

Welsh Secretary accepts keys to new UK Government hub in Cardiff

- New base in central Cardiff will open doors to 4,000 UK Government civil servants in late 2020
- Part of UK Government's commitment to the Union and levelling up Civil Service resources across the whole of the United Kingdom
- One of 16 UK Government hub buildings currently being created

The Secretary of State for Wales has been handed the keys to a new UK Government hub building in Cardiff city centre.

Rightacres Property Company formally presented the keys to the Right Honourable Simon Hart MP today (Friday 10 January). Contractors ISG will now prepare the building, in Central Square, for more than 4,000 civil servants from several UK Government departments and agencies to start work in late 2020.

The Cardiff building is one of 16 UK Government hubs currently being created across the UK's nations and regions. It forms part of the UK Government's commitment to the Union by building the capacity of the civil service across the whole of the United Kingdom and levelling up resources.

The new development follows the UK Government's recent announcement of up to £58 million to upgrade Cardiff Central railway station and a £5 billion investment in improving journeys through electrifying the Great Western Mainline between South Wales and London.

The Cardiff building has been named Tŷ William Morgan – William Morgan House, to recognise Bishop William Morgan's role in maintaining the strength of the Welsh language through his 1588 translation of the Bible into Welsh.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

This investment shows the UK Government's commitment to Wales and to strengthening the Union, as well as growing the capacity of the civil service outside London.

Today's event signals an exciting milestone in the construction of Tŷ William Morgan – William Morgan House which will provide a modern, flexible working environment in the heart of Cardiff for thousands of our civil servants.

Minister for Implementation at the Cabinet Office, Jeremy Quin, said:

Moving thousands of civil servants into the heart of city centres

across the UK is helping to boost local economies and ensure that the UK Government is not just centred in London.

This development in Cardiff will bring a real boost to the area, complementing the fantastic government investments that have already been announced for the city.

HMRC Director General for Customer Compliance in HMRC, Penny Ciniewicz said:

This is a significant milestone for HMRC, which will bring together more than 3,600 colleagues into Central Square. The department has a large and long-established presence in Wales and the new regional centre in Cardiff demonstrates our commitment to Wales and its economy.

This modern building will bring teams together, so they have the opportunity to work differently and more effectively.

The £100 million 270,000 square foot development has been delivered by Rightacres, Cardiff Council and funders Legal & General (LGIM Real Assets). Designed by architects Gensler and constructed by Sir Robert McAlpine, the 12-storey office building will house staff from a number of UK Government departments in Wales and will also have capacity to host full UK Cabinet meetings. HMRC is the largest occupier – the hub will be its regional centre and bring around 3,600 of its staff to Central Square.

Paul McCarthy, Chief Executive of Rightacres, added:

This is a team effort as we work with our partners to transform the heart of our capital city with a new gateway to Wales that we can all be proud of.

As one of the most successful regeneration projects in the UK, Central Square is a catalyst for the creation of new civic space and a city centre that is people-friendly, easily accessible, flexible and safe. From the brilliant strategic creativity of the masterplan to the laying of each individual paving slab, the delivery of this iconic development on time and on budget is testament to all involved.

Tom Roberts, Head of Strategic Investment at LGIM Real Assets, said:

The delivery of the new Government hub on time and to such a high standard is testament to the collaborative approach adopted on this successful development. The new Government hub is a wonderful

example of a modern fit-for-purpose building that is surrounded by excellent amenities and infrastructure. We are excited to see it come to life later this year with employees as Cardiff Central Square enters its final stages of development.

Construction of phase one of the Central Square project commenced in 2014, with One Central Square completed in March 2016 followed by Two Central Square in the summer of 2017. The new headquarters for BBC Cymru Wales was completed in April 2018 and work begun on the new bus interchange in July 2019.

ENDS

[Trialling new rail technologies: apply for contracts](#)

The UK rail industry transports 1.7 billion passengers and 110 million tonnes of freight each year and faces challenges from rapid growth and changing customer expectations.

The number of trains has increased by 28% since 1997 and demand for rail transport is expected to increase by 58% over the next 10 years.

Light rail and local transport systems are expanding and creating opportunities for UK businesses.

Current engineering and technologies are struggling to keep pace with the demand. New technologies could help the rail industry to meet expectations, improve services for customers and open new markets for business.

Innovate UK has up to £9.4 million from the [Department for Transport](#) to invest in demonstrations of new technologies that could improve rail services.

