

EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)

The Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths and Environment Secretary, Roseanna Cunningham, in a joint letter to the Chancellor and Minister of State for Energy & Clean Growth, call for the UK Government to initiate immediate Ministerial discussions to determine successor long-term arrangements in line with the devolution settlements.

Under proposals laid out in their latest tranche of 'no deal' Technical Notices, the UK Government has proposed to replace the long-standing emissions trading arrangements – reached by agreement between all four administrations – with a UK wide carbon tax, without discussion with the Devolved Administrations at a Ministerial level.

First full day of new Wales and borders rail service contract starts today

This is the message from First Minister, Carwyn Jones who will be on Pontypridd station today to mark the first full day of the new Wales and Borders rail services.

At the launch, which sees the 15-year relationship with Arriva Trains Wales come to an end, the First Minister will talk of the historic and economic significance of the new contract.

He will say:

“This is an important moment for rail in Wales – indeed for devolution itself.

Led by Transport for Wales with our partners KeolisAmey this will be the very first 'made in Wales' rail service, designed and delivered by the Welsh Government

The opportunity to re-design and re-purpose our railway network in Wales is a once in a generation opportunity and I am confident that by 2033 it can be the best passenger rail service in the UK.

The chance to develop an integrated transport system that encourages economic growth and better supports our public services

is supported across all political parties, and the opportunities to develop Metro systems here in South East Wales, in the North East and around Swansea Bay are drawing attention from across the globe.”

He will also pay tribute to the people on the front line:

“It is important to understand that our bold ambitions will take time to bring to fruition and won’t be achieved overnight.

However, when I talk to the drivers, the guards, the maintenance crews or ticket hall staff across Wales I’m always struck by their enthusiasm and their belief in what our rail network can be in Wales.

We are lucky to have so many people, who come to work for a service every day, genuinely wanting to make it better – and who see in it the potential for growth.

We need to harness their ideas and make our railway the envy of the world.”

Speaking at an earlier event in North Wales, Transport Secretary Ken Skates outlined some of the many improvements passengers can expect to see in the next few weeks, months and years:

“With investment totalling almost £5bn of over the next decade and a half, our network will be transformed. We have committed £800m to deliver new trains across the network, which by 2023 will see 95% of rail journeys made on new trains. A further £194m will be put to improving the passenger experiences at our stations across the Wales and Borders network.

There is £738m earmarked to modernise the central metro lines, support the next phase of Metro and run more trains every hour. Transport for Wales rail services will offer 600 new jobs and 450 apprenticeships over the 15 year lifespan of the contract.

Passengers will enjoy the benefits of the introduction of smart ticketing across the network, and through the extension of free travel to under-11s with half-price fares for 16 to 18 year olds, they will see economic improvements also.

This is an exciting time for Wales, and we wish Transport for Wales every success in bringing about these transformational changes on our behalf.”

James Price, Chief Executive, Transport for Wales added:

“Transport for Wales has innovative plans to revolutionise transport across Wales and ambitions to create a rail service that puts customers first. Taking over the running of the Wales and Borders rail service is an important first step on an exciting journey of transformation that will also see the creation of the South Wales Metro.”

Kevin Thomas, Chief Executive, Transport for Wales Rail Services commented:

“Our customers, the people of Wales and border areas, deserve a rail service that matches Welsh Government’s vision. We know people have high expectations of the transformation that will happen in the coming years. We’re determined to win their trust and develop a rail service that exceeds their expectations.”

“A Welsh legal jurisdiction and a devolved justice system is inevitable” **Counsel General tells Legal Wales conference**

Making the law accessible is vital to enable citizens to understand their rights and responsibilities under the law – something that has become increasingly important since repeated cuts have been made to legal aid and to other services designed to advise those in need of assistance or representation.

Addressing an audience of legal professionals the Counsel General set out his plans to improve accessibility, through a series of initiatives. The first of these initiatives is the Legislation (Wales) Bill which will be introduced later this year. This Bill will set Wales on a new journey to develop clear, accessible codes of law – a first for the UK.

The Counsel General told delegates that the bill will be accompanied by a draft Taxonomy of Codes, which will aim to organise Welsh law into comprehensive codes by the subject areas devolved to Wales.

