

Counsel General calls for fair and effective Welsh justice system

He will argue that current arrangements are not fit for purpose and that policing and justice need to be devolved in order to address a “conundrum at the heart of the devolution settlement”.

The Counsel General’s vision is for a justice system which reflects the values and particular characteristics of Welsh society and embraces social and economic justice. He will also talk about what the justice system in Wales can do to increase fairness, equality and prosperity for all.

Speaking at the event organised by the Bevan Foundation, the Counsel General will refer to the justice system itself and the impact that non-devolved areas of policing and justice have on the delivery of public services in Wales.

Ahead of today’s event, Jeremy Miles said:

“The Welsh Government is fully committed to an equal and fair Wales, but achieving our vision of a just Wales requires fundamental change. The Commission on Justice in Wales chaired by former Lord Chief Justice, Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, has a vital role to play in shaping our future.

“I am concerned that the justice system of England and Wales is not fit for purpose and there is an arbitrary line between what is devolved and what is not. This means public services cannot be properly joined up and integrated to the detriment of the people of Wales, who deserve better.”

Green light for £3.5 million EU-backed low carbon energy storage initiative

The Smart Energy Storage Solutions Hub (SESS) scheme, led by the University of South Wales (USW), will work with businesses to drive innovation and develop new products, technologies and processes for the commercial market.

The hub, based at the university’s state-of-the-art Centre for Automotive and Power Systems Engineering (CAPSE), will benefit from £2.3 million of EU funding to collaborate with businesses in sectors such as low carbon, energy

and environment, advanced manufacturing and ICT.

The remainder of the funding will come from the university and industrial partners involved in the project.

Professor Drakeford said:

“We are committed to driving forward cutting-edge research in the low-carbon economy and collaboration between business and universities will help us achieve this.

“Reducing our carbon footprint is a key priority of the Welsh Government, helping Wales to realise its energy-efficiency potential and to become a major exporter of energy efficiency technology and know-how.”

Businesses will have access to the university’s specialist research facilities and academic expertise to help develop new products and processes, including in the automotive and energy fields.

Professor Julie Lydon, USW vice-chancellor, said:

“USW has extensive experience of working in collaboration with a wide range of external bodies in all sectors of the economy.

“CAPSE has an excellent reputation for expertise in the field of battery/energy storage research, on which the SESS operation will be based.

“The extensive range of knowledge available at USW will help SMEs involved in SESS to capitalise on our existing academic and research strengths and the resulting innovation will maximise the contribution of Welsh businesses to future economic growth.”

Brilliance of the Seas returns to Anglesey

Tourism Minister, Lord Elis-Thomas had the opportunity to step on board the ship during a visit in June to meet with Captain and crew 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. This year alone, Wales will have welcomed 100 cruise visits – which means over

51,000 cruise passengers from USA, Canada, France and Germany, to name but a few countries. It is also a significant upturn on 2017 year's figures which show a year on year increase of 15%. Holyhead will welcome 54 of these calls in 2018 – an increase of 30% from 2017.

Wales has attracted new lines such as Norwegian Cruise Line, Aida, Regent Seven Seas and Phoenix Reisen and work is ongoing to attract further cruise lines as well as retain the existing ones. Cruise & Maritime Voyages cruise line will continue to offer turnaround cruises in 2019 to the Mediterranean, following the second successful year of sailing out of Cardiff port, where 750 passengers boarded and disembarked the Marco Polo cruise vessel.

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.

In Fishguard port, through the Tourism Investment Support Scheme, Welsh Government has invested in a pontoon allowing larger cruise vessels to call. As a result, there is already an increase in passenger numbers for 2019 of 30%, including the arrival of the Aidabella cruise ship, with 2500 cruise passengers on board. This will be the largest ship to call in Fishguard so far.

The port of Holyhead is also to undergo change, with a new multi-use berth development under consideration. In Milford Haven, revised plans for a multi-million pound marina redevelopment, including new hotels, shops and restaurants, have been approved by Pembrokeshire County Council.

A key part of retaining calls is to develop and promote new onshore tour itineraries for passengers and showcasing more of Wales's attractions to cruise lines and ground handlers. A new tour, involving the architect of the Wales Millennium Centre has been developed for passengers arriving in Cardiff; and for passengers arriving in Fishguard, a Hwyl event featuring entertainment to showcase Welsh heritage & culture and been developed. In Holyhead, an adventure tour option is being offered to Zip World Forest Coaster.

Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

"I was delighted to have the opportunity in June 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.

It's great news that Anglesey is welcoming passengers again today. 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 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.”

Anglesey’s Major Projects and Economic Development portfolio holder, Councillor Carwyn Jones added:

“The economic benefits the cruise industry brings to Anglesey and North Wales are hugely important.

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.

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.

First £10m of Active Travel grants announced

As part of the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan Mid-Point Review 2018 more than £10m has been earmarked for individual projects and packages of local schemes the length of Wales.

All local authorities were invited to submit applications – one strategic scheme and one local scheme or package of local schemes per local authority. A total of 35 applications were received, including 16 applications for strategic schemes, and 19 applications for local schemes.

The Active Travel Fund will allow 11 strategic schemes and 13 local schemes across 18 local authorities to be designed or delivered this financial year.

Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This funding will create new active travel routes across Wales, connecting people’s homes to schools, jobs and their local community with the aim of encouraging more people to walk or cycle.

“I am allocating the first £10.36 million to local authorities across Wales for schemes to promote active travel, which supports our efforts as a government to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality, while building physical activity into people’s daily lives, delivering wider health benefits.”

Some examples of the projects include:

Flintshire

Strategic – Deeside Industrial Park – Active travel and bus infrastructure on Parkway, Deeside Industrial Park Zone 2 – £1,070,000

Local – Holywell town walking and cycling link – Phase 1 – construction of active travel path, Greenfield Valley – £697,000

Pembrokeshire

Local – Pembrokeshire active travel package – Fishguard / Goodwick – Town Centre SUP Link, Haverfordwest – Castle Lake Link, Narberth – Redstone Court to Rugby Club Link, St Dogmaels – County Boundary to the Moorings, Neyland – A477 Westfield Pill Bridge Crossing £493,000

Powys

Strategic – Newtown Bridge (the 3rd Crossing) – New active travel bridge over River Severn £500,000

Local – Powys Active Travel Programme – Presteigne Phase ii, Section 1 active travel improvements and Active Travel Newtown, Pool Road – £450,000.

£6.8million to improve performance at Betsi Cadwaladr

The £6.8million Welsh Government funding will be used to strengthen the Health Board’s delivery of planned and unscheduled care across all three hospitals, and drive further improvements to mental health and learning disability services.

Vaughan Gething said:

“In May I set out my expectations for the Health Board over the next 18 months, and made a commitment to provide more intensive support, including additional resources to quickly and efficiently deliver the improvements needed to the Health Board.

“Today’s funding forms part of that support. It will be used to set up stronger operational governance and accountability at the Health Board and to push forward financial improvements. I expect to see significant improvements for patients as a result, especially in planned and unscheduled care across North Wales.”

The Health Secretary added:

“This additional support comes as a new Chair prepares to take up his appointment next month. This marks a new phase in the Health Board’s improvement journey. The key focus remains on driving forward the work to deliver sustained change and ensuring the people of North Wales receive the health service they deserve.”