

£9.5 million EU investment will help Wales move towards a low carbon economy

The £14.4 million GSCS (generation storage consumption supply) scheme, will receive £9 million of EU funding.

It will use cutting-edge battery technology to generate and store electricity from renewable and low carbon sources, which will then be distributed to local businesses at a discounted rate.

GSCS will provide revenue-saving opportunities at sites in Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

The £0.9 million community solar energy storage scheme in Swansea – Swansea Community Solar Storage with Direct Local Supply – will receive £600,000 of EU funds to supply electricity to up to 300 local consumers.

Based at Wales' first community-owned solar farm, the innovative scheme aims to create a larger local community energy model to support many more communities across Wales.

Speaking at the event in Cardiff, Professor Drakeford said:

“This investment is another positive example of how the Welsh Government is supporting innovative projects using EU funding and highlights the importance of securing replacement funding for Wales from the UK Government when we leave the EU.

“We are committed to creating a sustainable low-carbon energy economy in Wales and aim to generate 70% of our energy from renewable sources by 2030.

“These two projects will play an important role by supporting local businesses and communities to use renewable energy and help us achieve this goal together.”

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said:

“As a government we are committed to accelerating the transition of our energy system in Wales, particularly through the increased use of renewable energy. Our priorities are to increase energy efficiency, reduce our reliance on energy generated from fossil fuels and to actively manage the transition to a low carbon economy to benefit Wales.”

Iestyn Morgan, lead director from the Infinite Renewables Group, said:

“GSCS is an exciting new initiative, which will deliver energy cost savings to the business community. It supports the Welsh Government’s commitment to create a sustainable low-carbon economy by moving towards a smart energy future that combines local clean energy, storage and micro grids.”

Ant Flanagan, from Gower Power Solar Storage, said:

“The holy grail of community energy is enabling local energy consumers to benefit directly from renewable energy generation and storage assets – not only by sharing profits but also by reducing bills.

“This EU investment will enable us to carry out a market leading pilot. We are looking forward to working with great partners to make savings to national transmission costs and put money back into local people’s pockets, while also delivering wider community benefit programmes.”

Appointments to Snowdonia and Brecon Beacons National Park Authorities

The newly appointed members are:

- Sue Holden, Christopher Coppock and Grenville Ham – appointed to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority from 23 August 2018 to 31 May 2022
- Elinor Gwynn and Neil Martinson – appointed to the Snowdonia National Park Authority from 1 July 2018 to 31 May 2022

The Minister has also confirmed the re-appointment of three members:

- Ceri Stradling – re-appointed to the Snowdonia National Park Authority from 1 February 2018 to 31 May 2022
- Gwyneth Hayward – re-appointed to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority from 1 February 2018 to 31 May 2019
- Ted Sangster – re-appointed to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority from 1 April 2018 to 31 May 2019

Members of the National Park Authorities are paid £3,625.00 per annum reflecting a time commitment of 4 days per month.

These appointments have been made in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Hannah Blythyn said:

“Our National Parks are very special to the people of Wales and the thousands of people who visit them each year.

The five new appointments will bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the management of our National Park Authorities. I look forward to the members’ continued contribution in their effective stewardship.”

The National Park Authorities were established under the provision of the Environment Act 1995. The National Park Authorities have two statutory purposes under the Environment Act 1995:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks.
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities [of the Park] by the public.

As well as seeking to fulfil their two statutory purposes the National Park Authorities have a duty to foster the economic and social well being of their local communities.

The National Park Authorities (Wales) Order 1995 states responsibility for appointing the board of the National Park Authorities is shared between the constituent Local Authorities and the Welsh Ministers. Schedule 2 of the Order states that:

- The Board of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority must be 24 members in total, with the number of Members appointed by Local Authorities being 16 and the number appointed by Welsh Ministers being 8.
- The Board of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority must be 18 Members in total with the number of Members appointed by Local Authorities being 12 and the number appointed by Welsh Ministers being 6.
- The Board of the Snowdonia National Park Authority must be 18 Members in total with the number of Members appointed by Local Authorities being 12 and the number appointed by Welsh Ministers being 6.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for the political activity of appointees (if any declared) to be published.

Sue Holden has declared she has not undertaken any political activity in the past five years. She does not currently hold any other Ministerial Appointments.

Christopher Coppock has declared he has not undertaken any political activity in the past five years. He does not currently hold any other Ministerial Appointments.

Grenville Ham has declared that he was a candidate for the Green Party for the 2016 Welsh Assembly elections and 2017 General Election and held the position as Wales Green Party Spokesperson. He is an elected Town Councillor in Brecon. He does not currently hold any other Ministerial Appointments.

Elinor Gwynn has declared she has not undertaken any political activity in the past five years. She does not currently hold any other Ministerial Appointments.

Neil Martinson has declared that he has canvassed on behalf of the Labour Party or helped at elections during the past five years. He does not currently hold any other Ministerial Appointments.

Ceri Stradling has declared he has not undertaken any political activity in the past five years. He currently holds two other Ministerial Appointments – he is the Deputy Chair of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, and an independent member of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

Gwyneth Hayward has declared she has not undertaken any political activity in the past five years. She does not currently hold any other Ministerial Appointments.

Ted Sangster has declared he has not undertaken any political activity in the past five years. He currently holds another Ministerial Appointment – he is a member of the Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone Advisory Board.

[Active travel links, electric car charging facilities and road improvement projects to benefit from £78million transport funding](#)

Transport Secretary Ken Skates has announced £78million of additional funding for local transport projects in Wales as part of the Local Transport Fund.

The funding, which has been given the green light by Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford, will be broken down into £26million instalments over the three financial years from 2018/19 onwards.

