

Press release: Welsh Secretary to visit projects aiming to be on the front line of the Swansea Bay Region City Deal

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will visit innovative projects at the heart of the Swansea Bay Region City Deal technology revolution later today (11 January).

The Welsh Secretary will hear about the future of steel and how digital manufacturing can increase competition and create globally networked systems at Swansea University's Bay Campus.

Swansea University, in partnership with Neath Port Talbot, Tata and other commercial partners is working to catalyse the ambition of the Fabian Way Innovation corridor and show Swansea Bay residents the regeneration opportunities presented by the City Deal, by grouping three world-leading projects together, including the UK National Steel Innovation Centre and Astute Factory of the Future.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Swansea University is leading the charge in delivering exciting City Deal projects which will transform the region, delivering high-quality employment and world-leading technologies.

The UK Government is working hard to encourage the City Deal region to capitalise on its reputation as leaders in the fields of innovation, research and development and energy. With this existing strength, it is crucial that the area is empowered to take the reins and make decisions to support economic growth, boost employment and attract investment right across the region.

The Secretary of State will also visit the Harbourside site in Port Talbot, which aims to boost employment in the research and development field.

The former disused steel and tin-plate works in the docks area of Port Talbot is home to the Harbourside Business Park, occupied by TWI, TATA Steel and Thyssen Krupp. It is hoped that Neath Port Talbot College will develop a £28m campus on the site in 2019.

The Welsh Secretary will also visit the Baglan Bay Innovation Centre, which focuses on developing businesses in the energy, innovation and technology fields.

The Centre is home to the Project SPECIFIC, an academic and industrial

consortium led by Swansea University with strategic industrial partners Tata Steel, BASF and NSG Pilkington, developing functional coatings that will transform the roofs and walls of buildings into surfaces that generate, store and release energy.

Swansea University's SPECIFIC Innovation and Knowledge Centre [was recently awarded £800,000 of UK Government investment to develop the UK's first energy-positive office.](#)

Alun Cairns will see the proposed site for the Swansea Bay Technology Centre at Baglan Energy Park, aimed to support and encourage the growth of start-ups and indigenous businesses, with a focus on the innovation and research and development sectors in particular the growing energy sector.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns added:

The Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas have much to look forward to – not just because of the exciting City Deal projects transforming the region. The Harbourside and Innovation Centre are fantastic examples of investments that will deliver sustainable employment, regenerating the entire area and supporting the growth of new businesses, which will take the region in an exciting new technology-led direction.

ENDS

[Press release: Foreign Secretary discussions on Iran nuclear deal with Iranian and European counterparts](#)

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson travelled to Brussels today (11th January) for high-level meetings focused on the Iran nuclear deal. He was joined in his discussions by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Zarif, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini.

Speaking ahead of the meetings, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The UK has always been clear: the Iran nuclear deal is a crucial agreement that makes the world safer. It is vital that we continue to work with our European partners to preserve the Iran deal, and with it the security and prosperity it is bringing to the people of

Iran and the world. It is those shared interests which will drive our discussions in Brussels.

Of course there are areas where we disagree with Iran, not least on its destabilising regional activity and its ballistic missile programme. This will be an important part of our conversation.

I will be making it clear to Foreign Minister Zarif, on the subject of the recent protests in Iran, that the right to peaceful demonstration within the law is central to any truly thriving society. I will also raise all of our Iranian dual-national consular cases.

Further information

News story: Civil/crime news: rollout of contract performance reports

What do the reports show?

A wealth of important information about contractual performance is contained in each 'Provider Activity Report' (PAR). Some examples include:

- Defence Solicitor Call Centre acceptance rates
- rejects for claims submitted
- reconciliation statistics for standard and variable monthly payments

Why are you doing this now?

Your PAR is important to how we manage your contract and we want to be transparent about the information we hold.

The idea is to give providers the opportunity to review and monitor changes in performance using the same information that we hold.

You should already be familiar with the content of these reports through discussions with your contract manager.

We have been piloting the reports with providers in Bristol and London for the last few months and have listened to feedback. This has allowed us to refine the reports and our approach to sharing them.

Outcome of pilot

PARs were sent successfully to around 800 providers during August and September.

Feedback focused on making the reports as easy to use as possible e.g. increasing font size, removing excess pages, and using blanks rather than 0s for example.

