairs, Andrew Brown, provided an overview of how wild scallops, langoustines, crabs and whelks are handled at Europe's largest shellfish processing facility.

Minister Prentis then spoke to traders while touring Peterhead's buzzing fish market, and visited the UK's largest white fish and pelagic fishing port, accompanied by Peter Duncan, Business Development Manager for [Peterhead Port Authority](#) and [David Duguid](#), Scottish Conservative MP for Banff and Buchan.

The visit provided the opportunity for a wide-ranging discussion with key stakeholders, including Elspeth MacDonald, Chief Executive of the [Scottish Fishermen's Federation \(SFF\)](#) and J Johnston, and Jimmy Buchan from the [Scottish Seafood Association \(SSA\)](#).

Minister Prentis heard more about the sector's top priorities, and explored how the Scottish fishing and seafood industries can take every advantage of the opportunities available as we become an independent coastal state.

Fisheries Minister, Victoria Prentis, said:

As the new Fisheries Minister, I am absolutely delighted that I was able to visit Peterhead and meet organisations such as the SFF and SSA to hear about the important contribution of the seafood sector to this vibrant community, and to the UK economy at large.

Peterhead is at the very heart of the Scottish seafood and fishing industry – it's one of the most versatile ports in the UK and one that is very ambitious about its future. As we become an independent coastal state, it is my priority to ensure that our fishing industry is set to thrive in the years to come.

Elspeth Macdonald, Chief Executive at the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said:

Hearing the Minister reiterate the UK Government's position about securing the Sea of Opportunity outside of the Common Fisheries

Policy was very welcome.

There is much to do over the coming months to deliver this, and the SFF is committed to working closely with both the UK and Scottish Governments to achieve this for the benefit of our businesses and communities.

The visit offered the opportunity for Minister Prentis to reiterate the UK Government's strong commitment to the fishing industry in Scotland and across the whole of the UK.

The UK Government has already confirmed that funding supported by the European Maritime Fisheries Fund will be guaranteed. In addition, it has allocated an additional £37.2 million to support the industry as we transition out of the EU and [committed to funding for four domestic grant schemes](#) across the UK from 2021 onwards.

Scotland is also one of the greatest beneficiaries of the [Seafood Innovation Fund](#). In the first round of applications, over 50% of the fund were awarded to aquaculture R&D projects in the nation, a total investment of nearly £1.8 million. The second round is currently open for applications.

Leaving the EU means that Scotland, and the other Devolved Administrations, will see a significant increase in the decision-making powers in fisheries, and for protecting the marine environment. This ambition is enshrined in the Fisheries Bill, along with the opportunity to design our own domestic fishing policy, one that is catered to support our coastal communities best.

The visit coincides with the launch of a new seafood campaign led by Defra and Seafish. ["Sea for Yourself"](#) aims to showcase the varieties of seafood caught in UK waters, and provides consumers suggestions to best enjoy less known, but equally tasty and versatile seafood species. The campaign is one of the latest government initiative to support the fishing industry in Britain as we leave the Common Fisheries Policy and become an independent coastal state.

Minister Prentis concluded her visit with a tour of Mill of Crimond farm in Fraserburgh, and a meeting with representatives of NFU Scotland, including President Andrew McCornick, and David Duguid MP. The group discussed the opportunities and challenges ahead for the industry.

[Called-in decision: land at Hatchfield](#)

Farm, Fordham Road, Newmarket, Suffolk (ref: 2222871 – 12 March 2020)

Decision letter and Inspector's Report for a called-in decision for up to 400 dwellings plus associated open space (including allotments and areas of habitat enhancement) foul and surface water infrastructure, two accesses onto the A142, internal footpaths, cycle routes and estate roads.

RAF delivers UK aid to Turkey for Syrians in crisis

The UK Government has delivered vital humanitarian aid to the Turkey-Syria border, which will provide much-needed relief and protection for Syrians amid the worsening humanitarian crisis in Idlib.

