

Caernarfon and Bontnewydd Bypass building stage underway

On a visit to cut the sod at the Cibyn Industrial Estate, the Minister said the scheme is a significant development for North West Wales which will relieve congestion and improve safety in the area.

The 9.8km bypass will be from the Goat roundabout on the A499/A487 junction to the Plas Menai roundabout around Llanwnda, Dinas, Bontnewydd and Caernarfon.

Construction of the bypass, which is being carried out in a joint venture by Balfour Beatty and Ruthin-based Jones Bros, could be completed by Autumn 2021.

Fencing the construction work extents and site clearance will take place shortly allowing the main earthworks operations to commence.

There will be local employment opportunities and placements for trainees, apprentices and graduates as part of the construction stage as well as a focus on local spend on materials and sub-contracts where possible. Meet the buyer events will be held in due course to encourage local people and companies to apply for work on the project.

Ken Skates said:

“I am delighted to mark the beginning of the construction phase on this significant infrastructure scheme in North West Wales.

“The Welsh Government is investing £135 million in the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass which will deliver a real step change in how people travel. This means journeys for motorists will be quicker and more reliable and traffic congestion on local routes will be reduced leading to improved active travel opportunities on which we are working with Sustrans and Gwynedd Council.

“This scheme can have a real positive impact on the area, both in the construction phase by providing local employment and training opportunities and after completion through improved connectivity for communities and better air quality. It will also be vital in delivering better links to tourist destinations.

“Alongside our plans for a third Menai crossing, the Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion Improvement scheme and proposals to remove the roundabouts at Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr on the A55, the construction of the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass is another fantastic example of how we, as a government, are investing significantly in delivering for the region.”

Actions to address the greatest public health challenge of our generation – obesity – announced

Called '[Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales](#)', the consultation outlines the actions to be taken to help people in Wales maintain a healthy weight.

The UK has one of the highest levels of obesity in Western Europe. In Wales, twenty seven percent of four-five year olds and sixty percent of our adults are overweight.

Being overweight increases the risk of developing major health conditions such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. It is also a risk to people's mental health leading to low self-esteem, depression and anxiety.

The proposals set out in the consultation have a strong focus on prevention and are supported by research and international evidence from Public Health Wales into what can help the people to be a healthy weight.

The evidence has informed the content of the plan which is broken into four themes:

- **Leadership and Enabling Change** – strengthening national and local leadership to deliver change through Local Health Boards, Local Authorities, their partners and with communities themselves.
- **Healthy Environments** – creating an environment that helps everyone to make healthier food choices and creating opportunities in daily life for people to be active. Including to legislate on price promotions, calorie labelling on foods eaten out of the home, banning the sale of energy drinks to children and to bring together a range of programmes to develop active environments across communities.
- **Healthy Settings** – ensuring our education, work and leisure facilities promote and provide opportunities for people in Wales to access healthy meals, snacks and drinks and be physically active. Including strengthening support for early years and schools settings to enable healthy eating and daily physical activity opportunities.
- **Healthy People** – providing the opportunities and inspiring people and communities to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. Including support for parents and families, focussing on the crucial first 1000 days and early years and to review delivery of the All Wales Obesity Pathway.

Vaughan Gething said:

“Too many people in Wales are overweight or obese.

“Our high rates of overweight four to five year olds is a matter of national concern. This government is not prepared to let a poor diet or physical inactivity be defining features in the lives of our children and young people.

“We know that many of us want to eat healthier or do more exercise. However, fitting this into our busy lives can appear to be an overwhelming challenge. Creating an environment where it is normal and easy for us all to eat well and be physically active can make a significant difference and nudge us to change our daily routines.

“We want to encourage people to manage their own health and wellbeing, to lose weight and to be active. The long term sustainability of the NHS is at stake.

“We want people in Wales to have long, healthy happy lives. Being a healthy weight is a central part of achieving that goal.

“Tackling the root causes of why people become overweight is complex; it will require intervention at every level. We are under no illusion – there is no quick fix or easy solution to this problem. The proposals outlined today are based on the best evidence available of what could work to turn the tide on obesity.

“This is an issue we simply cannot ignore, it is the greatest public health challenge facing our generation and I urge people to engage fully with this consultation.”

[Financial incentives to attract new teachers extended](#)

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The incentives, of up to £20,000 per student, aim to attract the best graduates into teaching priority subjects such as maths, chemistry, physics, computer science and modern foreign languages.

Iaith Athrawon Yfory, the incentive scheme of up to £5,000 to train to teach secondary education in Welsh, will also continue in 2019-20. *Iaith Athrawon*

Yfory can be applied for alongside the incentives for priority subjects, making the maximum incentive up to £25,000.

The highest value incentives are available to graduates undertaking Initial Teacher Education in the priority areas who hold a first class degree, Masters or PhD, with other incentives for graduates with 2:1 and 2:2 degrees.

The funding is for postgraduates starting Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses in the following subjects:

- Up to £20,000 for mathematics, physics, chemistry, Welsh or computer sciences
- Up to £15,000 for modern foreign languages
- £3,000 for graduates with a first-class degree, a Masters or a PhD to teach all other main secondary subjects and primary
- A £3,000 supplement for graduates with a first-class degree, a Masters or a PhD undertaking primary PGCE studies with subject specialism in English, Welsh, mathematics or science.

