

# Economy Secretary in Liverpool to meet Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham

Ken Skates was also keen to use his time in Liverpool to learn lessons from the city, as Wales works to achieve its vision of a new, fully integrated transport network across Wales and progress its plans for metro systems in South and North East Wales. This builds on recent meetings with Metro Mayors for Manchester and the South West.

The Economy Secretary said:

“With around one million cross border journeys each month taking place between North East Wales and the North West of England alone there is no doubt that effective cross border travel is essential to economies on both sides of the border. Indeed we know that there is significant potential for job growth in this cross border area.

“This only emphasises the need for improvements to both public transport and the road network, and I have stressed to Steve Rotherham that the Welsh Government is absolutely committed to working with partners in Wales and England to develop an integrated transport system that meets the needs of people on both sides of the border.

“This commitment is reflected in our vision for transport in North Wales and our plans for a North East Wales Metro which includes a strong focus on cross border connectivity. I know that there is already strong engagement with partners on both sides of the border in taking forward this work and I look forward to this progressing over the coming months.

“My meeting with Steve also provided me with an opportunity to learn from Liverpool’s experience in developing its own transport system that has improved the public network in the area, and these discussions will be valuable as we progress and deliver our own plans in Wales. We also had a fruitful discussion on how we could work together to attract new businesses to the cross border area.

“Another issue on which Steve and I had much to discuss was the pressing need to rebalance the UK’s economy, and ensure that UK government investment and wider prosperity is spread much more widely.

“This supercharging of regional economies is a key theme of my recently published Economic Action Plan. It is something I am absolutely committed to and through working together on the right HS2 connectivity and other issues, I know the potential benefits

for both North Wales and North West England could be genuinely transformative.”

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## **NHS Bursary to continue in Wales – Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething**

The bursary, for eligible student nurses, midwives and allied health professionals, was scrapped in England in 2017.

In Wales, the full bursary package will continue to be available for those who commit in advance to work in Wales for up to two years post qualification.

Of the 2180 students applying for the bursary in 2017/18, only 3% declined to work in Wales post-qualification, meaning the vast majority of students trained in Wales will work in Wales after their studies.

The Health Secretary said:

Health care students are the future of our NHS, which is why, unlike in England, we are continuing to support them during their studies in return for a commitment to work in Wales.

This sends a clear message about how much we value our health care workforce and sets out our commitment to the future of our NHS.

The Health Secretary added:

As well as a commitment to extending the bursary, we’re investing record levels in our NHS workforce. Since 2014, the number of nurse training places commissioned has increased by 68%. We’re also taking positive action to attract more health professionals from the UK and beyond to come to Wales, to train, work and live.

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## **New fund sees appointment of 80 new**

## teachers to reduce class sizes

The new teachers will be appointed to schools which have large infant class sizes and also have high levels of deprivation, special education needs and/or where teaching and learning need to improve.

The new teachers will help to create smaller infant classes, so a school which currently has two infant classes of 29 or more pupils could instead have three smaller more manageable infant classes.

This will improve both the quantity and quality of the time that teachers spend with their pupils, while also helping to reduce teachers' workload.

The £36m fund comprises of £16m of revenue which allows local authorities to recruit the extra teachers, and £20m of capital which allows local authorities to build the additional classrooms and learning space needed to further reduce class sizes.

All local authorities in Wales will benefit from extra teachers after submitting bids for the revenue element of the grant, which amounts to £1.3m in 2017/18. Bids for capital element of the grant will be approved shortly.

The Education Secretary yesterday visited pupils in the nursery class at Awel y Môr Primary School in Port Talbot who will, as of this September, benefit from an extra teacher when they move into Reception.

Awel y Môr is a prime candidate for the funding, having above national average levels of both free school meals and SEN.

Kirsty Williams said:

"Time and again, teachers and parents tell me that class sizes are a concern. That's why one of my first actions as Cabinet Secretary was to announce this £36m fund.