An RAF C-17 carrying 37 tonnes of UK aid landed in Hatay, Turkey, yesterday afternoon. The supplies on board include tents to provide life-saving shelter, hygiene kits, blankets, water purification tablets, cooking equipment and lanterns for around 300 families who have been forced to flee their homes and seek safety in harsh conditions.

This comes as schools, nurseries and hospitals are targeted by Syrian regime bombing.

The aid flight is in addition to £89 million of UK aid for Syria – announced last week – to help protect victims of violence, which included tents, thermal blankets, clothing, food, clean water and medical supplies, among other measures.

The aid supplies are being distributed in the worst affected areas including Idlib in north west Syria, with the cooperation of the Turkish Red Crescent.

It comes as Defence Secretary Ben Wallace visited Ankara today to hold talks with his Turkish counterpart, Hulusi Akar, to discuss how the UK can further support Turkey, and those Syrians in desperate need. This follows the Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab's meeting with his Turkish counterparts in Ankara last week to discuss the continuing violence in Syria and the UK's support to the crisis.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The people of Idlib have suffered enormously during this conflict

and these crucial supplies delivered by our military will provide shelter for hundreds of families in desperate need.

We stand in solidarity with Turkey after the losses they have suffered, and the UK will do what we can to offer support.

For the sake of both nations, the wider region and security across the entire globe, the ceasefire in Idlib must continue to be respected.

International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

It is a tragedy that almost a million people – mostly women and children – have been forced to flee their homes in the past 100 days as the ruthless Assad regime and its Russian backers relentlessly bombed their homes and killed their families.

Too many innocent people are struggling to survive in freezing conditions without a roof over their head.

Through UK aid, delivered by our world-class troops, the British people are helping to save lives, boost regional security and stop the cruel suffering of defenceless Syrians in this warzone.

The UK is one of the largest bilateral donors to the Syria crisis, providing more than £3.1 billion to trusted partners in Syria and the region since 2011. From day one, we have been at the forefront of the humanitarian response providing more than 28 million food rations, 19 million medical check-ups and 12 million vaccines across Syria and the region.

The UK has also helped more than 140,000 people to get clean drinking water and provided psychosocial support to almost 28,000 people, including over 1,000 children.

Turkey is the largest refugee hosting country in the world. Working with our European partners, the UK has helped to support the education of more than 635,000 Syrian refugee children in Turkey and provided over 8 million primary healthcare consultations for the most vulnerable Syrian refugees to help alleviate pressure on Turkish communities and maintain regional security.

During his visit to the country, Mr Wallace will also meet other members of the Turkish government and lay a wreath at the Anitkabir Mausoleum, paying his respects to the founder of The Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

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Notes to editors:

- Images of the aid delivery are available from www.defenceimagery.mod.uk
- Last week, DFID announced £89 million of UK aid to protect victims of

violence as the Syrian regime increases attacks in Idlib:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-aid-protects-victims-of-violence-as-syrian-regime-increases-attacks-in-idlib>

- For more information, please contact the Ministry of Defence press office on 020 7218 7907 or the Department for International Development press office on 020 7023 0600.
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[US to lift ban on UK beef exports](#)

British beef could soon be sold in the US, creating £66 million worth of export opportunities for British farmers over the next five years.

The US has this week agreed equivalence of standards on the UK's disease control measures following a three-week inspection last summer. It means beef can soon be shipped to the US.

It comes after an ongoing process of negotiations between the UK government, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and industry groups.

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss said:

It is great news that the US has reopened the market to British beef. This is a win for our farmers and I look forward to seeing high-quality British beef enjoyed on tables across the US very soon.

The UK's farming industry will benefit from a free trade agreement with the US because we can create wider opportunities for farmers locked out of the largest consumer market on the planet. A stronger trading relationship is a win-win for both sides.

The government is expected to begin negotiating a UK-US free trade agreement this month, which will help to create even more opportunities for British businesses.