

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board meets for the first time

The purpose of the Board is to consider issues of teacher recruitment and retention to support a high-quality education workforce that is vibrant, engaged and committed to continuous learning for all and also able to meet the demands of curriculum and wider education reform.

The TRRB will provide the challenge, rigour and quality assurance to inform key areas of workforce planning policy development, including implications arising from the Welsh Language Strategy – Cymraeg 2050.

The Board will also provide expert advice to the Welsh Government on the continued progress of ITE reform and supporting the existing teaching workforce, taking into account excellent practice elsewhere in the UK and internationally.

The Board is chaired by Professor John Gardner, Deputy Principal (Education and Students) at the University of Stirling.

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams, said:

“Our teachers are absolutely integral to our National Mission. A profession that collaborates, is open to new ideas and is always learning – raising standards for all pupils so Wales can become a world leader in education.”

Members of the Board are as follows:

- Chair: Professor John Gardner
 - Professor Furlong (Chair – Teacher Education Accreditation Board)
 - Sir Alasdair MacDonald (National Academy of Educational Leadership Shadow Board)
 - Eithne Hughes (Head Teacher)
 - Sarah Lewis (ITE Inspection lead – Estyn)
 - Anna Brychan (CSC representing all regional consortia)
 - Hayden Llewellyn (CEO – Education Workforce Council)
 - Geraint Rees (Education and Local Authority expert secondee – Welsh Government)
 - Ty Golding (Curriculum Development secondee – Welsh Government)
-

Funding boost to complete Llangefni Link Road

Investment announced today will enable the delivery of section 3 with a further £1.028 million being invested this financial year and up to £2.5 million provided in 2018-19, subject to an updated business case. This brings Welsh Government contribution in the scheme to over £10.6 million.

The Link Road, which is being delivered in four sections, is a key part of Grŵp Llandrillo Menai's masterplan to develop their Llangefni Campus as an internationally-renowned Energy and Engineering Training Facility.

The Link Road will also be important in mitigating the impact of traffic in Llangefni town centre.

The Cabinet Secretary officially opened sections 1 and 2 of the link road in March 2017. Section 4, the construction of new roundabout junction of the A5114 and the Bryn Cefni Industrial Estate road was opened to traffic in December.

The project as a whole has received funding from the Welsh Government, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

Economy and Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

"The Llangefni Link Road is a vital development which will not only enable Grŵp Llandrillo Menai to expand, but also improve access to Anglesey Enterprise Zone businesses and support the area to realise its potential for economic growth.

"All of this has been made possible thanks to a close working partnership between Welsh Government, Anglesey County Council, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and is an excellent example of what can be achieved when everyone has the same goal in mind.

"I am delighted today's announcement will see this new route completed which will provide a big boost to the area and delivers on my commitment to improve our transport network to connect communities and businesses with jobs and services."

Anglesey Council's portfolio holder for Highways, Waste and Property, Councillor Bob Parry, said:

"We're delighted to have secured the funding needed to complete the final section of this important infrastructure project.

“The Llangefni Link Road will help secure significant economic benefits for Llangefni and Anglesey. It will provide a key driver for the expansion of the Grŵp Llandrillo Menai campus and further training opportunities for our young people. The project will also improve access to our Enterprise Zone sites and A55 expressway, and help overcome traffic constraints in Llangefni.

“I’d like to thank the Cabinet Secretary, Ken Skates, and the Welsh Government for their continued support in bringing this project to fruition.”

Dafydd Evans, CEO – Grŵp Llandrillo Menai said:

“The completion of the Llangefni link road will no doubt play an important role in the development of Llangefni, the Enterprise Zone and the surrounding region.

“For Grŵp Llandrillo Menai this project has already enabled us to embark on an ambitious plan to develop our campus in Llangefni.

“Construction of the new Engineering Centre is already well underway, it’s a development that will play a significant role in the future development and growth of the region and will ensure we have a skilled workforce to support the engineering and energy industry here on Anglesey for generations to come.”

Ruthin-based Jones Bros Civil Engineering UK will undertake the construction of final section after a competitive tender process with work expected to be completed towards the end of 2018.

Finance Secretary talks Brexit and Welsh/Irish trade links at Killarney Economic Conference

The Finance Secretary will join a panel of political figures, prominent academics and Irish business leaders including Arlene Foster, Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party and Micheál Martin, Leader of Fianna Fáil to discuss Brexit and the challenges it poses for business, the legal issues that will arise, how it will shape future politics and the impact it will have on daily life.

The conference will also provide an opportunity to discuss Welsh/Irish trade links post-Brexit and the progress being made with the current 2014-2020

Ireland Wales programme which is providing a €100m investment benefiting our businesses and communities.

Mark Drakeford said:

“We highly value our relationship with Ireland and are committed to deepening our engagement outside the EU given the close bond, common values, trade and cultural links between the 2 nations.

“As an outward facing nation, we want to maintain and build on our international networks through continued participation in co-operation programmes.

“We place great value on the European Territorial Co-operation (ETC) programmes, including our cross-border programme with our nearest neighbours. They provide the means to find real solutions to shared challenges which transcend borders.

“We must ensure that we do not lose, but rather sustain, the excellent and creative partnerships which have been built up across the maritime border with Ireland.”

Consider Credit Unions this January – Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans

The Minister has launched an open and competitive grant application process for credit unions in Wales to apply for over £840,000 of Welsh Government funding for financial inclusion activities. This work helps to ensure people aren't excluded from accessing safe savings products and affordable loans.

Minister for Housing and Regeneration Rebecca Evans AM said:

“Credit Unions in Wales deliver financial awareness education to adults and children in Wales; they help to equip people to make responsible financial decisions, and to avoid irresponsible high-interest doorstep, online and illegal lenders. Crucially, they also work to help people to overcome the problems that come with spiralling debt.

“This January, as people think about their finances after Christmas, it's worth considering whether your local credit union can help you to meet your savings goals.

“I have launched a competitive grant scheme for credit unions in Wales to bid for £844,000 of Welsh Government funding from April this year for the next two years.

“We fund credit unions to deliver on our financial inclusion goals, so that everyone in Wales has access to appropriate and affordable financial services.”

Wales and Europe must work together to face global cyber security challenges

The Memorandum of Understanding reflects the importance of continuing collaboration across Europe to address global challenges, such as cyber security, in the face of the changing political landscape as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

While in Brittany, the First Minister will visit the Cyber Pole of Excellence, which focuses on training, research and supporting SMEs working in the cyber industry.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“Cyber security and the prevention of cyber attacks is a global challenge and one which we can only face by working collaboratively with international partners. Cyber attacks, like last year’s WANNACRY strike, can have a wide ranging impact on national security and demonstrate the importance of working collaboratively to prevent further attacks.

“I am proud that Wales is the UK centre for cyber security and home to the Britain’s largest Cyber Security Cluster of SMEs and internationally renowned companies such as Airbus, General Dynamics, Alert Logic and CGI.

“It is crucial we remain at the cutting edge of technology. This can only be achieved by continuing to collaborate with global partners and participating in European research and innovation programs.

“Leaving the EU may also create challenges for this the cyber industry and we must take steps now to ensure this important sector is able to continue to develop and thrive. Placing restrictions on EU citizens working in the cyber industry will further restrict the sector that is already affected by a shortage in skilled labour, while restricting the UK’s access to the single market and could

damage the UK's position as market leader.

"I am committed to continuing to work in partnership with our European friends and partners to face future global cyber security challenges."