

Cabinet Secretary confirms reappointments to Design Commission for Wales Board

Established in 2002, the Design Commission for Wales promotes the importance of good design across sectors, collaborating with a range of other bodies to help champion better buildings and spaces, now and for future generations.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“I am pleased to confirm the reappointment of Ewan and Philip to the Board of the Design Commission for Wales for a further three years. I have no doubt their experience will continue to prove to be invaluable as we seek to improve our built environment and make Wales a better place for future generations.”

Gayna Jones, Chair of DCFW Board added:

“I am delighted by the reappointment of Phil and Ewan to the Board. They both bring valuable expertise and experience and I am impressed by the calibre of people the Design Commission attracts as Commissioners.”

The appointments will run for a period of 3 years from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020.

“Culture of steady and sustained improvement in NHS Wales” – NHS Wales Chief Executive Dr Andrew Goodall

Every year in the NHS:

- there are 30,000 births
- one million A&E attendances
- three million outpatient appointments
- an estimated 18 million contacts in GP practices, community clinics and other primary care settings

The report describes some of the improvements and innovations in the health service in the last year, as well as highlighting areas for future improvement.

Innovations detailed in the report include:

- A unique form of plastic surgery is helping to improve quality of life for lymphoedema patients. Wales is the only UK nation to offer the procedure, funded through the Welsh Government's Health Technology fund. The surgery means patients no longer require compression garments, reducing costs to the NHS.
- Over 150 new staff have been recruited and new services created to improve Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services across Wales. New crisis intervention teams are now operating outside of normal working hours and early intervention in psychosis teams are caring for 15 to 24 year-olds experiencing severe mental illness.

NHS Wales Chief Executive Dr Andrew Goodall said:

"We have seen several years of sustained improvement in diabetes outcomes for children and young people. Cancer survival rates continue to improve despite increasing numbers of people requiring treatment. Waiting times to access diagnostic services continue to fall and we have seen a steady decline in people experiencing delays in their hospital discharge thanks to improved links between hospitals and social care.

"Our new clinical response model has vastly improved ambulance response times and has attracted interest from across the UK and the world.

"Passionate and committed NHS staff are leading improvements in healthcare services across Wales, services used by thousands of people every week; the Annual Quality Statement takes a look at just some of these improvements, but also looks at what we need to do next.

"I want to challenge the NHS to keep on improving; to work to provide care that is truly centred on the individual patient, and to ensure health and care are delivered to the same high standards consistently across Wales."

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government in Wales

Under the plans set out in a Welsh Government White Paper councils would work with each other, on a regional and mandatory basis, to deliver a range of different services such as economic development – including certain planning functions and transport.

Councils would also decide how they would work together on other services like education improvement, social services, additional learning needs, public protection, substance misuse and promotion of the Welsh language.

Together with these proposals, views are also being sought on reducing the voting age at local government elections to 16 and enabling local authorities to adopt either 'first past the post' or 'single transferable vote' election systems.

The White Paper also sets out how the Welsh Government would strengthen the role of community councils and encourage democratic participation.

The Local Government Secretary said:

"These proposals are not about change for change's sake.

"Our councils are working against a backdrop of extraordinary austerity and some services are facing a great deal of pressure. Local government reform is essential if we're to make these services stronger and more resilient to cope with the demands of the future.

"We also want people to be more engaged and involved in the decisions that affect their communities. That's why it's so important that the public and those involved in delivering council services, at every level, have their say in this consultation. Your views matter and will shape the way we take these proposals forward."

The consultation on reforming local government closes on 11th April.

Aston Martin contracts worth over £60m on offer to Welsh firms on Welsh

Government's Sell2Wales

It is the first time that private sector contracts have been advertised on Sell2Wales and will ensure Welsh SMEs have easy access to the raft of contracts being awarded by Aston Martin for work linked to the preparation and commencement of production at its new St Athan site.

Aston Martin contracts worth several million pounds have already been advertised on Sell2Wales for Phase I of work on the former MoD site, with Ammanford-based construction firm, TRJ being one of the main beneficiaries after securing the contract for phase 1 of Aston Martin's initial work at St Athan.

