

New partnership with Heathrow puts Wales on flightpath to growth

The Strategic Partnership will be signed in Cardiff by First Minister Carwyn Jones and Lord Paul Deighton, Chairman of Heathrow Airport Ltd, which marks the start of a close working relationship between both parties.

Top of the agenda is ensuring Heathrow expansion maximises job creation in Wales. Set to be Europe's largest privately-funded infrastructure project, an expanded Heathrow will need extensive support from UK manufacturers and SMEs to deliver the project on time and on budget.

This partnership opens up new business opportunities in Wales as Heathrow, which invests more than £1bn a year at its site, wants to broaden its supply chain to support demand.

The First Minister said:

"This Strategic Partnership is very welcome and I am delighted the Welsh Government and Heathrow Airport will be working closely together for our mutual benefit.

"It opens the door to explore a wide range of new opportunities particularly for our existing supply chain companies that have the experience and expertise to support infrastructure projects at Heathrow. I would certainly like to see a far higher percentage spend in Wales and the Welsh Government will do all it can to support companies in Wales to bid and win more business at Heathrow.

"I am also pleased to announce that plans are already underway to host the first Heathrow business summit in Wales, where our supply chain companies will have the chance to meet and discuss opportunities with Heathrow's procurement team.

"It certainly marks a great start for this new relationship and there are very many other areas we are keen to explore with Heathrow Airport."

Heathrow Chairman Lord Paul Deighton said:

"I want to ensure that every corner of Britain benefits from Heathrow expansion. This strategic partnership will bring us closer to Wales and help us to deliver an expanded Heathrow.

"A new Heathrow runway will unlock up to 8,400 new skilled jobs and underpin up to £6.4bn in growth from construction through to

increased tourism and exports for Wales. This new partnership is a sign of our commitment to ensuring Heathrow expansion delivers tangible benefits for every corner of Britain and we are looking forward to working closely with the Welsh Government and Welsh businesses to make it a success.”

Areas of mutual co-operation and delivery identified in the Strategic Partnership include:

- broadening and seeking new supply chain opportunities in Wales to help meet the operational objectives of Heathrow Airport
- exploring the possibility of locating off site manufacturing logistic hubs in Wales to support delivery for the 3rd runway
- explore the eligibility of funding for potential flights between Wales and Heathrow to be funded through the proposed Heathrow Route Development Fund.

To encourage growth in its Welsh supplier base, Heathrow will host its first ever business summit in Wales on July 5th. Heathrow will bring its biggest suppliers to Cardiff City Stadium to welcome Welsh businesses of all sizes to one-on-one meetings providing a unique opportunity to secure contracts at the UK’s largest airport.

Recognising the importance of connectivity in driving economic growth, the partnership includes a joint study into the benefits for Welsh businesses and tourists from reduced journey times. The agreement also confirms that airlines wishing to operate a route from Wales to Heathrow would be eligible to bid for start-up capital from the airport’s £10m route development fund.

[Rainbow solar UAV to make maiden flight soon](#)

A large-scale solar-powered unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), latest in the “Caihong” (rainbow in English) series produced by the China Academy of Aerospace Aerodynamics (CAAA), will make its maiden flight by midyear, China.org.cn has learnt.

The UAV will seek to reach near-space, an altitude above where commercial airliners fly, but below orbiting satellites.

Such a vehicle is commonly referred to as an “atmospheric satellite” in that it can function as a low-orbit satellite to a certain extent. A solar UAV can perform sustained surveillance and information-relay over a region.

It usually features longer hovering time, higher communication capacity and

higher image resolution than a usual reconnaissance satellite that can only visit a designated region periodically. Besides, the price of a solar UAV's price and its launch cost is far lower than a satellite.

The Chinese vehicle has a wingspan of more than 40 meters. It has eight propellers installed on the front of the wings fully covered by solar panels. Its designer, CAAA's chief UAV engineer Shi Wen, calls it the world's largest solar-powered drone, even dwarfing the U.S. NASA Pathfinder series that never made it into mass production.

Shi said his UAV is among the world's top three in terms of its overall performance indicators and technical capabilities.

Super-high service ceiling, super-long endurance and easy maintenance are the three key aspects to ensure solar drones to perform a leading role in such fields as extensive aerial reconnaissance, disaster monitoring and communication relay.

The Chinese vehicle can easily stay airborne for months. "If we don't consider the life span of the parts, this kind of aerial vehicle could theoretically fly forever," said its designer.

The challenges in designing a solar drone mainly involve its aerodynamic layout and wing configuration, because there was no established template to follow. Shi said that a higher lift-to-drag ratio, to optimize the drone's aerodynamic layout, was essential, and this was something the CAAA had built its reputation upon.

