

Work underway on Cardiff Transport Interchange

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates was joined by Cardiff Council Leader, Huw Thomas, Network Rail Wales' Route Managing Director (Acting), Bill Kelly, and Chief Executive of Rightacres Property Company, Paul McCarthy on a visit to the site.

The Metro Delivery Partnership has been established to drive forward progress of Cardiff's Integrated Transport Hub, which includes both the Bus Station, upgrading the Central Station and improving access for bicycles, pedestrians, cars etc.

And it has been further cemented by a collaborative working agreement, signed by the Welsh Government, Cardiff Council, Network Rail and developer, Rightacres, to help ensure a co-ordinated and partnership led approach to delivering a modern and integrated metro system for South Wales.

The Welsh Government recently acquired the site for the new Interchange from Cardiff Council for £15m, including the rights to the original design, transport analysis, ground conditions, utility information and architectural principles.

The new Transport Interchange will be much more than just a bus station and will include 300 apartments specifically designed for the rental market, 80,000 sq. FT of Grade A office space and related car parking. The bus station itself will include 14 stands for buses and coaches. The project is scheduled to complete by mid-2021.

The bus station and interchange is just one element of the wider hub. Others developments include:

- New offices, residential and leisure facilities in the Central Quay area
- Improvements to and around the Cardiff Central Station to improve access for pedestrians, train and Metro passengers;
- Increased space for Metro lines;
- Bringing coach services back into Cardiff city centre;
- Increased space for coaches, car parking, a new bicycle hub in Central Quay and 1000 cycle spaces, south and north of the railway line.
- Increased passenger capacity at Cardiff Central Station to make it a fitting gateway to the capital city of Wales.

Economy and Transport Secretary, Ken Skates said:

"I am pleased that following the Welsh Government's acquisition of the Interchange Site, we have been able to move quickly to the start of construction on this vital project.

"As a Welsh Government we are committed to creating modern,

integrated metro networks that put users right at their heart. Working with our partners we want to provide world class, accessible public transport that encourages the modal shift we need and sparks inclusive economic growth across wider geographical regions.

“The Cardiff Central interchange is key to our wider vision for the South Wales Metro and we are proud to be working with Cardiff Council, Network Rail and Right Acres, under the terms of our newly agreed collaboration agreement, to make it a reality.

“I am proud that Welsh Government involvement in this partnership is helping to deliver solutions that are firmly focussed on economic growth, and I am confident this will help attract wider investment. It is a model I’m keen to explore in other areas of Wales, too.”

Leader of Cardiff Council, Cllr Huw Thomas said:

“By working together, all of the partners are now in a position to move this project forwards. A huge amount of work has taken place since last May to ensure this development can be built on a fully commercial basis, and through the Welsh Government’s involvement we can now secure Grade A offices as part of the final mixed-use scheme. This gives us an excellent opportunity to secure the major inward-investment project that we have all been working towards for some time.”

Bill Kelly, acting route managing director for Wales and Borders, said:

“I was proud to sign the Metro Delivery Partnership agreement. The railway helps to connect people, businesses and communities, as well as supporting economic growth.

“We will continue to work with the Welsh Government and other partners to deliver for passengers and the people of Wales.”

£4.7m funding boost for Holyhead

The funding will support the construction of new business units in Penrhos and the reconstruction of Holyhead’s historic Market Hall.

The £3.9m development on the former Heliport site of Penrhos Industrial

Estate will provide more than 2,800m² (30,000 square feet) of office, light industrial and storage space for businesses and will support Anglesey's growing low carbon energy sector.

Led by Ynys Môn Council, the project is funded by £2.3m of EU funds in a joint venture with the Welsh Government, with £1.5m of investment provided by Economy Secretary Ken Skates.

Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford said:

"This investment will help ensure Holyhead has suitable infrastructure in place to enable businesses to flourish in the growing low-carbon sector and create prosperity for North Wales"

Holyhead's historic Market Hall will receive more than £818,000 to complete its redevelopment into a modern information, business and community centre, housing the town centre library. The investment includes more than £570,000 of EU funding and builds on more than £860,000 of Welsh Government investment so far in the Market Hall project, which is being led by Ynys Môn County Council. This investment is part of the Welsh Government's £110m Building for the Future Fund.

Building for the Future is supported by £38m from the European Regional Development Fund and £16m from the Welsh Government's own targeted match fund. The programme will support business growth, create employment and increase footfall in town centres.

Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans said:

"Building for the Future is regenerating town centres and surrounding areas in Wales by refurbishing or redeveloping derelict or under-used land and buildings and bringing them back to life.

"The redevelopment of the Market Hall will create an exciting new resource in the centre of town and contribute to work to regenerate the town centre."

Economic Development and Major Projects portfolio holder Councillor Carwyn Jones, added,

"We are determined to grow the local economy and create more job opportunities on Anglesey. That's why we're working hard to attract private sector projects, more investment and funding which will aid regeneration on several fronts.

"There are currently an unprecedented number of major private sector projects under development on Anglesey. We want to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place so that the Island

benefits from these exciting business opportunities. I'm grateful to both colleagues in Welsh Government and ERDF for working in partnership with us to provide these new business units and the exciting Market Hall project in Holyhead."

"The new Market Hall will preserve an important civic building and a significant piece of Holyhead's rich history. The refurbished building will also create a focal point for the local community and a meaningful space for its residents. It will also provide a home to a brand new library and serve as a hub to direct visitors to local tourism places of interest."

Wales joins project on residential leasehold reform

In March the Minister for Housing and Regeneration Rebecca Evans announced a package of actions to curb the inappropriate use of leasehold for new build houses in Wales and to improve transparency and understanding for those entering into leasehold transactions.