The First Minister made the announcement ahead of the official ceremony to mark the commencement of Phase II of works on the St Athan site. He said:

"I am delighted to announce that we have now opened up our Sell2Wales procurement channel to Aston Martin. This is exciting news for Welsh business as it is the first time the channel has been used to award private sector contracts.

"The move means that Welsh SMEs will now have easy access to the range of contracts being advertised by Aston Martin for work on the St Athan site and when combined with for example active supplier development from Business Wales could potentially mean over £60m of contracts coming to Wales.

"Aston Martin is already having a positive influence on the economy of Wales with more than 40 Welsh workers already employed at the Gaydon site and we know that many more job opportunities will follow before 2020.

"The company's move to St Athan is a major success story for Wales and I look forward to continuing to build on our working partnership with the company in order to bring maximum benefits to our economy and enhance our worldwide reputation."

Dr. Andy Palmer, President and CEO of Aston Martin said:

"We are delighted to have made another significant step forward on our St Athan journey, as we develop the former MOD site to our new manufacturing facility. Being able to use the Sell2Wales procurement channel has enabled us to promote the various contracts we have to a wider audience within Wales and beyond."

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“I would like to congratulate Ammanford-based construction firm, TRJ on being the first Welsh company to win a contract linked to Aston Martin’s expansion into Wales.

“The company’s success demonstrates that the economic benefits of Aston Martin’s decision to come to Wales will be felt right across Wales and not just in the Vale of Glamorgan.”

Owain Jones, Director of TRJ said:

“We are delighted to be the first Welsh company to be appointed by Aston Martin for work on their St Athan site.

“It is really great news that Aston Martin is actively looking to engage with Welsh SMEs and I am sure we will be the first of many Welsh companies to benefit from their move to St Athan.”

Last year Aston Martin announced it had selected St Athan from 20 potential global locations it had been considering for its second manufacturing facility as part of a £200M investment in new products and facilities.

The St Athan site is expected to employ 750 workers before 2020, with many more jobs in the local supply chain. It is estimated the move will bring economic benefits worth half a billion pounds to Wales.

[Review of government funded research and innovation in Wales begins](#)

A review of government-funded research and innovation in Wales has begun its work today (Wednesday 5th April).

Wednesday 05 April 2017

The highly respected Professor Graeme Reid from University College London has been asked by the Welsh Government to lead the review that will look at the strengths, gaps and future potential to sustain and grow strong research and innovation activity in Wales.

The review will:

- Look to identify patterns and themes in the development of business and public services in Wales which draw on research and innovation strengths in Wales and further afield and will report back next winter

- Collate the results of recent analyses of research and innovation activity in Wales.
- Consider how firms, public services and research groups in universities connect locally and globally to support the needs of Welsh communities, business and the economy. It will also consider how the connections and interactions between these groups can be improved to enable Wales to become a more entrepreneurial state.

Education Secretary Kirsty Williams said:

“I am delighted Professor Reid is leading this exciting review of research and innovation investment made by Welsh Government. Our aim is to make sure that every penny we invest in this area delivers the maximum benefit to the people and economy of Wales. I am looking forward to the education sector, business, learners and other getting involved.”

Julie James said:

“The aim of this review is to look at all the investment the Welsh Government makes into research and innovation and how it is making a difference and what we can do to change things for the future as this area is vital to Wales’ prosperity.”

Professor Reid said:

“Thriving research and innovation are key to the future economy and society of Wales

“Brexit, the Industrial Strategy and UK legislation on Higher Education & Research will bring significant changes to the environment for government-funded research and innovation in Wales. This review will explore how the Government, universities and business in Wales can influence and respond to these changes, both creating opportunities and mitigating threats.

“The review will aim to report early in 2018, before UKRI is created formally and while Brexit negotiations are still underway.”

Professor Reid will be supported by a distinguished panel of advisors who will meet for the first time today in Cardiff.

[April 2017](#)

M T W T F S S

[1](#) [2](#)

[3](#) [4](#) [5](#) 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21 22 23

24 25 26 27 28 29 30

[<< Mar](#)