We have also worked to:

- improve the guidance that sits alongside PAR
- make sure contract managers are equipped to answer more detailed questions or address concerns at annual visits

Timescales and next steps

All providers will be start receiving quarterly PARs by from January 2018.

Who will you contact?

We plan to email the designated primary contact email address we hold for your office in Contracted Work and Administration (CWA).

How can I check you have the right email address?

You can check the designated primary contact email address we hold for you by going into the CWA system.

There is a user guide on GOV.UK which sets out how to check and amend this information – see below.

Further information

[CWA detailed user guides](#) – download ‘CWA user guide admin’ and see page 7 ‘Primary Contacts’

[Press release: Government’s vision for a greener future launched](#)

A pledge to eliminate avoidable waste, introduce new safeguards for wildlife and connect more children with nature are among the ambitious plans for a greener future outlined by Prime Minister Theresa May and Environment Secretary Michael Gove today.

In a major speech today, the Prime Minister has launched the government’s landmark 25 Year Environment Plan, setting out how we will improve the environment over a generation by creating richer habitats for wildlife, improving air and water quality and curbing the scourge of plastic in the world’s oceans.

[“A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment”](#) sets out how over the next quarter of a century the government will:

- Crackdown on plastics by eliminating all avoidable plastic waste through extending the 5p plastic bag charge to small retailers, removing consumer single use plastics from the government estate, supporting the water industry to significantly increase water fountains and working with retailers on introducing plastic-free supermarket aisles.
- Help wildlife thrive by creating 500,000 hectares of new habitat for endangered species, supporting farmers to turn fields into meadows and other habitats, replenishing depleted soils and providing £5.7 million to kick-start a [new Northern Forest](#).
- Be a world leader in environmental protection by investigating the feasibility of an anti-poaching taskforce to tackle the illegal wildlife trade, committing overseas aid to help developing nations combat plastic waste, and extending the UK’s network of marine protected areas
- Deliver a Green Brexit by consulting on a [new environmental watchdog](#) to hold government to account for environmental standards, and setting out a new approach to agriculture and fisheries management
- Seek to embed a ‘net environmental gain’ principle so development delivers environmental improvements locally and nationally, enabling housing development without increasing overall burdens on developers
- Connect people with nature by creating ‘nature friendly schools’ and reviewing National Parks to see how they can improve and whether the network should be extended.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Respecting nature’s intrinsic value and making sure we are wise stewards of our natural world is critical if we are to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it.

Our Environment Plan sets out how over the next 25 years we will radically reduce the waste that is choking oceans and rivers, cleanse our air of toxic pollutants and create new habitats for our most precious wildlife to thrive.

Through this plan we will build on our reputation as a global leader in environmental protection, creating an environment everyone can enjoy and helping the next generation flourish.

In a world-first, the 25 Year Environment Plan also sets out how we will use a natural capital approach to help us see the additional benefits – whether that is improved health and wellbeing, or national prosperity – in every part of our environment, helping improve and direct decision making, and guiding new development.

The Plan sits alongside existing work. A [Call for Evidence](#) on reward and return schemes for drinks containers, including plastic bottles, has closed. Its findings are now being assessed by the Working Group, who will make recommendations to ministers this Spring.

As announced in the Budget, the Government will also launch a further Call for Evidence shortly on how changes to the tax system or charges on single-use plastics can play a role in reducing waste.

The plan sits alongside the Government's [Clean Growth Strategy](#), which sets out how the UK is leading the world in cutting carbon emissions to combat climate change and driving economic growth.

[News story: MHRA streamlines services for devices customers](#)

At MHRA we are always working to improve the transparency, responsiveness, usability and effectiveness of our services.

To make our systems easier to use, we have developed and successfully piloted a new online service which:

- offers customers a better way to do business with us
- provides a single online account with the Agency
- provides access to Devices Registration (DR) and Certificates of Free Sale (CFS) services via a new online portal
- allows our staff to access and provide information to customers more quickly and in a more joined-up way
- enhances our customer service to you

What do I need to do?

Our new online accounts began being rolled out to customers at the end of November 2017 and we aim to have everyone on the new system by the end of February 2018.

If you use our Device Registration service or you apply for Certificates of Free Sale you will be moved to the new system in groups and will receive information with your instructions and go-live date.

There is no need to re-register. Your existing registration will remain valid and we will let you know what action you need to take to update your new account.

Further information

[Read more about our new system.](#)

If you have any further questions, please contact:

devices.transformation@mhra.gov.uk

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