Working alongside the UK Government, the Law Commission project will also consider how to overcome barriers to wider use of Commonhold, which provides an alternative form of home ownership to residential leasehold.

Rebecca Evans said:

"There has been widespread criticism of poor practice in the use of leasehold in Wales, and I have been clear that the Welsh Government will not support poor practice that has a negative impact on homeowners.

"This is why we introduced new criteria for Help to Buy – Wales. Now developers must give a genuine reason for a house to be marketed as leasehold, and comply with new minimum standards for both houses and flats to be sold as leasehold through Help to Buy – Wales.

"I've been clear that I am not ruling out future legislation to make leasehold or Commonhold fit for the modern housing market. When I receive the Law Commission's report and our own research, I will set out our next steps.

"In the meantime, I continue to explore every avenue available to address the valid concerns being raised."

The [Law Commission's eight week call for evidence on Commonhold Law](#) (external link) is now open.

[£1.2m for Welsh Universities to crack the code](#)

The investment is on top of a £1.3m drive to connect Welsh pupils with coding, Cracking the Code, which was announced last year.

Research from 2016 showed the digital sector employs 40,000 people and is worth over £8.5 billion in turnover to the Welsh economy.

Cardiff and Swansea Universities will benefit from the funding, allocated by HEFCW, which will include £200,000 to support coding initiatives in schools, colleges and universities.

The Institute of Coding has been established by the UK Government to serve as a national focus for improving digital skills provision. It includes universities, businesses and industry experts including IBM, Cisco, BT and Microsoft.

The funding will pay for computers and associated equipment for Technocamps labs which provide hands on experience for teachers and learners on a range of coding activities and tools. It will also fund schools/business liaison officers, and the establishment of community engagement code clubs run by the National Software Academy.

The Cabinet Secretary will make the announcement at St Philip Evans Catholic Primary School, Cardiff, which runs a coding club.

Since announcing Cracking the Code progress has included:

- Over 200 teachers have undergone training in coding with further sessions planned.
- Coleg Meirion Dwyfor in partnership with BT Cymru and Bangor University's Widening Access Centres hosted an all Wales coding competition
- In 2017/18 Technocamps delivered 150 workshops in 85 primary schools across Wales to over 4,250 pupils and their 135 teachers. 40 workshops were delivered in 25 secondary schools to over 1,000 pupils and their teachers.

Kirsty Williams said:

"Code is everywhere and part of our everyday lives. Having world-class digital skills is essential and it is vitally important that

young people have the ability and knowledge to develop in this field.

“I’m pleased to announce that £1.2m is available for Cardiff and Swansea universities to take part in the Institute of Coding which will allow them to link with other universities, businesses and industries. Importantly the funding will also enable them to carry out work in the community, building further on the steps we have already taken to ensure coding is part of the learning process in our schools.”

David Blaney, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said:

“This is an excellent opportunity for the universities involved to be part of the influential consortium of businesses, professional bodies and universities, and to develop a recognised standard to meet the needs of the digital industry. We are excited to be able to fund the universities involved in order to give this development the status it deserves in Wales.

“The funding will develop coding activities for students and young people in Wales to help address any skills gaps. It will allow universities to run new and revised degree programmes in Software Engineering, Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity, with considerably increased opportunities to access work experience.

“This will have a significant impact on Wales’s ‘supply-chain’ of coders: from upskilling teachers and running hands-on computer science workshops to inspire young people, to delivering work-ready technical graduates. Through student STEM ambassadors, they will also have a role in changing the perceptions of computer science and breaking down barriers to participation, including providing more opportunities for women to participate in computer science.”

Professor Faron Moller, Director of Technocamps and Lead of the Institute of Coding Wales, said:

“With the pan-Wales Technocamps programme, and through delivering novel software engineering apprenticeship courses to full-time employees from companies throughout South Wales, Cardiff and Swansea Universities together represent a powerful force in Wales in addressing the national skills shortage in the digital economy workforce. We are excited at the prospects and new opportunities that will arise from being partners in the UK-wide Institute of Coding.”

Professor Stuart Allen, Head of School, Computer Science and Informatics, Cardiff University said:

“The Institute of Coding builds on the successful partnership between the University’s National Software Academy, Welsh Government and industry leaders, to address the national shortage of skilled programming and software engineering graduates. Its focus on developing skills and knowledge through hands-on experience on industry led projects is producing sought after graduates ready to step straight into careers as commercial software engineers.”

Minister sets out Welsh Government’s approach to parental alienation

There are occasions when one parent behaves in a way which creates anxiety in the child, so that it appears the child is opposed to living with or spending time with the other parent. This is often referred to as ‘parental alienation’.

The Welsh Government recognises parental separation affects many children and their families. Where it is handled well, the adverse impact on children is minimised.

To address this, the Welsh Government continues to place a firm focus on positive parenting and the provision of parenting support services are an integral part of the Families First and Flying Start programmes. Funding has been made available to up-skill the family support workforce, so they are better able to embed inter-parental support in their early intervention services for families.

Later today, the Minister will appear before the National Assembly for Wales’ Petitions Committee, where he will respond to calls that the Welsh Government should take specific actions to reduce the impact of parental alienation on children and their families.

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“The Welsh Government believes a child is entitled to a meaningful relationship with both parents following family separation where it is safe and in the child’s best interests. However, I am clear the welfare of the child should always be at the centre of our concerns.

“We recognise some parents can behave in a way that alienates the other from their child’s life, and that these behaviours can have a significant adverse impact on the emotional well-being of the

child.

“We view parental alienation not as a syndrome or a classification, but as a set of behaviours. The most important issue for us is that these behaviours, when they occur, are appropriately dealt with using our family and parenting support programmes and the existing regulatory and legal frameworks.”