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Welsh Government established the NICW to support independent, better informed advice on a longer-term strategy for infrastructure investment, which enshrines the goals and principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

It has been established as a non-statutory, advisory body to provide advice and recommendations to the Welsh Ministers on the economic and environmental infrastructure needs of Wales over five to thirty years. The Commission will also consider the interactions of these needs with 'social infrastructure', such as schools, hospitals and housing.

Economy and Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

"The calibre of candidates who came forward for this role through the public appointments process was high and I want to thank all those who took the time to express their interest

"I'm delighted to appoint a group of Commissioners with such expertise and experience. I look forward to receiving their advice and am convinced they will make a major contribution to Wales' well-being through improved infrastructure."

Economy and Transport Secretary Ken Skates had already appointed Mr John Lloyd Jones OBE, FRAgS, Hon FLI to the Chair of the Commission.

Mr Lloyd Jones said:

"I'm privileged to lead such a talented and capable group of commissioners. Our first meeting will be an opportunity to introduce ourselves to each other. After this, we look forward to making a substantial contribution to Wales' long-term infrastructure development."

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Funding green light for Wales International Coastal Centre

- Final sign off of funding for improvements to 11 'must-visit' destinations across Wales.
- Investment of £62 million in the tourism industry up until 2021.

This is the final project to receive the go ahead under a programme of tourism destination improvements across Wales.

The EU funding is being invested through the Welsh Government's Tourism Attractor Destination programme, led by Visit Wales, which aims to develop 11 must see destinations.

The new centre in Saundersfoot builds on previous EU funding for investment in Saundersfoot as part of an ambitious development programme.

The project is a transformational development for both Pembrokeshire and South Wales offering a high quality activity and events programme, with all-weather attractions and establishing Saundersfoot as a must see tourism destination for the region. It will establish new water activity venues and family activity facilities that complement and strengthen the Port's current leisure and commercial maritime operation.

The Wales International Coastal Centre will comprise of four linked developments: Marine Centre of Excellence and Coastal Storm Centre; National Events Deck; Ocean Square Heritage & Arts Centre; Coastal Schooner – historic tall ship recreation. Some of these developments are subject to planning.

The Wales International Coastal Centre is the final of 11 destinations to get the green light for funding. The Tourism Attractor Destination project will see £62 million investment in the tourism sector over the next three years, including £ 27.7 million of European funding.

Developments are well underway in all 11 destinations with the aim of all projects completing by February 2021. The other 10 destinations benefiting from this funding include Caernarfon; Holyhead; Pendine; Porthcawl; Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal; Llys y Fran; Vale of Rheidol; Colwyn Bay; Venue Cymru, Llandudno; and the Summit Centre, Merthyr Tydfil.

Minister for Culture Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“Our aim through the Tourism Attractor Destination programme is to focus efforts and investment on key projects in each region so we have a real impact on Wales' profile in this globally competitive market, this represents a huge funding boost for the sector, which will make a real difference to the products and experiences that Wales has to offer.

“The aim is for these destinations to develop as attractors and give compelling reasons for people to visit Wales or stay in Wales for a holiday. By attracting visitors to these key sites, the surrounding area will also benefit from further business investment and deliver key outcomes in terms of employment and regeneration.

“Tourism is one of our key sectors and generates £8.7 billion for the Welsh economy and employs 15% of the workforce. Our mission is to remain competitive in a very rapidly changing global market-place. Projects such as these will ensure that we can continue to compete on the world stage.”

The project will provide a significant boost to tourism in Pembrokeshire and the aim is to create a must see destination in Saundersfoot that will provide wet weather attractions and a high quality programme of events and activities throughout the year.

Bradley Davies, Commercial Manager of Saundersfoot Harbour, said:

“We’ve seen a big increase in footfall to the area since the completion of the earlier developments, and we look forward to bringing something completely new and different to visitors and locals alike.”

[New code to support rural schools comes into force](#)

The School Organisation Code has been revised to include a more detailed set of procedures and requirements that local authorities and other proposers must follow when putting together proposals to close a rural school.

For this purpose, the Code includes a designation of a rural school, based on The National Statistics Urban Rural Classification.

A list of schools in Wales that come under this designation is included in the Code.

