

“Transparency is key in developing our tax policy” Finance Secretary tells Cardiff Business School breakfast

Speaking at a Cardiff Business School breakfast, he will update the meeting about the process of testing the Wales Act 2014, which enables the Welsh Government to propose new tax ideas in areas of devolved responsibilities.

A vacant land tax was chosen from a shortlist of 4 tax ideas to test the Wales Act, following a public debate about new tax ideas last year.

A vacant land tax could be used to discourage land banking and encourage the more timely development of vacant sites to meet increasing housing demands in Wales.

Addressing an audience of policymakers, business practitioners, and other stakeholders, Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford will say:

“We are currently working on the process of transferring powers from the UK government to Wales. We hope to begin negotiations with HM Treasury in the coming months, with a view to securing the powers in the New Year. After this time, we can begin more formal policy development.

“I am committed to ensuring our tax policy is developed in an open and transparent matter and that’s why we’ve had – and are continuing to have – constructive discussions with stakeholders.

“Only through this cooperation can we ensure we achieve our objectives without placing any unnecessary burden on responsible developers and land owners.”

A vacant land tax is not a new idea. Property taxes have been used to encourage development and regeneration across the world. The Republic of Ireland’s vacant sites levy provides a useful reference point for how a vacant land tax might work in Wales.

However, a vacant land tax in Wales would be developed specifically for Wales’ unique requirements.

Coastal location inspiration for Sea Shanty

The Sea Shanty opened its doors in July 2016 following a coordinated effort from its creator Philip Brown, Anglesey County Council and funding from Visit Wales. Located behind the main beach of Trearddur Bay, this brand new build sits behind the sand dunes and has 160 covers inside with a further 55 outside.

The interior draws on the coastal location and maritime heritage of the area to bring a strong sense of place to the village. Wooden sailing boats and vintage outboard motors can be seen on the ceiling while curiosities brought to life by local craftsmen are exhibited everywhere. Each piece of work bears a plaque acknowledging the local artisan responsible. The café-restaurant celebrates the sea shore in a most unusual way – bottles of sand from beaches all over the world are displayed along one entire wall with shells, shipwreck copper, driftwood, and other beach finds adorning the walls.

The Minister met with owner Phil Brown who reported that the business had initially expected to create thirty two jobs, but now employs over sixty local people and provides ancillary business to dozens of other local trades. Phil Brown, said:

“Sea Shanty is a classic example of how public and private sector can work together for the benefit of both. Personally, the creative side has been huge fun and given all of us involved the opportunity to express our views in areas such as re-cycling, litter clearance and architectural environmental enhancement.

Food from local growers, fishermen and producers is used whenever possible and I’m proud to say that we have a large number of Welsh speaking staff greeting and serving customers”.

Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“As we celebrate our Year of the Sea this year it was an excellent opportunity to see how the Sea Shanty is making the most of our magnificent coastline and ensuring that that sense of place permeates every aspect of the business from décor to menus.

The Sea Shanty is part of a growing family of high quality coastal restaurants in Wales which are giving people an excellent experience of Welsh food and hospitality. I’m delighted that we’ve been able to support this development and wish the team every

success for the future. ”

Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales – appointment of chief executive

Alun Davies, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services, today announced that Shereen Williams MBE has been appointed as the new Chief Executive to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

Thursday 18 October 2018

Alun Davies said:

“I am pleased to announce the appointment of Shereen Williams to the post of Chief Executive to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

“Ms Williams will bring valuable skills to the role: her previous experiences in Local Government and the Third Sector will ensure the Commission has the leadership it needs to complete its current programme of work and beyond as it continues to keep under review all local government areas in Wales, and their electoral arrangements.”

Finance Secretary celebrates first anniversary of the Welsh Revenue Authority

The WRA was established in October 2017, 6 months ahead of the introduction of first 2 devolved Welsh taxes in 800 years – land transaction tax (LTT) and landfill disposals tax (LDT) from 1 April 2018.

