

Economy Secretary to hold Brexit trade talks with North Wales Businesses

Business leaders from some of North Wales' most prominent exporters will give their views on the challenges and opportunities presented by Brexit. Joining Airbus will be Deeside Cereals, Halen Môn, Plas Farm Foods, Qioptiq, Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics and Silverlining Furniture Group.

The latest statistics show over 60% of Welsh exports worth nearly £10billion currently go to EU countries.

Taking into account the 70 plus countries with Free Trade Agreements that the UK has access to through its membership of the EU's Customs Union, nearly three in every four pounds earned by Welsh businesses from overseas sales currently depends on our relationship with our EU partners.

The Welsh Government wants to see continued access to the Single Market and participation in a customs union after Brexit.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

"The UK leaving the EU will see the biggest change to our international trading status for a generation. Welsh exports are a key part of our economy, providing jobs and investment and this must not be threatened by Brexit.

"This is why I am again meeting with business leaders from some of Wales' most prominent exporters to listen to their views on the opportunities and threats posed by Brexit.

"Events such as this are part of the Welsh Government's drive to protect and grow our economy. By listening to the needs of business and relaying these concerns to the UK Government, we are making the argument for a deal that can work for our economy. The Prime Minister has a duty to make sure we have a sensible Brexit that allows Welsh businesses to continue to export to the EU, our biggest market, without any barriers, extra costs or new taxes.

"The event will also provide a chance from us to hear first hand from business about the what they see as the opportunities of Brexit, and this will help shape how we build on and progress our ongoing work to grow Welsh exports.

"We will keep doing all we can but what we urgently need now is clarity from the UK Government on the type of Brexit deal they want. It is only this can provide certainty for businesses and allow them to plan for the future."

Ban on microbeads comes into force today

The ban will make it an offence to manufacture or supply any rinse-off personal care product which contain the microbeads.

A microbead is a water-insoluble solid plastic particle of up to 5mm in size, too small to be filtered out in sewage treatment systems. An estimated 680 tonnes of plastic microbeads have been used in personal care products in the UK every year, billions of which end up in the sea. The tiny beads accumulate because they do not biodegrade and are considered impossible to recover once released.

Plastic microbeads have been added to a variety of personal care products for many years, including hand cleansers, face scrubs, toothpastes, shower gels and cosmetics.

The policy to ban microbeads in cosmetic products has gained support from the general public, as well as from the cosmetics industry itself. The legislative ban will ensure a level playing field and consistency in the definition of a "microbead", so that all relevant products are free from microbeads.

The Minister for Environment, Hannah Blythyn, said:

"I'm pleased to introduce this ban in Wales, which will reduce the amount of plastics entering our seas and prevent further harm to our marine life.

"Microbeads in rinse-off products are unnecessary and there are suitable alternatives which do not have negative impacts on the environment. The ban will provide confidence to consumers that the products they buy will not endanger sea life.

"2018 is Wales' Year Of The Sea and earlier this month I signed the UN Clean Seas pledge. We're taking action to reduce plastic pollution in Wales, such as developing water refill points at key communities along our Wales Coast Path.

"We want to be an example to other countries around the World so that together we can reduce the dangers of plastic to sea life."

Peter Davies, Chair of the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group, said:

“Evidence shows the damage plastic microbeads can cause the marine environment, as well as their potential risk to food security and human health.

“I’m delighted to see this legislation come into force today, which is an important step towards eliminating the danger to sea life from plastic pollution.”

National Armed Forces Day is our chance to say “thank you” – First Minister

The First Minister said:

“I am honoured this event to celebrate our Armed Forces is taking place in Wales.

“We have a proud history of military tradition here and National Armed Forces Day is an opportunity to mark our debt and gratitude to veterans of previous conflicts in our nation’s history.

“2018 is a particularly important year as we mark the centenary of both the end of the First World War and the formation of the RAF.

“Today is a special day when we can join together to offer our support, and honour our present service men, women and reservists, and remember the valiant service of those who have served in past conflicts.

“The occasion is also an opportunity for the younger generation to learn and appreciate the sacrifices made by our Armed Forces so that have the freedom we enjoy today.”

The Welsh Government is a major funding partner, supporting Conwy County Borough Council to deliver National Armed Forces Day 2018.

