

# Rock UK – Adventure Hub for the Valleys

The project received £2.3m of EU funding through the Welsh Government's Tourism Attractor Destination programme led by Visit Wales.

Rock UK is the first project to be completed under the Tourism Attractor Destination programme – the new facilities were completed and became operational in June 2018. The Tourism Attractor Destination project – which includes 11 destinations, will realise £62 million investment in the tourism sector over the next three years, including £ 27.7 million of European funding.

The project at Rock UK has created a unique proposition bringing together multiple leisure activities with attractive, affordable accommodation which in turn brings welcome employment and first-class facilities for the local community. The team are also working with the local community to identify opportunities to work with local groups to ensure that local people can access the jobs created by this investment.

The work undertaken at the centre includes – new 104 bed en-suite accommodation for groups; 120-cover dining room; meeting rooms; new café with outdoor children's play area; fitness suite and gym.

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“The team have transformed this site into a first-class residential adventure facility – that creates a new adventure tourism hub in south east Wales. I'm delighted that we've been able to assist Rock UK with this development.

“Our aim through the Tourism Attractor Destination programme is to focus efforts and investment on key projects in each region so we have a real impact on Wales' profile in this globally competitive market, this represents a huge funding boost for the sector, which will make a real difference to the products and experiences that Wales has to offer.

“One of the aims of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys is to stimulate economic activity in our valleys communities and create jobs. Attracting fabulous inward investment like this can help us achieve those goals.”

New member of staff Becky Fear, from Quakers Yard, Treharris joined Rock UK Summit Centre in February this year. “The whole ethos of the organisation is so inclusive; it offers people the opportunity to experience something they would never have had the chance to try. It has been great to be part of something from the start and to see this facility fill up with local people

and visiting groups. The team have achieved so much in our first few months and I love working somewhere with such a positive atmosphere which has made a real difference to me". After 8 months on reception, Becky has now moved into the new role of Administrator and is handling the many residential bookings coming into the centre.

---

## **New standards to improve school nurse services in Wales' special schools**

The main aim of the new special schools nursing framework is to enable a more consistent approach for children in special schools, by ensuring children have access to both mainstream and specialist services.

The special schools nursing framework describes how special schools nurses work with children, schools and families to make sure that children in special schools receive the same high standard of healthcare as children in mainstream schools.

This means special schools nurses make the reasonable adjustments to help children to get the healthcare they need. Equally important, this framework will ensure children and families receive specialist health care when needed.

It also sets out what's expected to ensure children with significant additional needs who require health care input within other schools are supported. Part of this is making sure other professionals in community and specialist teams can work in a coordinated manner with the child when in school.

This will involve taking a 'team around the child' approach – this recognises the important role that special schools nurses have in making sure this happens. During the early implementation phase of this framework, we will be looking at how children's community teams operate to help develop a more co-ordinated and cohesive approach to supporting children and their families.

The framework reflects the aspirations of the Welsh Government's long term plan for health and social care – A Healthy Wales. There is a large focus on the public health role nurses have in schools across the board. Supporting early identification of health issues that affect children is an important part of the health promotion role of the nurse.

Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"I am delighted to be able to launch the new framework for nurses working in special schools. This important work builds on the existing school nursing framework which describes the health care

for all children in schools across Wales.

“I see the role of the special schools nurse as pivotal in ensuring that care is coordinated, families and carers are included and that children with additional needs have access to the care that they need. I want to recognise and acknowledges the excellent work that special school nurses do.

“The framework I’m unveiling today is designed to support them by providing consistency of approach, ensuring they provide the very best care and support to children in every school across Wales.”

---

## Sustainable drainage compulsory from next year

SuDS make use of landscape and natural vegetation to control the flow of surface water and reduce the risk of flooding. Designs can include ponds, permeable paving and swales, which slow down the discharge of surface water more than conventional piped drainage.

Surface runoff water can also be a major source of pollution, both directly and from overwhelmed sewers discharging into rivers. SuDS are designed to improve water quality while being more resilient and longer lasting than conventional drainage.

As part of the regulations, ‘SuDS Approving Bodies’ or ‘SABs’ will be set up within every local authority to approve drainage plans. The SAB or local planning authorities will have powers to issue enforcement notices to a developer who breaches the requirements. Developers will have a right of appeal to Welsh Government against the decision of a SAB.