CAAA is a subsidiary of the NASA-like China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. Its principal mission is to test the aerodynamic performance of China's aerial and aerospace vehicles, including rockets, space modules and atmospheric reentry-vehicles of long-range projectiles.

CAAA started to develop the Rainbow drones to break the monopoly of the U.S. drones such as Global Hawk and Reaper in the global arms market. CH-3 and CH-4 are the star products of the Rainbow series. They have already displayed their capabilities in geological and maritime surveillance at home as well as anti-terrorism activities in the Middle East and Africa.

At the International Defense Exhibition (IDEX) 2017 held in Abu Dhabi last month, Saudi Arabia announced it would manufacture certain types of Rainbow UAVs, after inking deals with CAAA. Military insiders claim the CH-4 has a strong possibility for mass manufacture, but no comment was available from CAAA.

Couples divorce for relocation compensation

A wave of divorces recently swept a small village in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, with more than 160 couples rushing to the local marriage and divorce registration office within a short space of time, the Nanjing Morning Post reported.

Unlike the usual case when a couple split due to a disharmonious relationship, these couples, in ages ranging from the 20s to 80s, divorced for an ulterior motive – to get more relocation compensation.

Marriage and interests in the eyes of villagers

Located in Gaoxin District, Jiangbei Village was included in the provincial capital's urban land requisition project long time ago. After large-scale demolition, the village was left in ruins, with only a few shops left scattered along the main streets.

Interviewed by the Nanjing Morning Post on the reason for their divorce, villagers were not at all shy. "This is indeed the case, and we do it because we want to get more relocation compensation out of it," many said.

According to local land acquisition and relocation policy, compensation is measured in terms of household size, and each family group can receive an additional 70-square-meter of housing and 131,000 yuan (about US\$19,070).

The compensation proved very tempting. So far, most of the 160-plus households in the village have completed their divorce formalities, according to a shop owner, who used the term "fake divorce" to describe the act.

Many divorced couples still live together. A man in his 80s said that he and his wife had a very good relationship, but they divorced for financial reasons. He said that their "fake divorce" was aimed at getting more compensation for the future relocation.

Asked what might happen if they couldn't remarry, a villager explained that nobody cared about it for the time being. "Everybody is doing it and we'll deal with other things later. Just wait and see," the villager said, adding that the divorce is worthwhile if it could help them get more compensation.

Loopholes in land requisition and relocation policies

According to the house demolition policy, only consensual divorces occurring at least five years before could be used to determine household size for demolition and relocation compensation. So, why did so many couples still rush to register for divorce and therefore get benefits?

Things always sort themselves out. A local legal service agency sent staff workers to the village to help villagers handle the business. The workers

were familiar with helping villagers seeking the “fake divorce” approach to avoid the limits on relocation cases.

This time, they explained to the villagers, there were no clauses in the demolition and relocation policy stipulating that a court-approved divorce couldn't enjoy the compensation policy.

Villagers followed the staff's advice to use this loophole and, as a result, divorce service fees subsequently surged from 5,000 yuan to 15,000 yuan.

Later, an official from local house demolition office said that the office did receive complaints that some villagers had taken the advantage of the policy loophole; however, he said, the office had yet to determine whether the demolition and relocation project will continue to be implemented without any change in the policy document.

Experts warn of severe consequences of ‘fake divorce’

A similar case happened in a village in the province's Changzhou City seven years ago when 84 couples rushed to register their divorce within the space of a few days in order to get more relocation compensation. Similar cases also happened recently in the province's Jiangxizhou, Jiangning and Pukou areas.

So, the “fake divorce” cases reveal one of the anomalies emerging amid rapid urbanization in China.

Legal experts argue “fake divorce” for such a purpose can bring about potential legal consequences, so it is a “dangerous game.” People who use loopholes existing in State policies for their personal benefits not only damage family harmony, but also undermine social stability.

Zhou Haiwang, vice-director of the Institute of Population and Development at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said that when so many people decide to divorce against their wish for family stability, policy makers should consider an adjustment, China Daily reported.

Legal experts suggest that the key to curb this phenomenon at source lies in the government departments, who must carefully check and carry out relevant policies and even set up a remedial mechanism.

[Internet helps promote organ donation in China](#)

The myriad services just a swipe of the finger away in China are no longer limited to food delivery, airport check-ins, or finding a bike on the street.

The latest novelty is an after-death service: organ donation.

Once beset by misconceptions and opaque proceedings, the Internet is unleashing explosive growth of people signing up for organ donation.