Brilliance of the Seas basks in the Anglesey sunshine

The Royal Caribbean's 'Brilliance of the Seas' is a 90,090-ton, 2,112 passenger capacity cruise ship, with passengers mainly from the USA.

Tourism Minister, Lord Elis-Thomas had the opportunity to step on board the ship to meet with the crew and captain and explore how Wales can further increase its share in the lucrative cruise sector.

The cruise ship market has been identified as growth market for Wales. In 2016 the cruise industry was worth an estimated £7 million to the Welsh economy.

There are 103 planned cruise calls across Wales in 2018, a year on year increase of 15%. Holyhead will welcome 53 of these calls – an increase 30% from 2017.

The Welsh Government and Cruise Wales have been working in partnership with Local Authorities and Ports on a marketing programme for Wales as well as improving what we have to offer in Wales for the cruise market.

Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“Today has been an excellent opportunity to see how a cruise ship such as the Brilliance of the Seas operates and look at the opportunities these cruise calls present for the wider economy of Wales. The growth of the sector is testimony to the collaborative work between public and private sector partners, working closely with the cruise liners to ensure that Wales is developing the right infrastructure and products which will appeal to their customers. I'm sure the passengers will have had an excellent time exploring the variety and quality of what Wales has to offer and we look forward to welcoming more ships to Wales during 2018.”

In order to develop the cruise sector, the Port of Holyhead are developing their infrastructure with a new multi user berth which will allow larger cruise vessels (up to 365m) to berth. This work is being done with advice from the Royal Caribbean on the berth design.

“The economic benefits the cruise industry brings to Anglesey and North Wales are hugely important,” added Anglesey's Major Projects and Economic Development portfolio holder, Councillor Carwyn Jones.

“Anglesey Council is pleased to be leading the North Wales Regional Cruise Project, and support via the Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF) has helped us attract many more cruise ship passengers

to the region.

“Our annual cruise ship programme is going from strength to strength. We’ll welcome 53 cruise ships to Anglesey this summer, compared to 43 in 2017; bringing around 30,000 visitors and crew to the region. We will continue to market North Wales as a unique destination, build on our success and cement Holyhead’s position as one of the UK’s premier cruise ports.”

The cruise industry is also supported by the Destination Anglesey Partnership, where key private sector representatives collaborate with the public sector to maximise benefits.

[Health Secretary welcomes week-long NHS 70 celebrations](#)

He also reflected on Wales’ role in shaping the NHS of today and set out how the Welsh Government aims to ensure the NHS in Wales continues to provide high-quality healthcare, free at the point of delivery, when it reaches its 100th birthday and beyond.

Since it’s creation in 1948 by Ebbw Vale MP Aneurin Bevan, Wales has played a key role in the development of the NHS. Following devolution Wales has also led the way across the UK in a number of areas, like introducing an organ donation opt-out system, now being adopted by other home nations.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething said:

“It’s a great honour to be the Health Secretary during the NHS 70 celebrations, here in Wales where the NHS was born. I am looking forward to celebrating our much loved NHS alongside the dedicated, hardworking staff who truly make the service what it is today. It is an opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved since 1948 and also to remember the core principles of the NHS.

While much may have changed since 1948, the words of NHS founder Aneurin Bevan still ring true today as they did 70 years ago,

“No society can legitimately call itself civilised if a sick person is denied medical aid because of lack of means.”

As well as an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the NHS, Mr

Gething said the 70th birthday was also an opportunity to look to the future.

“The Welsh Government’s long-term plan for the future of health and social care in Wales, A Healthier Wales, focuses on providing more joined-up services, in community settings – removing many of the current frustrations expressed by those both using and working within the system.

“In the future people will only go to a general hospital when it is essential. The intention is to create even better care locally, with support and treatment available across a range of community-based services. Fundamental change is needed to ensure a sustainable future and to ensure the NHS in Wales can remain true to that core value, born in Wales 70 years ago, to provide free healthcare for all.”

A number of events are being held across Wales to celebrate NHS 70 and the Health Secretary along with the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, will be attending a number of those.

The centrepiece of the celebrations, on the eve of the birthday (4 July), will be a thanksgiving service at Llandaff Cathedral for the NHS attended by HRH, the Prince of Wales who will be greeted by current and past NHS staff from across Wales, as well as Aneira Thomas, the first person born in the NHS.