Funding for this 'first of a kind' competition is under the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) and managed by Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation.

Projects must use new technology in rail environment

The competition aims to fund projects that demonstrate for the first time how proven technologies, such as automation or innovative uses of data, could be used on the railways.

Projects must seek to demonstrate the technology as a compelling business idea in areas such as a railway station, rolling stock, rail infrastructure or an environment close to a railway.

They are expected to focus on 1 of 4 themes:

- environmental sustainability including low-carbon freight, energy generation and storage, low-emission self-powered vehicles, improved air quality, noise reduction and recyclable materials
- customer experience including improving access and accessibility, optimising journey times, improved information systems, on-board and station connectivity, passenger comfort, analysis of customer feedback
- railway operations including improved dwell time at stations, optimised freight planning, better recovery from disruption, better information for frontline staff, real-time decision-making assistance, use of robotics to improve safety and security
- optimised and cost-effective maintenance including use of automation and robotics, automated cleaning, on-site maintenance of rolling stock, improved reporting of failures

Project teams should include the owner of stations, rolling stock or infrastructure, an experienced railway organisation and an organisation that could become a customer.

Competition information

Effective mentoring and a well-paced curriculum are key to high quality initial teacher education

Today we have [published research](#) designed to develop and test a model that assessed the quality of an ITE programme's curriculum. This will bring ITE inspection closer into line with the education inspection framework launched in September 2019.

The findings of this research are being used to inform the development of the new ITE inspection methodology and framework and followed a first phase of

research we published in October 2019.

The latest research found that effective sequencing of the curriculum across the year was vital in preparing trainees for entering the classroom.

In some examples of ITE partnerships we visited, a desire to cover every aspect of teaching in depth resulted in an imbalance in their curriculum. In these cases, more time was spent on one aspect of teaching to the detriment of another equally important aspect.

We also identified some weaker performing partnerships were attempting to capture everything in bite-size chunks in order to ensure coverage of the Teachers' Standards. This often led to trainees having only a surface-level understanding of teaching concepts and being unprepared at the end of their programme.

We also noted that good quality mentoring, backed up by effective quality assurance and communication within ITE partnerships, is vital to creating and delivering a quality curriculum.

In some partnerships, mentors reported that a lack in their own training led to confusion about their goals, which was reflected in the support they offered their mentees. In those that scored well on our research indicators, partnerships had worked to improve the teaching skills of mentors as well as trainees.

In higher-scoring partnerships, course leaders and partner providers worked together to deliver a well-sequenced curriculum that put the trainee's development at its core, rather than prioritising the needs of the partner and settings.

HMCI Amanda Spielman said:

Our research shows that the best initial teacher education programmes teach a well-sequenced curriculum and provide strong mentoring.

As we have done with schools, we want to inspect in a way that looks at the curriculum properly and helps would-be teachers choose the right training course.

For our research we visited 46 ITE partnerships in total, including 24 school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT), 20 higher education institutions (HEI) and 2 Teach First partnerships.

The visits were carried out over two days. The model set out 22 curriculum indicators across eight broader themes that we identified as being potentially related to ITE curriculum quality. These were each marked out of five, five representing best practice.

The ITE framework covers all inspections of initial teacher education

partnership programmes that lead to early years teacher status, qualified teacher status and qualified teacher learning status.

During the next phase of development of the new ITE framework, Ofsted will be consulting on a draft handbook. The consultation will be launched later this month.

Further piloting and development is also planned during spring term 2020. It is anticipated that the first set of inspections under a new framework will begin in January 2021.

[Teesside transformation backed by £71m government funding](#)

The Government is today announcing £71 million new funding towards ambitious local plans to turn the former site of the former SSI Steelworks in Redcar into a huge business zone, home to world-leading clean energy, manufacturing and tech companies.

Ministers are committed to levelling-up opportunities so that all corners of the UK benefit from growth and prosperity as we get Brexit done and make the most of the opportunities ahead.

Since the steelworks went into liquidation in 2015, it has been a local priority to create a new role for the site, and the wider 4,500-acre South Tees Development Corporation area, to become a key driver of economic growth in the North East.

The area is one of the largest redevelopment opportunities in the country, and the Development Corporation plans to develop it into a business park, attracting companies from a range of industries and creating thousands of jobs once the area is fully developed.