Huang Jiefu, director general of the China Organ Transplantation Development Foundation, told Xinhua on the sidelines of the annual “two sessions” that the number of online applicants in two days had been equal to those registering at Red Cross offices in two years.

In December, Huang’s foundation – backed by the National Health and Family Planning Commission – launched an organ donation function on Alipay, an online payment platform with 450 million users.

Alipay users can easily register themselves as potential organ donors, because to sign up as an Alipay user, one has to submit accurate personal data. It saves the foundation efforts to collect and verify potential donors’ information.

If one regrets, even at the deathbed, he can de-list himself from the pool by a few clicks, says Hong Junling, public relations manager of the foundation.

Hong said after three months of operations, the number of registered donors on Alipay has exceeded 100,000 and keeps rising.

“With Internet, I register in just one minute,” said an eager donor who chose to remain nameless. “Life is short, but by donating my organs, I can save the lives of others and part of me will live on in them, so why not?”

In China, about 300,000 patients need organ transplants each year.

Volunteers became the lone source of transplants after organ trading was outlawed in 2011 and the use of organs from judicial systems banned in 2015.

In a public opinion poll by the foundation, 83 percent of the respondents said they would like to donate their organs after death. Among the remaining 17 percent, more than half were reluctant to register because they did not know where to apply or complained that the registration was too complicated.

Xiaolong (pseudonym) was diagnosed with progressive muscular dystrophy when he was six years old. Last year, at 14, he decided to call off his treatment.

Xiaolong said he had wanted to donate his body, but did not know where to go. He only succeeded in getting touch with a Red Cross cornea bank after appealing on a local TV channel.

China has 731 million Internet users, more than half of the entire population. Internet is rapidly changing people’s life, including the way they participate in charity.

“The wide availability and convenience of the Internet made it much easier for the Chinese to express their wish to donate organs,” said Huang, a member of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative

Conference (CPPCC), a political advisory body.

Though registered donors do not translate into actual donors because the law gives the deceased's family the final say, there will definitely be more donations in the long run, Huang said.

As political advisors, CPPCC members can put forward proposals, comments and suggestions on major political and social issues.

Huang has proposed that the health insurance covers organ transplant costs so that more low-income families can afford it.

“A £60 billion Brexit fund”?

I awoke to an odd headline yesterday in the Sunday Times. The Chancellor we were told is going to set up a £60bn Brexit fighting fund.

Fortunately the Chancellor's own words in the same newspaper said no such thing. It was a silly headline. The government is scheduled to continue borrowing a bit more each year up to 2020, beyond our likely date of exit. The additional borrowing each year is now well down on the peak rates of the previous decade, and will continue to fall this Parliament. All the time we are adding a bit to state borrowing we cannot create a fund out of tax revenues.

Nor did the Chancellor write that there can be no net increase in spending in the March budget. He acknowledged that growth has come in faster and the revenues higher than forecast in the Autumn Statement. He has pre announced more money for vocational training and hinted at more spending on social care. He of course states his wish to see continued progress this Parliament in cutting the deficit further but has not said he wishes to stop all new borrowing. He will have some options as the Treasury and OBR correct some of their forecasting mistakes from the Autumn.

The headline about a Brexit fund is doubly misleading. The sum involved just happens to be the sum the rest of the EU would like us to pay as an exit payment. That is why we must rush to explain to them there is no such fund, no such money, as well as telling them there is no liability for us to have to pay. Nor does Brexit require a special fund. The future path of the UK economy is going to be mainly influenced by interest rates, the performance of the US and global economy, world commodity prices and their impact on inflation, and by the balance of domestic fiscal and monetary policy. In other words after Brexit as before the main determinants of our performance will have nothing to do with whether we are in or out of the EU, just as our past performance clearly got no visible benefit out of being a member of the EU internal market. Inflation is rising as many have predicted, but so far UK inflation has risen in line with US and German because it is led by

world oil prices, not by the fall in sterling.

In the EU we experienced two great crashes. One was caused directly by EU policy when we fell out of the mad and dangerous Exchange Rate Mechanism and plunged into recession. The second, the Great Recession and banking crash of 2008-9 was a common crash in the USA, the Euro area and the UK brought on by similar Central Banking and commercial banking mistakes in all three zones. The EU did not cushion or ameliorate the problems, and then added their own twist of the recessionary knife with the Euro crisis that followed.

Let's hope our authorities have learned from these bitter experiences so we have a good economic performance as we leave the EU. To do so we need interest rates that allow continued expansion without damaging the pound further, as the US hikes her rates. We need some relaxation of credit for good projects, home purchase and other affordable purposes in the private sector, and we need accelerated rates on investment in infrastructure to catch up with our needs.