"International research and evidence tells us there is a positive connection between smaller class sizes and attainment, particularly for our youngest pupils from poorer backgrounds.

"Additional teachers at schools like Awel y Môr will be able to devote more time and individual attention to each of their pupils.

"That's good news not only for the pupil and the teacher but the school's ability to improve as a whole; smaller class sizes are crucial for both improved attainment in those early years of education and helping teachers to manage their workload.

"When seen in the context of broader reforms we're making such as reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and strengthened initial teacher training and professional development, this will also make a real

difference in giving teachers the time to teach and learners the space to learn.

“This is central to our mission to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system which is a source of national pride and confidence.

Sam Greasley, Headteacher of Awel y Môr Primary School said:

“This new fund will have a genuine impact on Pupil Standards. Securing smaller class sizes enables us as teachers to work more closely with individual children.

“We set high expectations for all pupils but acknowledge that pupils need differentiated levels of support, which is more achievable in smaller classes.”

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## [First Minister opens new 21st century school in Rhymney Valley](#)

The Idris Davies School has replaced the former Abertysswg and Pontlottyn Primary Schools and merged with the existing Rhymney comprehensive school to form the 3 – 18 campus.

Supported with over £4m of Welsh Government funding, the school will provide the very best education facilities for pupils and staff to help drive up educational standards across the county.

The school has play an extensive outdoor area with play equipment, a planting area for the garden club and an amphitheatre for outdoor teaching and events. The school will also be home to a state-of-the-art Flying Start part time childcare facility, providing mornings sessions for children and Families First parenting programmes.

During the visit, the First Minister said:

“It’s a pleasure to officially open the new Idris Davies School, supported with £4m of Welsh Government funding. Named after the renowned Welsh poet, the school is steeped in history – but, today, we bring the school fully into the 21st century.

“It has been good to speak with pupils and hear first-hand how the state-of-the-art facilities in this new 3-18 campus are helping

them learn, feel inspired, and get the most out of the school day.”

During the official opening the First Minister and the invited guests was treated to a concert by the school children.

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## [£2.3m for new hybrid theatre for vascular surgery at Glan Clwyd Hospital](#)

The project has also been supported by a legacy of more than £500,000 from the Livsey Trust. The charitable trust, set up in memory of former Rhos-on-Sea residents Robert and Flora Livsey, supports services at Glan Clwyd Hospital.

The funding will convert an existing theatre into a state-of-the-art hybrid theatre capable of performing complex vascular surgery. It will support a new vascular network model centred at Glan Clwyd Hospital and retaining procedures at Ysbyty Gwynedd and Wrexham Maelor Hospital.

The network model for vascular surgery was recommended in an invited review by the Royal College of Surgeons, and will mirror best practice provision across the UK.

The new theatre will allow a full range of procedures to be carried out in a single room. It will be equipped with advanced medical imaging devices, meaning theatre and radiology staff can work together, with patients benefiting from imaging and minimally invasive surgical procedures at the same time and in the same place.

The one site approach will also provide an improvement to surgical training, allowing multi-professional training in one place.

Speaking ahead of a visit to Glan Clwyd Hospital today, Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething, said:

“This is an exciting development for vascular surgery in the area. There are many patient benefits to centralising complex services on one site; in particular we expect to see faster recovery times as a result of procedures being undertaken using less invasive techniques.

“We also expect the development of the vascular network and this significant investment to lead to more sustainable on-call rotas and that it will increase the attractiveness of the Health Board in

terms of the recruitment to consultant and other posts. This is very welcome news for patients and staff in North Wales.”

Dr Evan Moore, Executive Medical Director for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, said:

“The investment in a hybrid theatre will give us the best facilities possible to care for patients from across North Wales in need of complex vascular surgery.

“Developing the theatre here at Glan Clwyd Hospital, will also support the training of specialist vascular staff, contributing to a robust, sustainable service for North Wales residents.”