

Mark Drakeford responds to the UK Government's Spring Budget

The Spring Budget included £149m of additional revenue funding between 2017-18 and 2019-20 and an extra £52m of capital funding for Wales between 2017-18 and 2020-21.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford:

"Ahead of the Budget, I wrote to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to outline my concerns about the UK Government's intention to press ahead with £3.5bn cuts to public spending in 2019-20. We still have no clarity about these looming cuts, which could result in our Budget being reduced by £175m.

"The UK Government's efficiency review will not report until the autumn. I am not prepared to wait until then to find out the impact of more cuts to our Budget. I am seeking urgent assurances from the UK Government that we will discuss early findings well before the autumn.

"In these uncertain times, we have been clear about the need to end austerity and invest in our valued public services and the economy.

"Additional revenue funding is always needed against the backdrop of continued cuts to our Budget as a result of the UK Government's pursuit of the damaging policy of austerity.

"Since 2010, our Budget has been cut by 8% in real terms. Today's Spring Budget was yet another missed opportunity to end austerity.

"Despite the ongoing cuts to our funding, we have prioritised funding for social care in Wales and spending health and social care is 6% higher in Wales than in England. I'm pleased the Chancellor has followed the Welsh Government's lead and recognised the importance of social care to the health service.

"In Wales, we have also acted to support those small businesses which have been disproportionately affected by the independent Valuation Office Agency's revaluation. We have put in place £20m of targeted support for 2017-18, on top of our Small Business Rates Relief scheme.

"The Welsh Government's Cabinet will now decide how we maximise the additional revenue funding and the very modest increase to our capital budget to support our investment priorities."

"We have said for some time that the Swansea Bay Region city deal

is ready to be signed – we fully recognise the importance of the deal and the positive long-term economic benefits it will bring across the region. It is disappointing the Chancellor didn't use this Budget to bring the deal to its conclusion immediately.”

STG Aerospace showcases latest lighting technologies at new Cwmbran centre

With offices in Norfolk, Florida USA and Shanghai China, STG Aerospace develops innovative and cost-effective aircraft cabin lighting solutions which transform the flying experience. With products installed on over 11,000 aircraft worldwide, representing two thirds of the world's passenger fleet, STG Aerospace has a global customer base ranging from the largest aircraft original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to airlines, maintenance, repair and overhaul providers (MROs) and aircraft lessors and airlines.

The open day attracted a range of the companies' key customers, suppliers, Universities and R&D partners, where they joined management and staff for a tour of its world class Innovation and Engineering Centre.

Welcoming the news Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“STG Aerospace is a recognised market leader in its field and has a quite remarkable global reach, exporting worldwide with its products acknowledged as industry standards. This is a considerable achievement and STG Aerospace is a very welcome addition to the dynamic aerospace sector we have in Wales.

“I am delighted Welsh Government support helped the company establish its new centre in Wales and that it has created significantly more jobs than was originally anticipated which is great news.

“Today marks an important date in STG Aerospace's business calendar as it marks the completion of its first major strategic investment and enhanced capabilities and I wish the company every success in the future.”

Nigel Duncan, Chief Executive of STG Aerospace, commented:

“The support of the Welsh Government has been pivotal in helping us

in establish our Innovation & Engineering Centre. It represents a major step forward for STG Aerospace, enabling us to turn our vision into reality and creating truly human-centric lighting solutions for the aircraft cabin.

“Locating the Centre in Wales, an increasingly important aerospace hub, means that we can recruit from a pool of highly skilled people in the area and strengthen our relationship with Cardiff University, an important partner in our research into the effects of lighting.”

Established in 1995 on the basis of its photoluminescent technology for aviation, STG Aerospace has enjoyed substantial growth year on year, and successfully launches many new product lines including its liTeMood® cabin lighting which significantly enhances the cabin ambience of non-LED-equipped aircraft, bringing them to the same quality standard as brand-new aircraft delivered with the latest LED lighting solutions.

Visitors, including customers and suppliers as well as academics and other Invited guests, gained an insight into some of the company’s latest product developments, including the new LED Reading Light which features a unique patented photometric design that delivers a square lighting profile instead of a circular light source. Along with the world’s first blue glowing photoluminescent floor path marking system, brought to the market by the market-leading saf-Tglo® brand, which has already won a global cabin innovation award.

Minister welcomes report on substance misuse among older adults

The independent Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse (APoSM) was asked by the Welsh Government to provide advice on the additional actions needed to tackle the problem of substance misuse in an ageing population.

Older adults are forming an increasingly large proportion of the population; they are also, as a group, more likely than earlier generations to develop substance misuse problems. This is resulting in greater demands on health, social care and other services.

The [Report](#), published today, concludes that although there is significant work already underway, substance misuse services need to adapt to meet the needs of older adults, and more specialist older adults’ services need to be developed.

Interim Chair of the Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse, Richard Ives, said:

“The proportion of older adults in the population is increasing rapidly, and so is the number of older adults with substance use problems. Services must respond to this social change and need to be flexible in providing effective treatment for older clients.”

