

First Minister calls for flexibility from EU27 to avoid 'catastrophic no deal'

In his second meeting with the European Chief Negotiator, the First Minister will reiterate that while the Welsh Government supports continued participation in the Single Market and customs union, the UK government's white paper should open the door for the start of serious negotiations.

The First Minister will also meet Sir Tim Barrow in Brussels, the UK Permanent Representative to the EU, and deliver a keynote speech at the European Policy Centre. During his address, the First Minister will restate the Welsh Government's Brexit priorities, consider the UK government's negotiating position and reflect on how the UK and the EU 27 can work together to secure a mutually beneficial Brexit deal.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, the First Minister said:

"While the Prime Minister refuses to admit that her ill-judged red lines are a thing of the past, she has – at long last – set out a vaguely credible negotiating position.

"The UKG White Paper advocates partial participation in the Single Market and continued participation in a Customs Union by any other name. There are many flaws in the proposals and far too many questions remain unanswered. However, I believe it is a basis on which more serious negotiations can now start.

"I urge the EU27 to show an element of flexibility to avoid the catastrophic 'no deal' scenario. The need for such co-operation is brought into sharp focus by the US administration's protectionist attacks on the UK and EU steel industry. A clear demonstration that the UK and the EU share core values and core interests.

"By stepping over the red lines and working together I believe we can reach an agreement that provides the basis for a long-term economic relationship."

First Minister sets out legislative

priorities

The Welsh Government will introduce new legislation to end the physical punishment of children in Wales. The bill will be part of a package of measures to ensure children have the best start in life and provide support to parents.

A bill will also be brought forward to establish duties of quality and candour in health and social care. This will place statutory obligations on all health organisations in Wales to be open and transparent and will ensure lessons are learned and improvements made where necessary. A new independent body will be created to give people a stronger voice for their experiences of health and social care services.

The government will bring forward a local government bill, which will include reform of local authority electoral arrangements, including reducing the voting age to include 16 and 17-year-olds.

The way animals are treated is an important reflection of society and over the next 12 months, a bill will be introduced to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses on welfare grounds.

The government will also introduce a bill to make Welsh law more accessible. The Legislation (Wales) Bill will be the first major step towards achieving a clear and well-organised statute book.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“The year ahead will be one of the busiest for us in legislative terms since Wales gained primary law-making powers.

“Making our statute book ready for EU exit is a big challenge for the Welsh Government and the National Assembly but we must not let this limit our ambitions. We will keep driving forward progress and delivering for the people of Wales.”

In addition to the Welsh Government’s legislative programme, the National Assembly will be asked to undertake a substantial programme of correcting regulations under the EU (Withdrawal) Act between October and March in preparation for EU exit.

Welsh Government working with DECA on

plans for second Welsh Advanced Manufacturing and Research Institute

The Economy Secretary confirmed that following a meeting of the Deeside Enterprise Zone on 13th July, the Welsh Government has declared its intention to work with the Enterprise Zone Board and the Ministry of Defence led by the Defence Electronics and Components Agency (DECA), to develop a proposal that would see Wales' second AMRI situated on MOD land adjacent to the Deeside Industrial Park Interchange.

Wales second AMRI follows the first in Broughton which is currently under construction and due to open by the end of 2019.

Speaking ahead of his visit to the Farnborough Air Show, Ken Skates said:

"News that DECA are keen to work with us to develop an AMRI on Deeside is incredibly positive and exciting, particularly given DECA's prominence as a world leader in the test and repair of avionic and electronic component support services.

"Both I and the Deeside Enterprise Zone are hugely encouraged that the MOD supports, in principle, the use of such a prominent and accessible piece of land at the gateway to North Wales for this exciting project, and I am delighted to announce this as I travel to Farnborough to celebrate Wales' thriving and successful aerospace sector.

"In developing our plans for Wales' second AMRI we have listened carefully to the needs of business. As a result of that dialogue we intend to develop the second AMRI as an open access centre, which will include a real focus on skills development across the advanced manufacturing & materials and technology sectors. Delivering everything from apprenticeships right through to postdoctoral research it will be a real jewel in North Wales' crown.