In future, local authorities and other proposers will need to check whether a school is on the list and the further procedures and requirements apply. However, the presumption against closure is not retrospective, and doesn’t apply to proposals that are already in progress including those where the consultation has been published.

A presumption against closure does not mean that rural schools will never

close, however, it does mean that the case for closure must be strong and not taken until all viable alternatives to closure have been explored, including linking up with other schools under one governing body – otherwise known as federation.

The strengthened School Organisation Code forms part of a wider Rural Education Plan which also includes a Small and Rural Schools Grant that has already benefited over 370 schools in all local authority areas across Wales.

The Grant, which totals £2.5m a year for the lifetime of this Assembly aims to encourage innovation including the use of digital technology to combat the issue of professional isolation, and provides additional administrative support in schools where the headteacher has a significant teaching commitment.

The Grant also supports collaboration and federation with other schools – and where opportunities exist and there is local demand, the use of school facilities for community purposes.

Kirsty Williams said:

“Rural schools are at the heart of community life and key to our National Mission for Education. I want to make sure that we’re supporting pupils and teachers in rural areas and that all our young people, no matter where they live, receive the very best education.

“That’s why we have acted to strengthen the School Organisation Code, ensuring that councils and other proposers do everything they can to keep a rural school open before deciding to consult on closure.

“This doesn’t mean a rural school will never close but it does mean that all options and suggestions are on the table before a decision is made. This might include federation with other schools or increasing the community use of school buildings to make the school more viable.

“This is of course just one part of our Rural Education Action Plan which is already making a big difference through the Small and Rural School grant and the E-sgol project which aims to bring all schools in Wales into the digital age by introducing innovative teaching techniques.”

Minister announces Accreditation for Museum of Welsh Cricket during 30th Anniversary of the Scheme

The Museum has been awarded Full Museum Accreditation – making it the first fully accredited cricket museum in the U.K.

Opened in 2012, the Museum celebrates the long and proud history of cricket throughout Wales using a series of information panels, display cases and interactive media. Indeed, the latter saw the Museum win the Kieran Hegarty Award for Innovation at the 2014 Celtic Film and Media Festival for its use of archive images in a series of digital and film presentations.

During his visit the Minister saw how the Museum highlights key dates and personnel in the history of cricket in Wales, and celebrates the achievements of Glamorgan CCC. A special event is planned in the Museum during November in conjunction with The Royal British Legion to showcase the work which has been undertaken with local schools to commemorate those who fought, and died, during the Great War.

During his visit, the Minister also spoke to pupils from Ysgol Pencae, Cardiff, one of the many school groups welcomed by the Museum every year.

Andrew Hignell, the Museum's Curator and Archivist to Glamorgan CCC, said:

“We are delighted to have secured Full Accreditation status.

“It has been a long journey since we received the first tranche of grant assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Visit Wales, but it has been a very fruitful one.

“To be the first fully accredited cricket museum in the UK bears testament to the efforts of the loyal and dedicated team of volunteers who have tirelessly assisted with the care and conservation of the collection housed at Sophia Gardens and in store at Glamorgan Archives, the labelling and photographing of objects, plus creating a fully interactive catalogue of items which, in the not too distant future, will be accessible to visitors and online.”

The Museum has significantly expanded its public engagement activities over the course of the past few years. Together with staff in the Community Department at Glamorgan Cricket, the Stadium tour guides and others with Cricket Wales, the Museum will have welcomed over 12,500 young people to the Sophia Gardens ground during 2018. There are exciting plans to further raise the number of school visits, as well as projects using cricketing memorabilia to engage with people who have issues relating to well-being and mental

health.

Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“I’d like to congratulate the team at CC4 Museum of Welsh Cricket – and it was a pleasure to formally announce this Accreditation which makes this museum a very special place – and unique in the UK. Visitors to the Museum can learn more about the history of the game against the fabulous backdrop of the present day stadium – and also getting to play some cricket during their visit. The museum is a great way to inform and also inspire the future generation of players.”

The Accreditation scheme for Museums, now in its 30th year, is highly valued by museums, has been transformative for the sector and has brought many benefits. Having reached this important milestone, the scheme has been re-launched to be clearer, more streamlined and welcoming.