The Environment Minister, Hannah Blythyn, said:

“Surface water flooding can have a devastating impact on communities and our economy. The recent flooding we’ve seen in parts of Wales have underlined the need to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

“Around 163,000 properties in Wales are at risk of surface water flooding. Employing sustainable drainage systems are estimated to reduce flood damage by up to 30%.

“Until now, the uptake of SuDS has been low. These regulations will help reduce flood risk and improve water quality, while also introducing homes for wildlife within new housing developments.”

---

## Regulatory measures to tackle agricultural pollution to be introduced

The regulations will come into force in January 2020 with transitional periods for some elements to allow farmers time to adapt and ensure compliance.

The regulations will include the following measures:

- nutrient management planning
- sustainable fertiliser applications linked to the requirement of the crop
- protection of water from pollution related to when, where and how fertilisers are spread
- manure storage standards.

There are already reports of poor practices being carried out in unsuitable weather conditions this winter, with the number of incidents this year already exceeding last year.

Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths said:

“Last year, I outlined my intention to introduce a whole Wales approach to tackling nitrate pollution. This year, we have seen an increase in the number of major polluting incidents, damaging both the environment and reputation of the agricultural industry. Equally damaging, in the context of Brexit, is the impact such incidents have on the work underway on Sustainable Brand Values for Welsh Products.

“As winter approaches, I am receiving reports of further incidents and of slurry spreading being carried out in unsuitable weather conditions. Not all slurry spreading is bad, but it must be done legally to avoid such destructive consequences.

“This poor practice is leaving many stretches of rivers devoid of fish. Our rural communities, which depend on tourism, angling and food industries, must be protected.

“I have carefully considered the need to balance regulatory measures, voluntary initiative and investment to address agricultural pollution.

“In the long-term, we will develop a regulatory baseline, informed

by responses to the Brexit and our Land consultation. But in the short term, we must take action now to deal with these unacceptable levels of agricultural pollution.

“That is why I am today confirming I will introduce regulations next spring across Wales to tackle the issue. The regulations will replicate good practice which many farms are already implementing routinely – this must become the norm.

“The regulations will enable firm and consistent enforcement to be taken. The regulations will also ensure there are no barriers to trade of agricultural produce with the European Union following Brexit and help us meet national and international obligations on water quality.

“This is the right thing to do – for the environment, for the economy and for the reputation of farming in Wales.”

---

## **Rebecca Evans meets key European Parliament Brexit group in Strasbourg**

During a visit to Strasbourg the Minister will meet the Parliament’s Brexit Steering Group. The group’s six members will play a crucial role in determining the Parliaments’ views on any Brexit Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU. The European Parliament has a decisive role in the Brexit process because it must approve the Withdrawal Agreement negotiated by the European Commission.

Rebecca Evans said:

“We are now at a crucial time in the Brexit process. A deal, if there is one, between the UK and the EU will need the approval of both the Westminster Parliament and the European Parliament, an aspect which is often overlooked in the heated debate over Brexit. I am looking forward to meeting MEPs from the Brexit Steering Group to again communicate the Welsh Government’s aim of a Brexit that protects jobs and our economy.

“We are now 135 days from the UK leaving the EU and it is crucial we see a deal that avoids us catastrophically falling out of the EU and puts in place a platform for continuing our trade and economic relations.”

The Minister will also raise the Welsh Government’s wish for the Wales to

remain a member of certain EU programmes – such as Horizon 2020 and Erasmus – once the UK has left the EU.

Rebecca Evans continued:

“I have heard from our university leaders how much they value collaboration with partner universities, how important continued research collaboration is and why it is vital that they are still able to participate in the Erasmus + and Horizon 2020 programmes. We share this view, and have continually lobbied the UK Government on continued participation.

“We want Wales to be a global and outward looking nation; Welsh universities have worked hard to build these links and our students benefit from this collaboration and we want to see this continue.”

Rebecca Evans’ visit will include meetings with at least three members of the Steering Group – Elmar Brok MEP, Gabriele Zimmer MEP, Philippe Lamberts MEP – and European Parliament Deputy Secretary-General Markus Winkler, as well as Welsh MEPs.

In April the Welsh Government welcomed Elmar Brok MEP, a senior Member of the European Parliament and a member of the Brexit Steering Group for talks on Brexit.