

Visit of Trade Delegation to Iran

20 member trade delegation led by Chairman, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) visited Iran from January 28-30, 2017.

Welsh Government sets out plans for a North East Wales Metro

The Infrastructure Secretary has launched '[Moving North Wales Forward – Our Vision for North Wales and the North East Wales Metro](#)' – which outlines how ambitious proposals will help connect people, communities and businesses to jobs, facilities and services across the region, with the North East Wales Metro integral to these plans.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Modernising the transport network across North Wales and delivery of an integrated North East Wales Metro are key priorities for the Welsh Government. They will provide a fantastic platform to deliver sustainable economic development, connecting people, communities and business to employment, services, facilities and markets through reliable, resilient infrastructure.

“Brexit will mean it is more important than ever to have good connections to markets across the Wales – England border, which already sees around one million journeys per month. Direct links to and from key centres in the Northern Powerhouse, the Midlands and to London and direct public transport services to airports and key rail hubs will all help to drive economic growth.

“I have already committed to projects of nearly £600 million for transport infrastructure improvements across the region whilst working hard to secure an additional £41 million of EU funding for transport schemes in the region. But it's crucial that our investment and ambition does not stop there.

“I am proud to launch our vision for a fully integrated North East Wales Metro system which will transform transport links in North East Wales. This will be supported by our ongoing work on the future of local bus services, and by the new Wales and borders rail franchise which will be in place from 2018.

"I am also pleased to announce plans for a designated team to work in collaboration with other public sector organisations, operators, business, the third sector and communities on both sides of the border to develop the vision and improve transport integration across all modes. This will help inform and deliver a transport system that meets the needs of North Wales, ensuring our vision for a connected North East Wales becomes a reality.

"There is huge potential to deliver increased economic growth in North Wales. A modern, high quality integrated transport system is fundamental to achieving that potential and I am committed to working to make that a reality."

Councillor Dilwyn Roberts, Chair of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board said:

"The announcement is a firm commitment by the government to support economic growth and prosperity in North Wales, putting it on an equal footing with the city regions in South Wales.

"I particularly welcome the 'whole system' approach outlined in the Vision that recognises the strong link between the health of the economy and an effective and modern transport system. The plan is enhanced by the recognition of the cross border commuter flows in the Mersey Dee area.

"I look forward to working with the Cabinet Secretary to implement the vision for the benefit of all parts of North Wales."

Cllr Samantha Dixon, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council and Chair of Growth Track 360, the campaign to secure £1bn of rail improvements for North Wales and Cheshire, welcomed the announcement and said:

"The vision for a Metro for North East Wales will complement the integrated service and infrastructure improvements we are seeking as part of the Growth Track campaign.

"Such investment is essential if we are to create opportunities for generations to come. This investment would increase productivity and economic growth, increasing tax revenues and reducing unemployment across the region."

Press release: Flood relief for villages in Worcestershire

Construction will start this summer on a £4 million flood storage area which will reduce the risk of flooding to nearly 300 homes and businesses in Broadway, Childswickham and Murcot.

The Environment Agency, Worcestershire County Council, Wychavon District Council, Broadway Parish Council and Childswickham Parish Council have been working in partnership and have now secured over £2 million Government Grant in Aid funding, enabling the scheme construction to begin. The Environment Agency's English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee have also contributed over £1 million. To enable access to the Government Grant in Aid funding under Defra's Flood Partnership Funding Model, Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon District Council are contributing £555,000 and the local parishes have raised £312,000.

Broadway, Childswickham and Murcot were severely flooded in 2007 following record breaking rainfall across the area. The new flood storage area in Broadway will be able to hold up to 135,000 cubic metres of water during times of flood and will only allow a set amount of water to flow downstream at times of intense and high rainfall. This will reduce flood risk along the Badsey Brook downstream of Broadway.

The English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) continues to support the scheme and provided funding which allowed the Environment Agency to purchase the 18 acre field where the majority of the flood storage area is to be located.

As a condition of the planning application detailed archaeological investigations, part funded by Worcestershire County Council, are being carried out. This involves excavation work and will reduce the risk of delays during construction. These ground works are almost complete.

Specialist contractors are currently on site carrying out tree clearance in preparation for the main flood scheme works.

Daniel Wilkinson, from the Environment Agency, said:

Flooding has a devastating impact on people's lives and livelihoods, so it's great that by working together with our partners we have managed to find a solution which means we are now one step closer to reducing the risk of flooding for residents living in Broadway, Childswickham and Murcot.

Cllr Anthony Blagg, Worcestershire County Council's cabinet member for environment, said:

Now that the archaeological work is nearing completion, this project can move on to the next stage and closer to protecting homes and businesses with this innovative flood alleviation scheme.

Cllr Emma Stokes, portfolio holder for environment and street scene on Wychavon District Council, said:

It's almost 10 years since the floods of 2007 but none of us will forget the devastating impact they had. This scheme will help reduce the risk of future flooding and provide greater protection to communities in Broadway, Childswickham and Murcot.

Kevin Beasley, from Broadway Parish Council, said:

We are very pleased that the flood alleviation scheme is progressing well and that the residents of both Broadway, Childwickham and Murcot will be more reassured that the properties are safer from flooding and the devastation that they have previously experienced, once the work is completed.

County Cllr for Broadway in Worcestershire, Liz Eyre BEM, said:

This project represents an enormous amount of hard work behind the scenes. I am simply delighted that sticking by the project, working with talented county and district officers at all levels and the Environment Agency has led to this, a real outcome for my residents.

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