Moving on from the bill the Counsel General expanded on other initiatives in place to improve accessibility. He said:

“We are working with the National Archives whose role it is to publish Welsh laws to develop a clearer and more accessible system

of categorisation of law, prior to its future consolidation. This will enable us to organise the publication of legislation by subject matter, rather than by the date it is made, which will be a significant breakthrough.”

During his address the Counsel General discussed his intentions to re-launch the Law Wales website. He said:

“This site already serves a useful purpose but it remains a work in progress and its content is limited. I recognise that the content on the website falls short of people’s expectations, not least mine. If each of us as practitioners, legislators, academics, commentators and others in the Welsh legal community shared a small part of our experience and expertise, by producing content for Law Wales, this would have a huge impact. Collectively we can transform this asset from something that is little known and under used into a genuine public good for the people of Wales.”

Bringing his speech to a close the Counsel General commented:

“A process has begun to create a distinct legal infrastructure for Wales. This is a process that won’t stop. The process of making laws for Wales won’t stop, the divergence in laws between Wales and England won’t stop. The creation of a Welsh legal jurisdiction and the devolution of the justice system is inevitable.”

“Welsh Government here to support Refinitiv workers”- Ken Skates

The decision was taken by New York based private equity business Blackstone following its recent acquisition of the controlling share in parent company, Thomson Reuters, and is a devastating blow to the 300 highly skilled employees currently working at the Wrexham based finance business, formerly called Avox.

The Economy Secretary stressed that finding alternative employment for them was something his department were already actively pursuing.

He said:

“This is devastating news for not only for the skilled workforce,

who have won many plaudits for their professionalism and productivity, but also for their families and the many communities in and around Wrexham who are affected.

Yesterday's announcement caught everyone by surprise and my officials are meeting with the site management today to get clarity on the nature and timing of their decision. I expect the company to ensure those affected are properly supported and that it undertakes the 45 day staff consultation in accordance with its statutory obligations.

I have put my department into action immediately, looking to use our connections across the industry to help secure alternative employment for those currently working at Refinitiv as quickly as possible. This has proven to be successful elsewhere in Wales following job losses and my clear message to all those affected is that we will leave no stone unturned in our support.

As part of this, we have already contacted colleagues in the UK Government's Department of International Trade to enquire as to the recruiting plans of the many companies within the financial services industry operating in Chester and the surrounding area and are also in contact with our New York office for more intelligence on yesterday's announcement.

Should the decision to close the site be upheld following the 45 day consultation period our ReAct 3 team will be deployed. This programme provides a comprehensive package of support to individuals in Wales who are affected by redundancy.

This is an extremely difficult and uncertain time for all workers at Refinitiv and I can give them my absolute commitment that Welsh Government will do everything possible to help this skilled workforce find alternative employment following this extremely disappointing and sudden decision."

[Finance Secretary gives key note speech at 'EU funding post-Brexit' event](#)

The event which will be co-hosted by Julie James AM and Derek Vaughan MEP, will examine issues including how funding currently received from the EU should be replaced, how powers returning from the EU should be exercised in future, and how current arrangements which ensure a high degree of control by

the Welsh Government and its partners over the way the funding is used can be built upon.

Speakers will also include former Scottish Secretary, Michael Moore Director of Strategic Business Development at Tata Steel, Deirdre C Fox, and Chair of ABMU Health Board, Professor Andrew Davies.

Speaking before the event, the Finance Secretary said:

“Through our Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit paper we have called for every penny of the £370 million that Wales currently receives from the EU’ Structural and Investment Funds each year to be replaced by the UK government and added to the Welsh Government’s annual budget.

“We are best placed to lead on regional investment in Wales. Over almost 20 years we have built up the experience, working closely with the regions of Wales, businesses and communities, who know what they need and the kind of investment that would benefit them.

“We have networks across Wales and the machinery on the ground to effectively devise and deliver regional investment. Whitehall simply does not have and cannot replicate this.

“Just as the Welsh Government is best placed, working with partners, to provide an overarching Welsh policy, each region is best placed to identify specific priorities, challenges and opportunities in their places and for their people.”

The ‘EU Funding post-Brexit’ event will take place between 2:00 and 5:30 pm at the Energy Safety Research Institute, Swansea University Bay Campus.