A year on and Wales has a brand new function of government. At a WRA Board

meeting earlier today the Finance Secretary said:

“The Welsh Revenue Authority plays a key role in our ambition to develop a tax system, which meets the unique needs of Wales.

“I am pleased with the work which has been done to get us to this point.”

Dyfed Alsop, chief executive of the WRA, said:

“Today is a major milestone for the WRA and is testament to all the support we’ve received from all our partners.

“We’re committed to delivering a fair tax system for Wales, which will help raise important revenue to support public services across Welsh communities.”

The money raised from the Welsh taxes – which includes council tax and non-domestic rates and, from April 2019, Welsh rates of income tax – funds Welsh public services, from our hospitals and schools to improvements to roads and bridges.

First part of £100m transformation of health and social care announced

Developed by the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board, the Me, My Home, My Community project integrates health and social care to bring care closer to home.

It will receive nearly £7m over two years from the Transformation Fund to change, develop and join up health and social care services, with more emphasis on preventing illness, and shifting services out of hospital to homes and communities.

The Transformation Fund has been created to support key actions from the Welsh Government’s long term plan for health and social care, A Healthier Wales.

Me, My Home, My Community is based on partnership working between all parts of the NHS, local authority services, charities and the voluntary sector to ensure individuals and families get the support they need closer to home, at the right time. It aims to maximise independence, which research has shown is the outcome that matters most to people.

The project is informed by a similar initiative developed in Canterbury, New Zealand and has a number of key elements which will improve how health and social services work together:

- Get Me Home and Get Me Home Plus will change the way partner organisations can work together in hospitals. For example local authorities will work with the NHS to provide increased daily contact on the wards. Get Me Home Plus will see people being assessed in their own home after being discharged from hospital, rather than being assessed before being discharged. This will give a clear understanding of the support and adaptations needed in their home, and it will allow people to return home more quickly after a stay in hospital. Wrap-around care at home will be provided by healthcare professionals, social services carers, and social workers.
- A well-being website will link services across the community and allow health and social care professionals to share information about patients.
- Community development officers will develop and recommend community based care – for example community gardening projects, walking groups ‘men’s sheds’, and ‘talking cafés’.
- Developing a well-being workforce. In addition to social prescribers and existing well-being officers, reception staff will be trained to provide information and connect people to volunteer care workers in the community.
- Identifying people who are at risk and actively supporting them to remain as independent as possible. This involves creating better connections between hospitals, GPs, and pharmacists to ensure everyone is informed of individual patients’ needs when they’re discharged from hospital, and patients have one point of contact.
- Multi disciplinary teams, led by a GP, to develop and review services.

During a visit to Redlands Surgery in Penarth today (Thursday 18 October), Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething met members of the Cardiff and Vale team and some of the team visiting from New Zealand to see the development of the project.

Mr Gething said:

“With an increase in life expectancy and our continued public health challenges, our health and social care services will continue to face increasing pressures. This is why, in our long term plan for health and social care, we have set out the need to truly transform the way we deliver care to ensure it is sustainable in the future.

This will require better integration of health and social services to reduce reliance on hospitals and deliver care closer to home. The Transformation Fund will be used to fund a small number of projects which have the most impact in developing and delivering new models of care, and which have potential to scale up so they can be used across Wales.

I am very pleased to announce the first project to be backed by the Fund. The Cardiff and Vale team have a clear vision of how to deliver better care for patients and reduce pressure on GPs and hospitals, and I look forward to seeing this and other new models developed and rolled-out quickly.”

Cardiff Council’s Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, and Chair of the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board, Cllr Susan Elsmore, said:

“This is a tremendous opportunity to fundamentally realign health and social care, not only in the region, but also across the country, in order to deliver the priorities set out by Welsh Government in its Healthier Wales strategy.

“Our programme has families and individuals at its heart. By having this population focus, local authorities and the NHS can work together to deliver preventative services, at a local level, which maintain independence and produce the outcomes people are looking for.

“There has been a lot of hard work undertaken by the members of the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board to continually improve health and social care. Now is the time to build on this work and place the principles of the new national policy at the forefront of our services.”