"I am confident the second AMRI in Wales will be of huge benefit to companies across North Wales, including in the aerospace sector, and I look forward to attracting significant high value inward investors to the region, many of whom are already showing a keen interest."

Speaking before attending the Farnborough Air Show where DECA are exhibiting, Geraint Spearing, Chief Executive, Defence Electronics & Components Agency said:

"Following the announcement in November 2016 that DECA and its industry partners BAE Systems and Northrop Grumman would become the

global hub for F-35 component repair, I am delighted to be able to support Welsh Government, in principle on behalf of MOD, in taking forward their proposed plans for a second AMRI at DECA.

“I am also tremendously proud that, should this proposal proceed, we will be able to continue DECA’s commitment to growing apprenticeships and high-end manufacturing skills now and in the future supporting local, regional and national job sustainment, Welsh Government’s advanced manufacturing and skills strategies and the UK Government’s Prosperity Agenda.”

The Economy Secretary is visiting Farnborough to meet key players from the Aerospace Sector and celebrate the successes of companies based in Wales.

While at the show he will meet representatives of a range of Aerospace companies and organisations including Raytheon, Thales, Dennis Ferrati, Otto Fuchs and DECA.

The Economy Secretary will also visit the Qatar Airways Stand who have recently begun daily direct flights between Cardiff and Doha.

These, along with the direct Manchester flights serving North Wales, are opening up tourism and business links between Wales and vibrant markets in the Middle East, Australia, New Zealand China and India.

Expert group to consider improvements to residential leasehold in Wales

Groups representing different perspectives on leasehold, including residents groups, housebuilders, advice services, and housing professionals will come together next week in a task and finish group to consider a number of issues:

- failings in the leasehold system in Wales: how they impact on leaseholders, and recommendations to address these
- advising on production and dissemination of materials to better explain how leasehold works, guidance and relevant training for all those involved in buying or selling leasehold property;
- proposals for a voluntary code of practice for management agents
- options for freehold homeowners on private estates to challenge estate charges.

Rebecca Evans said:

“We have seen widespread criticism of poor practice in the use of leasehold in Wales. We will not support practices which have a

negative impact on homeowners, and I have already taken action to prevent the use of leasehold in new build houses in Wales.

“In terms of where we go next, these are complex issues, and I have asked a wide range of interested parties to advise me so that I can take well thought through and appropriate steps to address the wide and varied concerns that have been raised with me.”

The group includes the Federation of Private Residents Associations, the Homebuilders Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing and has been convened for up to two years. It is anticipated that the Minister will receive a report from the task and finish group in summer 2019.

Further relaxation of Glastir obligations to help farmers during prolonged dry weather

Farmers and land owners have recently reported challenges in soil tillage and the increased risk of crop failure due to the current dry spell.

There will now be a blanket derogation on the establishment of root crops until 15 August. Although contract holders do not need to contact RPW, farm records such as activity diaries must be updated.

Alternatively, contract holders can request to not undertake the root crop option for 2018. In these circumstances, it will not contribute towards the 2018 payment but no penalties will be applied for not delivering the option either. Claimants must request this derogation in advance either in writing or through RPW online.

On unsprayed Spring Sown cereals, current rules prevent farm businesses from harvesting before 1 August or until 14 weeks after sowing (whichever is later). A blanket derogation will now allow harvesting to commence from 15 July. Again, contract holders do not need to contact RPW but farm records must be updated.

For contract holders with hay meadow options, a derogation has already been given to allow them to cut before the 15th July. Contract holders do not need to contact RPW although farm records must be updated.

Farmers and land owners experiencing difficulties in meeting other Glastir options or have animal welfare issues, such as availability of water for livestock, are advised to contact RPW immediately for further consideration on a case by case basis.

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, said:

“The prolonged period of dry and hot weather has been a real challenge for farmers across Wales.

“I want us to be able to provide flexibility to them and I am pleased to be able to announce further temporary relaxations to Glastir obligations. These will not only support farmers to mitigate the impact of the dry period but enable them to continue delivering their Glastir commitments.”

Full details of the derogations and advice can be found on the [Glastir pages](#).