Kirsty Williams, said:

“Giving school pupils the best possible education means attracting the best teachers into the profession, especially in priority subjects where the demand for new teachers is highest.

“We are also extending the *Iaith Athrawon Yfory* incentives to help increase the numbers teaching Welsh and through the medium of Welsh, to help us achieve our aims in *Cymraeg 2050*.

“These incentives of up to £20,000, with an additional £5,000 available for Welsh-medium teachers, will help recruit the best teachers we can and support them on their career pathway. Maintaining a strong and skilled teaching workforce is essential to achieving our ambitions in our National Mission for Education in Wales.”

Further information on the incentives can be found at:

<https://www.discoverteaching.wales/teacher-training-incentives/>

Prime Minister gambling with nation's future – Jeremy Miles

With the Prime Minister facing the prospect of a heavy Commons defeat and the threat of a no deal Brexit increasing, the Counsel General also announced further funding from the European Transition Fund would be made available to help Wales prepare for the possibility of the UK crashing out of the EU.

The Welsh Government's white paper, Securing Wales' Future, sets out an alternative to the PM's deal, which would prioritise the Welsh economy and protect jobs and services.

We are continuing to press the UK government to work with us to secure a deal which provides the best possible outcome for the whole of the UK.

Jeremy Miles said:

"We are scheduled to leave the EU in just over 70 days and we have no agreed deal in place. We have been led to this cliff-edge by an inept government more interested in its increasingly-desperate attempts to hold its own party together than the national interest.

"The UK government has been playing dice with this country's future. It took 2 years to come up with the Chequers proposals – effectively the government's opening gambit on the long-term relationship – which should have been in place when we triggered Article 50 almost 2 years' ago.

"This was vital time lost posturing over red lines instead of developing a viable strategy and building coalitions of support, including those, like the Welsh Government and this National Assembly, which advocated a sensible withdrawal based on respect for the European Union and the vital interests of this country.

"There is no avoiding the serious reality of the difficult position we now face. No deal is a very possible outcome and as a responsible government we must do all we can to work with others to prepare and mitigate where possible.

"Through our European Transition Fund we have been able to help hundreds of Welsh businesses, as well as public service organisations and other partners, plan and prepare for the impacts

of Brexit.”

Finance Minister Rebecca Evans will today confirm 3 more projects have received funding from the £50 million European Transition Fund.

These are:

- The Police Partnership Resilience – £435,000 to support the police services’ preparations for Brexit. The funding would provide dedicated capacity and capability to support local resilience forums in planning and responding to adverse scenarios and civil emergencies, particularly in the context of a no deal scenario.
- ADSS (Association of Directors of Social Services) Cymru Brexit support – £150,000 for ADSS Cymru to provide professional advice and intelligence about the potential impact of Brexit on the delivery of social care in Wales.
- Preparations for successor arrangements to EU structural investment funds – £590,000 to support the implementation of a post-EU regional investment model for Wales. This includes external support for project development and evaluation of the preparations for a new multi-annual, multi-billion pound regional investment system. This work will help ensure that Wales has the strongest possible approach to secure full replacement funding and autonomy over successor arrangements for EU structural funds.

She said:

“As the threat of ‘no deal’ looms, we have focused our attention on bids which address immediate priorities in a no deal scenario.

“None of us wants to be in this position; but we will work to protect Welsh businesses, the public sector and our communities wherever possible from the worst impacts of a no deal situation should it arise.”

And Jeremy Miles added:

“We will find out soon how the UK government and Parliament intend to resolve this position. We have already called for the Article 50 deadline to be extended.

“The UK government has perplexed its friends, undermined our country’s interests, caused anxiety to Europeans in our community and exacerbated deep division among its own citizens. If the UK government cannot bring forward a deal that commands strong support then it should stand aside. The current chaos cannot continue.”

£1m for central Newtown business centre

Powys Council will receive £1m of Welsh Government Targeted Regeneration Investment funding towards the £3.8m project to refurbish the building.

Hannah Blythyn, Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister said:

“The project will modernise the building in the centre of Newtown, creating 2,500 square metres of flexible office space for smaller businesses to establish and grow in the centre of the town.

“We know there is a need for more good quality office space for businesses, and this investment aims to attract growing businesses and high value jobs to Newtown.

“The work will also improve the building’s energy efficiency, generate solar energy and offer charging points for electric vehicles.

“We are committed to using regeneration funding to revitalise areas and to promote economic growth that benefits our towns and communities. I look forward to seeing this investment bring jobs and businesses to Newtown.”

The Welsh Government’s flagship Targeted Regeneration Investment programme is providing £100m of capital funding across Wales over three years to support regeneration projects in town centres and neighbouring areas.

This funding is supported by estimated further investment of at least £60 million from other organisations and businesses, providing an overall boost of £160 million to communities all over Wales. This is part of the Welsh Government’s overall regeneration strategy, which will invest £800m between 2014 and 2023. This includes around £250m from the Welsh Government supported by more than £550m from other organisations and businesses.

Powys County Council Cabinet Member for Property, Councillor Phyl Davies said:

“The council is committed to strengthening the county’s economy and providing modern offices in Newtown our largest town is a key part of that strategy.

“Having modern flexible office accommodation will support local businesses and help create a vibrant economy in the heart of the

town. The Ladywell House project is a long term investment for the council and will generate income to support service delivery and we are grateful to Welsh Government for their support.”