

Press release: Welsh Secretary to mark 35 year anniversary of Japan-Wales business club

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will underline the strong cultural bonds between Wales and Japan at a dinner to mark a milestone anniversary for a Tokyo based business forum.

Clwb Hiraeth was founded in 1982 by senior executives of Japanese corporations who had worked and lived in Wales and had since returned to Japan. The aim was to champion business ties between the two nations.

35 years on and the club has helped to maintain and strengthen not only the business bonds, but the social links between those who formed close friendships in Wales.

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns is in Japan visiting leading international companies to discuss the great potential for further inward investment in the United Kingdom.

He will mark Clwb Hiraeth's anniversary at a dinner in Tokyo where he will address the members and reiterate the importance of preserving the business ties between the nations to help secure the future prosperity of both countries.

Speaking ahead of the event Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Japanese companies have given Wales a lasting legacy, not just industrially, but culturally as well.

Japan has never underestimated Wales. It is one of the best places to do business and I know that Clwb Hiraeth has worked tirelessly to ensure other business leaders, universities and communities throughout this country understand just how much Wales has to offer.

I congratulate the club on its 35 years of important service to Japan and Wales. I wish it every success in the years to come as we continue to strengthen the bonds between us.

The first chairman of Clwb Hiraeth was Mr Yamaguchi of Takiron – the first Japanese company to invest in Wales.

Over its 35 year history, members of the club have acted as unofficial ambassadors for Wales. They meet regularly, hold a number of social events, celebrate St David's Day, and endorse Wales to other potential investors and

business people.

Japan's business ambitions have also been matched by the ambition of its sportsmen on the rugby pitch. Like Wales 20 years before it, the country is readying itself to host the 2019 Rugby World Cup. And while the two countries may often face one another as adversaries on the field of play, Alun Cairns will highlight the affinity each nation has with the game as another key catalyst for many more years of mutually beneficial business.

Mr Cairns added:

The strong cultural and sporting links between our two great nations have provided a strong backdrop for a successful and lucrative trade and investment partnership.

Rugby has the ability to define us as a nation and we know that success for the Welsh rugby team has a measurable economic impact. We look forward to seeing the world gather in Japan in 2019 and seeing our sporting, trading and cultural partnerships take deeper root over the years to come.

[News story: Home Secretary Amber Rudd calls for united stand against online terror](#)

Speaking at the Forum, held in San Francisco, Amber Rudd welcomed the willingness of internet service providers to develop a coordinated industry response to the global threat.

It is encouraging to see so many organisations here today willing to take a stand on this vital agenda. I want to thank the companies I have met while here for the strides they are taking in making the internet a hostile place for terrorists to operate.

But we need to do more to help keep our communities safe. The scale of the threat we face is not something any one of us can tackle alone and only through collective action across governments, civil society and industry can we seek to defeat it. I welcome the commitment of the Forum to take this work forward.

There is no doubt that the challenge is complex. But it is important to remember that behind these discussions about technology lies our

determination to protect people – from being radicalised and from being the victims of a terrorist attack.

Our enemy is trying to weaponise vulnerable people in their homes. It is a war where the front line can be a screen in a young person's bedroom or the mobile phone in their pocket.

We must be united in our resolve to purge the internet of this poisonous and pernicious material. Today has been a significant step towards achieving that goal but there is more to do. Let's work together to take terrorism offline.

[Press release: £174m M3 upgrade opens to traffic](#)

Cutting-edge technology installed on a 13.4 mile section of the motorway between the M25 and Farnborough sets the speed limit to match conditions, helps spot any queuing traffic, incidents or broken down vehicles, and informs drivers about conditions ahead.

The hard shoulder has been converted to a new fourth traffic lane in each direction, boosting capacity by a third on the vital route between London and the South West.

Since it was created in April 2015, Highways England has completed 16 major improvements, with a further 15 upgrades due to be started or open by spring 2018.

The new style emergency area on the M3 smart motorway

Drivers in this morning's peak period were the first to benefit from the fully upgraded road. Main construction on the project was completed overnight on 30 June, when the fourth lane was available for use with a 50mph speed restriction remaining in place, whilst testing of the smart motorway technology was finalised. Now, the full four lanes are open at 70mph, with the smart motorway technology detecting incidents, actively managing traffic and giving drivers information.

Shaun Pidcock, Director of Highways England's smart motorway programme said:

This is a significant upgrade for the M3 and will deliver real benefits for the 130,000 drivers who use it every day. We've added 26.8 miles of new lanes to this busy section of the M3 and completely overhauled the technology to give drivers better information to help with their journeys.