In welcoming the Report, Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans, said:

“Substance misuse among older adults is a growing problem. Levels of alcohol and drug misuse – including illicit drugs and prescription and over-the-counter medication – is a cause of concern.

“The Welsh Government, together with Public Health Wales, is taking forward a range of actions to support this group of people, including implementing a new treatment framework specifically targeted at older substance misusers.

“But we recognise that challenges remain and we agreed that APoSM should explore and advise the Welsh Government on this, to examine what more could be done to tackle this issue. I would like to thank the Panel for this comprehensive Report which will be a useful contribution to our evidence base on substance misuse among older adults, as we look to build on the good work already underway in Wales.”

[Green light for 5 brand new primary schools in Powys](#)

The money has been made available as part of the £1.4bn 21st Century Schools and Education Programme, a unique collaboration between the Welsh Government and Local Authorities with the aim of creating a generation of 21st Century Schools in Wales.

Powys County Council have been awarded £11.8 million against a total project cost of £23.8 million. This will now enable the construction phase to begin on the following projects:

- **Hay-on-Wye Community Primary School**

A new 210 place community primary school will replace the existing school which currently has 161 pupils in reception to year 6. The school will include facilities for early years provision, as well as youth /community facilities and a public library. This will address growing

pupil numbers resulting from several new future housing developments proposed for Hay-on-Wye.

- **Clyro Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled School**

The 120 place Church-in-Wales school in Clyro will replace the existing school which currently has 85 pupils. This school will also include facilities for early years provision. The new school will meet the projected demand for Church in Wales school places in the North of the catchment area.

- **Bronllys/Talgarth Community Primary School**

The 150 place community primary school built on a greenfield site in Talgarth will replace two existing schools – Talgarth community primary school which has 56 pupils and Bronllys community primary school which has 32 pupils. It too will have early years, youth and community facilities. It will address growing pupil numbers in the wider Talgarth area which will see a number of new housing developments over the coming years.

- **Llangors Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled School.**

A new 150 place Church-in-Wales school in Llangors will replace the existing school which currently has capacity for 146 pupils. The new school will include accommodation for early years' pupils and will meet the need for Church in Wales school places in the south of the catchment area.

- **Archdeacon Griffiths Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School, Llysven**

A new 150 place Church-in-Wales school will replace the current school which holds 129 pupils. It will meet the need for Church in Wales school places in the West of the catchment area. This school will also have early years facilities.

Minister for Lifelong Learning Alun Davies said:

“Securing capital investment in these difficult economic times is essential not only for better education outcomes but for the continued support of our construction industry and the growth of our economy.

“This is great news for local people and for the future of education on the area.”

Powys' Cabinet Member for Schools, Councillor Arwel Jones said:

“We are delighted that our ambitious plans for five new primary schools in the Gwernyfed catchment area have received final approval from the Welsh Government and that construction work can get underway as soon as possible.

“Between them the schools will provide state-of the-art teaching accommodation for young learners demonstrating the council's commitment to education in Powys.”

Cabinet Secretary pledges to stand against inequality, violence and abuse on International Women's Day

Leading a debate in the Senedd, the Cabinet Secretary said:

“The first International Women’s Day took place over 100 years ago. Since then it has grown into a truly global event – a day when the achievements of girls and women are recognised irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, language, culture, wealth or politics. It is an excellent example of how people can come together, as one, for a common cause.

“Shining a spotlight on inequality and presenting the stark evidence that exists to show how women are still being treated unfairly can only facilitate meaningful change. Men have a duty to speak out on inequality, violence and abuse. We need an International Women’s Day because those battles are not yet won. Until that time comes, I’m proud to stand with those who call out the abusers, the sexists and the denigrators of women – whoever they may be and wherever they may peddle their poisonous misogyny.”

The theme for International Women’s Day in Wales this year is ‘Creating an Equal Future’ and the Cabinet Secretary highlighted action the Welsh Government is taking to enhance the lives and opportunities of girls and women across Wales.

He said:

“Creating an Equal Future” chimes well with the Welsh Government’s aims and commitments. From tackling poverty, delivering a more diverse pool of decision-makers in public life, lessening the pay gap, supporting women back to work after having children and tackling violence and abuse, our Equality Objectives ensure that action is focused on the areas which disproportionately affect women and the other protected groups.

“We must recognise the importance of men playing their part in working for gender equality. We all have a part to play. Without men as committed allies, and supportive partners in this quest led by women, genuine change will not happen. The positive impacts of gender equality are good for all of us, our families and society as a whole.

“We must also stand together against domestic abuse and other types of violence against women, which can have devastating and long-lasting consequences. The key is to change attitudes and get the message across that violent behaviour is not acceptable in any circumstances, and will not be tolerated in our society.

“This is a day to celebrate the achievements of women. We are not complacent – there is more to be done before we can claim to have ‘created an equal future’. But Wales has much to be proud of and we stand committed to supporting women and girls to aspire and achieve.”