The funding announced today will support work demolishing old buildings and preparing the site for redevelopment to attract new businesses and investment. It will also help the Development Corporation secure some of the land to ensure the whole area can then be regenerated.

Speaking ahead of his visit today, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Rishi Sunak, said:

This is our levelling-up agenda in action, as we back Teesside's exciting ambitions to be a global trading centre with great jobs for world-leading industries.

We want to unleash the potential in Teesside and across the country

to make the most of the opportunities available for the future.

Welcoming the announcement, Tees Valley Mayor and Chairman of the South Tees Development Corporation, Ben Houchen, said:

I have always said I would be the first to ask Government for more money when we needed it for the redevelopment of the former Redcar steelworks site. So, after asking, I'm pleased we will be receiving the £71 million to help secure the site and accelerate its preparation for private sector investment.

It is fantastic for our region that Rishi Sunak and the Treasury have made this money a top priority and announced it in the first few weeks of the new Government. This is another significant step to help us breathe new life into an area that was devastated following the closure of the steelworks in 2015.

The Development Corporation will set out a strategy later in 2020 which will lay out the Tees Valley's vision to establish the area as a leading location for clean energy, low carbon and hydrogen, including the application of industrial decarbonisation and clean growth technologies.

Today's announcements follows the Government's existing commitment for £450 million towards the Tees Valley Combined Authority's plans to help more young people access skills training, introduce high quality broadband, and support people overcoming barriers into work alongside other priorities. The Government is also supporting people in Tees Valley with the cost of living, with a £930 annual pay rise for a full-time worker on the National Living Wage from April 2020. More than 300 more police officers are being recruited this year in the North East, as part of the Government's commitment to raise numbers by 20,000 nationally.

Business Secretary, Andrea Leadsom, said:

The SSI site is perfect for redevelopment, and this funding will help to get the exciting and ambitious plans from the South Tees Development Corporation off the ground – delivering as many as 20,000 skilled jobs over the next two decades.

These plans have the potential to transform the Teesside economy and attract manufacturers and other companies into the area – and across the wider region, as part of our wider efforts to level up across the UK.

Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick, said:

This Government stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of

Teesside in bringing this historic site back to life.

Backing Tees Valley with this multi-million pound funding will transform this site, creating well paid jobs, boosting economic growth and unlocking opportunities for the area to thrive.

M20 Operation Brock barrier to be removed from next week

The removal of the barrier, which starts on Monday (13 January) is good news for drivers. It means that three full width lanes at the national speed limit will soon be restored on the London-bound M20 at the end of the month.

The barrier has been in place on a 15-mile section of the M20 between junctions 8 (for Maidstone) and 9 (at Ashford) since March 2019, reflecting the risk of potential traffic disruption during this period. Now that the risk has lowered, Highways England has agreed with the Kent Resilience Forum and the Department for Transport it is the right time to take the barrier down.

Highways England project director Nicky Potts said:

Removing the Operation Brock barrier is good news for drivers and the people of Kent and reflects the decreased risk of disruption to cross-channel services in the coming months.

Operation Brock has provided people living, working and travelling in and around Kent with a scalable set of measures to help limit the impact to the county in the event of disruption to services across the English Channel.

We are grateful for people's patience while the barrier has been in place, and are looking forward to restoring the motorway to full capacity.

The work to remove the barrier will start with a full closure of the M20 in both directions on Monday 13 January between junctions 9 and 7 from 8pm until 6am on Tuesday 14 January.

From 8pm on Tuesday 14 January, the London-bound carriageway of the M20 will be closed between junctions 9 and 7 from 8pm until 6am every night for a further 15 nights. Work is being carefully planned to limit any disruption, with all work being carried out overnight.

There will also be lane restrictions on short sections of the coastbound carriageway near junction 9 (for Ashford) and 8 (for Maidstone) while gaps in the central reservation that were used as crossover points during Operation Brock will be reinstated. At these locations, lane 3 will be closed for safety reasons until the work to lift the barrier is finished, with a reduced 50mph speed limit in lanes 1 and 2.

Around 1500 metres of barrier will be taken off each night, with road markings repainted and gaps in the central reservation barrier closed.

The final overnight closure is planned for Tuesday 28 January, where the coastbound carriageway will be closed while the remaining restrictions are removed. All work is expected to be complete, with all restrictions removed, by Saturday 1 February at the latest.

Full details of the closures, including diversion routes, can be found on the [M20 junctions 8 to 9 temporary solution](#) web page.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.