

## Progress for the campaign for free public wi-fi



As reported in the press earlier this week, I have welcomed progress towards the provision of free public wi-fi for the Waterfront and City Centre, something that has been a long time coming.

The City Council's Head of Customer Services & IT has now confirmed to me that a working group involving the council's IT and City Development Departments along with representation from the Scottish Futures Trust has now been established to drive the initiative forward. The Head of Customer Services & IT advised :

**"A Public Wireless project is still being investigated by Dundee city council for the waterfront development and city centre and we are actively working with the Scottish Futures Trusts Public Wireless program to get best value for the city given the financial implications. The discussions are on-going and I attended a meeting with them ... and have established a short working group to take this forward."**

Going back as far as 2014, I highlighted the need for Dundee to progress free public wifi for the City Centre. Many cities are discovering free wi-fi is a good way to attract more visitors. Already local businesses from coffee shops, hotels and restaurants, churches and bars are among the locations discovering the value of offering free wireless but a city centre wide wi-fi facility would be a boon for our city.

Other cities in Scotland are already providing free public wifi such as [Edinburgh](#), [Glasgow](#) and [Inverness](#) and I am anxious that Dundee does not fall behind.

I am pleased that the council now has a working group with the Scottish Futures Trust whose remit is to deliver a free-wifi offering for Dundee City Centre and the Waterfront area. I wanted to see momentum behind this and delivery of free public wi-fi for Dundee.

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## £13m EU funding for Institute for Compound Semiconductors

A £13m EU funding boost to help put Cardiff University's Institute for Compound Semiconductors at the forefront of 21st Century technologies has been announced by Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford.

Saturday 28 January 2017

The EU funding will help build, equip and run a state-of-the-art cleanroom at the new Institute for Compound Semiconductors (ICS), based at Cardiff University's Innovation Campus.

ICS will turn its laboratory research into products and services by working with commercial partners to lead in developing one of the world's key enabling technologies – Compound Semiconductors.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“Investing in world leading facilities so that academia and industry can collaborate and drive forward research in this sector will be an important boost to the Welsh economy.

“This EU funding will encourage high quality well-paid employment in the participating companies and the creation of spin-out companies, new start-ups as well as attracting innovative compound semiconductor companies from across the UK and Europe, all adding to increased growth and prosperity in the region.”

Compound Semiconductor technologies underpin the internet and have enabled new emerging megatrends such as Smart Phones, tablets, and satellite communications. These semiconductors are created by combining elements to produce materials with physical and chemical properties that have wide-ranging technological applications.

Professor Colin Riordan, Vice Chancellor of Cardiff University, said:

“This EU funding is a vital component in our bid to generate

prosperity in South Wales through industrial innovation. By investing in high quality facilities and talented researchers, and by building long-standing commercial partnerships, Cardiff University's Innovation System will help deliver prosperity for Wales."

The funding award builds on long-running work between the University, IQE, Welsh and UK Government to develop a hub of compound semiconductor expertise in South Wales, including £12m from the Welsh Government to support the development of the wider ICS facility in 2015.

Dr Drew Nelson, CEO, IQE plc, said:

"The role of compound semiconductors as an enabling technology for a wide range of next generation applications from high-speed communications to autonomous vehicles is widely acknowledged worldwide, with major initiatives underway by blue-chip organisations, academic institutions and government agencies, particularly in Asia and the USA.

"In Europe, Wales is uniquely positioned with a critical mass of compound semiconductor expertise to exploit the enormous commercial opportunities that will doubtlessly be generated. Today's announcement of £13m EU funding through the Welsh Government significantly adds weight and credibility to Wales becoming a global hub in this key enabling technology that will drive innovation over the coming years and decades."

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## [Xi's new year inspection indicates poverty relief](#)

As most Chinese are busy preparing for Spring Festival, China's top leader this week was in the snow-covered grassland of northern China, facing the country's arch enemy.



Chinese President Xi Jinping talks with villagers and local cadre at the home of villager Xu Haicheng in Desheng Village, Xiaoertai Township of Zhangbei County in north China's Hebei Province, on Jan. 24, 2017. Xi Tuesday pushed for increased efforts on poverty alleviation during an inspection tour to the city of Zhangjiakou. (Xinhua/Lan Hongguang)

For the fifth year in a row, Xi Jinping's New Year inspection tour had taken him to the front lines of China's war against poverty.