Smart motorways create vital extra capacity, improve journey times

and maintain our high levels of safety across the network. New technology will make the road more resilient to disruption, improving journeys by using variable speed limits that will help tackle frustrating stop-start traffic and giving drivers better information on conditions ahead.

As well as the smart motorway upgrade, we have also been carrying out the most extensive maintenance on the M3 since it was first built in 1971, fully resurfacing the motorway and its slip roads and restoring it to an 'as new' condition.

I would like to thank drivers for their co-operation and understanding while we've been building this new improved road and hope they enjoy the improved journeys between London and the south coast.

[Smart motorways](#) have been designed to be intuitive to drive on. Normal motorway rules apply: keep left unless overtaking, drive within the speed limit and never drive in a lane closed by a Red X. Even without a hard shoulder, there are safe places to stop every 75 seconds of driving on average.

Work on the smart motorway upgrade started in November 2014. Major maintenance being carried out alongside the project is also substantially complete, but some activities – including the rebuilding of the Woodlands Lane bridge over the M3 near Windlesham – will continue until later in the year. None of this maintenance will require any permanent traffic restrictions on the M3.

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.

[Press release: Green light for HS2 as first major contracts signed](#)



From left to right: Sean Jeffery, Executive Director and Chairman of CEK JV Board; Nicole Geoghegan, General Counsel & Company Secretary, HS2 Ltd; Mark Cutler, Balfour Beatty VINCI HS2 Managing Director; Mark Thurston, Chief Executive, HS2 Ltd; Jim Crawford, Managing Director, Phase One, HS2 Ltd; Emma Head, Corporate Health, Safety, Security and Environmental Director, HS2 Ltd; Peter Jones, Executive Director and SCS JV board member; Jérôme Furgé, Align Project Director

High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd Chief Executive, Mark Thurston, was joined by representatives from SCS JV, Align JV, CEK JV and Balfour Beatty VINCI, in a signing ceremony at the company's Birmingham head office. The winning companies, whose names were released by the Department for Transport last month (17 July 2017), will go on to support 16,000 jobs across the UK-wide supply chain as they deliver what will be the biggest investment in UK's transport infrastructure since the building of the motorways.

Welcoming the milestone for the project, HS2 Chief Executive Mark Thurston said:

HS2 is more than just a railway. The contracts we sign today will provide much needed extra capacity and connectivity between our major cities, but it will also unlock huge opportunities for new jobs, homes and economic development and start to rebalance our economy.

We are determined to deliver the project to new levels of safety and efficiency, with respect for communities, protection for the environment and value for money at the core of everything we do. The contracts we signed today will support 16,000 jobs and generate thousands of contract opportunities within the wider supply chain, spreading the benefits of this investment across the whole country.

A team made up of Skanska, Costain and STRABAG (SCS JV) will build the first section of the route which is in a tunnel between Euston and Old Oak Common and onwards to Northolt. Welcoming the contract award, Peter Jones, Executive Director and SCS JV board member said:

We are delighted to have been awarded these major contracts by HS2 which follow on from the South Enabling Works Contract awarded last year.

The awards are further testimony to the SCS collaborative approach and our strong track record in applying technology-based innovative solutions in the delivery of large-scale projects.

Align JV, a team made up of Bouygues, VolkerFitzpatrick and Sir Robert McAlpine will build the next stage, including the Colne Valley Viaduct and Chilterns Tunnel. Welcoming the contract award, Jérôme Furgé, Align Project Director said:

I have worked on many major projects around the world, and find it a special privilege to be working on HS2. This project will require a unique level of collaboration between all of us and the highest industry standards, expected by HS2, will be implemented in order to obtain the very best outcome. My Align colleagues and I are delighted to be part of the challenge to deliver a world-class asset to the UK.

The largely rural stages between the Chilterns Tunnel and Long Itchington will be built by a team made up of Carillion, Eiffage and Kier (CEK JV). Welcoming the contract award, Sean Jeffery, Executive Director and Chairman of CEK JV Board said:

We are delighted to have been selected to help deliver this major infrastructure project and look forward to working in partnership with HS2. Our involvement in this project will enable us to create many new jobs and training opportunities as well as working with a diverse range of supply chain businesses from across the UK.

A team made up of Balfour Beatty and VINCI will complete the route, taking the line north past Birmingham Airport and into the new Curzon Street station in the centre of Birmingham, as well as onward to a connection with the existing West Coast Mainline at Handsacre. Welcoming the contract award, Mark Cutler, Balfour Beatty VINCI HS2 Managing Director, said:

I am proud that our long-standing joint venture has been chosen to deliver these two important and complex sections of HS2.