All 22 local authorities in Wales who made bids for funding to the Welsh

Government, with a total of 82 applications totalling £34million, will receive an allocation from the additional in-year funding.

More than 60 projects will either be partially or fully funded during the remainder of 2018/19, with these schemes also providing an additional £7.2million in match funding.

Welsh Government has worked with local authorities to ensure schemes provide good value for money and meet transport and economic priorities.

Projects that will benefit from the Local Transport Fund via the additional allocations in 2018-19 include the A4119 Corridor Improvement Phase 2D (Strategic Bus Priority and Interchange) in Cardiff with £554,000, Cross Hands Link Road in Carmarthenshire with £1,685,000 and the Deeside Industrial Park Walking and Cycling Links with £1,008,000.

Projects across Wales that will benefit from additional funding include:

- Cardiff, Active Travel to schools, £742,000
- Torfaen, Direct Active Travel link to Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School, £102,900
- Rhondda Cynon Taff, Active Travel Package, £640,000
- Pembrokeshire, Installation of electric car charging facilities, £168,000
- Cardiff, on street cycle hire, £796,000
- Swansea, Fabian Way Corridor (Baldwin's Bridge), £1,800,000
- Powys, Quality Bus Provision, £1,550,000
- Monmouthshire, Abergavenny town centre walking and cycling improvements third phase, £435,000
- Newport, Newport City Centre Sustainable Transport Study, £25,000
- Flintshire, B5129 Queensferry to Denbighshire border – Bus priority and traffic management measures – £107,500
- Isle of Anglesey, Gaerwen Park & Share, £59,000
- Wrexham, Active Travel Improvements, £7,000
- Gwynedd, Llanbedr Access Road, £1,374,000
- Denbighshire, Llangollen 2020 – Pedestrian Improvement Scheme, £20,000

Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

“I'm delighted that a host of transport projects across Wales will be allocated funding from the Local Transport Fund.

“These schemes have the potential to make a massive difference to people's everyday lives, with improvements to transport networks, infrastructure and cycle lanes making it easier to choose active and sustainable travel.

“These projects support our ambitions to provide a modern and connected transport infrastructure, whilst further boosting our efforts to encourage healthy and active lifestyles.

“This funding could also prove a shot in the arm to the Welsh

economy by making it easier for people to travel for both business and leisure.”

[New bill to make Welsh law more accessible introduced](#)

This is a significant moment in the evolution of Welsh legislature, as for the first time a bill which has the law itself as its subject matter will be presented.

This Legislation (Wales) Bill is made up of 2 main parts.

Part 1 seeks to put in place a system which imposes an obligation on Welsh Ministers to keep the accessibility of the law under review and to take action to make it more accessible. Although a UK-wide problem, the inaccessibility of the law is more acute in Wales as it is set against a complex devolution settlement, a shared legal jurisdiction with England and our responsibility to make laws in both English and Welsh.

Part 2 is about the interpretation and operation of Welsh legislation; it contains bespoke rules for Wales that enable us to shorten and simplify legislation and make it more consistent.

Counsel General, Jeremy Miles said:

“For many years, the complexity of the law in the United Kingdom and the disorganised state of our vast sprawling statute book has been a major concern.

“This Legislation (Wales) Bill will start us on a new journey to make Welsh law more accessible to everyone.

“A clear, certain and accessible statute book is an economic asset and gives those who do business in Wales a more stable and settled legal framework, helping investment and growth.

“It also enables public sector bodies and other organisations to more easily understand the legal context within which they operate, and makes law-making more efficient and effective.

“But most of all, making the law accessible is a matter of social justice. In an age where access to legal advice is becoming harder and harder due to legal aid cuts, it’s incumbent on governments and legislatures to make sure that citizens can easily find and understand the laws that set out their rights and

responsibilities.”

Inclusive action plan to increase apprenticeship opportunities for disabled people

The Minister launched the action plan at an event held in conjunction with Equality and Human Rights Commission to mark the International Day for Disabled People in Cardiff today, where employers disability organisations and other key stakeholders came together to discuss the issue and encourage more employers to take on more apprentices, particularly those with disabilities.

Created by a working group of specialist disability organisations, the action plan feeds into the Welsh Government’s Employability Plan, which includes an action to provide an individualised approach to employability support that is responsive to an individual’s needs. It takes account of personal circumstances, barriers, aptitudes and ambitions Ensuring there are opportunities for disabled people to find and stay in work is a key element of this.

The action plan aims to help people like Twm Draper who has completed a level three apprenticeship in customer care with BT in March. Twm now works as a full-time consumer help case manager. Twm has a bilateral hearing impairment and uses an adapted headset that blocks out background noise. This is the only adjustment his employer has had to make for him.

Twm said:

“After sixth-form, I didn’t want to go to university, I wanted to work for a big company and I wanted to start earning money, so I looked into what apprenticeships were out there. I love my job and just get on with it,”

Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan, said:

“There are not enough disabled people in work. In Wales, just 45% of working-age disabled people are currently in employment, compared to 80% of those who are not disabled. This is not acceptable. It is something I want to see change.”

“This isn’t a purely altruistic process. Employing diverse work

groups can create better solutions to business challenges, increase productivity, and encourage creativity. Having a work force that reflects a company's customer base means they can better understand their needs and issues that affect them."

"Apprenticeships are a proven route into sustainable employment and I am proud that we have a successful Apprenticeship Programme here in Wales. However, the makeup of the apprentice cohort is far from representative of the diverse society in which we live. Encouraging disabled people to apply for apprenticeships and making sure potential employers are aware of the support that is available is vital in changing this. This is the aim of our Inclusive Apprenticeships Action Plan."