This time, the battleground was Desheng, a small village in Zhangbei County, Hebei Province.

Left out of China's headlong rush to riches following decades of economic reform, Zhangbei – just 200 kilometers north of Beijing – has been classed as a deprived county since 2013, with one eighth of its population still living on less than one dollar a day by October last year.

Fighting poverty is the fundamental task in building an all-round moderately prosperous society," Xi told villagers in Desheng days ahead of the traditional Chinese New Year.

China is striving to become "Xiaokang," or a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way, by 2020, just before the centennial anniversary of the founding of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC).

One aim is to make sure that those yet to be lifted out of poverty, about 45 million by 2016 year-end, could take their rightful place as citizens of a well-off society with the rest of the nation.

In Xi's own words, "no one should be left behind.

Though Xi's words hardly deviated from what had been said on previous occasions, the timing nonetheless gave them a little extra weight.

Chinese leaders have made it a tradition to visit ordinary people in both urban and rural areas ahead of Spring Festival.

Xi himself visited Gansu Province and Beijing in early 2013, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in 2014, northwest China's Shaanxi Province in 2015, and east China's Jiangxi Province in 2016.

Most of the places he has visited during the festive seasons have been locked in a relative development backwater.

Xie Chuntao, a professor from the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, said Xi's new year visits underscored the current leadership's greater commitments to achieving "Xiaokang."

His words were echoed by Xu Yaotong from the Chinese Academy of Governance.

"Xi is first and foremost concerned with 'Xiaokang' of all Chinese people," said Xu.

In addition to inspection tours, Xi has raised poverty alleviation with national lawmakers during the annual March sessions of the top legislature.

The country's 13th Five-Year Plan, which outlines priorities for national development from 2016 to 2020, also proposes support for poor villages to develop signature products and services.

In early December, guidelines were issued calling for enhanced collaboration between developed eastern regions and under-developed western regions to bridge the regional development gap and meet 2020 poverty-reduction targets.

Already, all these efforts have been translated into encouraging signs of achievements. China had seen its rural population living in poverty decrease from 770 million to 55.75 million between 1978 and 2015.

An additional 10 million people shook off poverty last year, and China is aiming to help at least another 10 million become members of the well-off society this year.

In Zhangbei alone, 20,700 of its 372,000 residents were lifted out of poverty in 2016. Thanks to a major poverty-alleviation program, the county is receiving support, including measures to promote profitable agricultural products and emerging industries such as solar power.

But as Xi himself admitted in Hebei this week, "poverty alleviation is getting more and more difficult as it progresses to the end," Xi said.

Nonetheless, he insisted that local Party and government authorities must make sure that all must be lifted out of poverty "in time."

He stressed the importance of making sure every poor family had a program for increasing their income and every poor person had a way of casting off poverty.

The president pointed to relocation as an important supplementary approach when fighting poverty and highlighted the role of ecological compensation, which would not only help improve the ecological environment but also boost incomes.

Stressing the importance of education in poverty alleviation, Xi said, "Making sure children of impoverished families enjoy access to high-quality education is a fundamental solution to poverty."

Xie Chuntao agreed. "If we compare China's development to a wooden bucket, the amount of water a bucket can hold is determined by its shortest plank," Xie said, adding that poverty is one of the short planks.

"President Xi has just spelt out the way to fix those short planks," he said.

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## [China vows to get tough with duty-related crimes](#)

The Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) will strengthen prosecution of duty-related crimes and maintain the momentum of the crackdown on corruption in 2017, an official said.

Chen Guoqing, head of the public prosecution division of the SPP, said that the SPP will improve prosecution procedures and handle cases of duty-related crimes with higher standard and efficiency.

The SPP will take part in the campaign of locating officials who have fled overseas and recovering their ill-gotten gains, Chen said.

The SPP will continue to reform the trial-centered litigation system and improve the leniency system for those who confess to their crimes, Chen said.

Procuratorates at all levels have been urged to follow instructions by the SPP and perform their duty based on advanced science and technology, Chen added.