This iconic rail infrastructure project will create significant opportunities for the UK construction industry and enable long term benefits in skills, jobs and regional prosperity. We look forward to building on our successful track record of major infrastructure projects, and playing our part in the delivery of HS2.

The contracts are two-stage, with the contractors spending the first 16 months working collaboratively with HS2 Ltd on the detailed design before construction begins around 2018/19. Preparatory work has already begun on the

project with geological investigation underway across the route and ecological and archaeological work due to begin soon.

Speech: Protecting confidentiality and improving care: not a zero sum game

Dr Mark Taylor writes about how NDG principle of 'no surprises' in the context of genetic and genomic medicine.

Protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable patient data, and using that same information to improve care outcomes, is sometimes seen as a zero-sum game. Either the information is protected or it is used to improve care.

During my time on the National Data Guardian's panel I've come to see it a little differently.

There is not always a conflict between respecting an individual's right to exercise control over the use of her information and using information about her to improve care. What matters is whether the use is consistent with what she expects, accepts as reasonable, and whether it respects her wishes. I've come to recognise it to be central to the work of the National Data Guardian (NDG) to ensure that the health and care system has the right controls in place to stop inappropriate uses of data but also to ensure that it is used so that people get the care they need.

The tension, between stopping data flow and making it flow, may be perceived to be acute particularly in case of new technologies and innovative opportunities to deliver high quality health care. Genomics and genetics is a case in point.

In her most recent Annual Report, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dame Sally Davies, makes clear the promise of genomic medicine and science for the UK. In Generation Genome, Dame Sally notes the importance of holding patient data securely and of standards to protect from inappropriate disclosure. She also says that "the emphasis on confidentiality must be balanced against the interests of other family members and broader society, especially where genomic information may prevent serious disease".

Dame Fiona Caldicott, as the NDG, has established authoritative principles to guide appropriate use of confidential patient data for a wide range of purposes associated with the delivery and improvement of care. Dame Fiona has been approached by the genomics and genetics community to help them think through how these principles, such as the principle that there should be 'no surprises' to patients about how their data has been used, may be applied in

the context of genetic and genomic medicine.

As none of the previous NDG Reviews specifically considered these challenges in detail, we have been undertaking some work to examine the issues in collaboration with others. As a panel member, I have been supporting Dame Fiona in this work. This work has been very much an attempt to help the genomics and genetics community move forward and is not, at this point, a policy position or official advice from the NDG.

A key challenge we've looked at is whether it is necessary for genetic and genomic data about individuals to be shared more widely than is traditional for medical data in order to ensure that people get the best diagnoses and care. We have heard that when a doctor or scientist gets a result of a genetic test for patient A, they won't necessarily know whether the result indicates a problem or not, whether possession of that gene variant by that person might contribute toward disease or if it could indicate what the best treatment might be for her. This is partly because there are so many possible gene variations and partly because the significance of a variation for an individual can depend upon other variables. We are nowhere near having seen or understood them all. So where should a doctor start to help their patient?

One place is to look at the records of as many other patients as possible to see if anyone else has ever had the same test result, what their symptoms and other characteristics were, and what treatment they had. So to most effectively diagnose and/or treat patient A, a clinician might need to look at the records of patients B, C, D, E, F etc. This is a challenge to conventional understandings of medical confidentiality – a doctor would not normally be looking at the personally identifiable patient data of people they were not treating. Our thinking has principally been around this challenge. If doctors and scientists need to access data about others to give the best care to the patient in front of them, how can this happen in a way that patients can be comfortable with and maintains trust in a confidential health service?

We've come up with some [suggestions for next steps in the paper we have published today](#). Crucial will be exploring with the relevant patient population how acceptable they consider such use to be. While the opportunities may not always exist within clinical practice for an in-depth conversation, if time and space is made for such a discussion/dialogue outside a clinical setting, then do people consider this to be a reasonable use of personally identifiable patient data? If so, then how can awareness of this use be raised to the point that patients in general would not be surprised to learn of it? How do we move toward it being a general expectation?

If it were established that access to personally identifiable patient data by other health care professionals, to help them understand genetic variants for the benefit of the care received by all, was seen by patients to be both reasonable and expected, then there are various ways in which such 'reasonable expectations' might be related to existing Caldicott and legal principles. It also relates to other work on 'reasonable expectations' being undertaken by the NDG and her panel.

We are not the only people looking at this, we know that the genetics and genomics community, NHS England, the CMO, Genomics England and others are also doing this. We look forward to playing our role in ensuring that patient confidentiality is protected consistent with patient expectation and at the same time genetic data may be used to support and improve the delivery of care. That doesn't have to be a zero sum game.