

How the UK Government is delivering its commitments to the people of Wales

The UK Government is delivering a stronger Wales, within a stronger United Kingdom, across a wide range of areas. We are working to tackle the challenges our country faces while building a United Kingdom that is fit for the future.

Stronger Economy and Global Britain: support a strong, outward looking Welsh economy

1) Support a trade and foreign investment policy that delivers for Wales

The UK Government is supporting businesses across Wales, and working with Welsh Government to attract maximum investment into Wales. In 2017-2018, UK Government supported 93% of the 57 Foreign Direct Investment projects into Wales, creating over 3,000 jobs. We worked with a range of stakeholders to create Qatar Airways' flight to Cardiff Airport, with over 44,000 passengers using the route in the first six months of operation. This is also expected to drive 1,500 tonnes of freight traffic over the year. UK Government has launched the Wales Portfolio in MIPIM in Cannes, showcasing six major capital investment projects to the biggest investors in the world. This was also a notable example of collaborative working between UK Government and numerous Welsh Local Authorities. We also work closely with UK Export Finance to provide support to businesses in Wales, and the Secretary of State has championed Wales around the Globe through trade missions to markets including Qatar, Japan and Hong Kong.

The Secretary of State for Wales champions Wales in his capacity as a member of the Board of Trade, and Chair of the FDI Sub-Group. He uses both positions to showcase Wales' expertise in a range of sectors, notably promoting companies and products in both South Africa and the USA. In August 2018, the Secretary of State visited South Africa alongside the Prime Minister. As part of that visit with two Welsh companies, Sure Chill and Hydro Industries, the Secretary of State created the Africa Consortium. The Consortium is a collection of companies who, linked through British Embassies in Africa, are collectively made aware of opportunities and to consider ways of joint working.

2) Secure UK Government infrastructure investment

Improving Wales' transport infrastructure is key to the future economic prosperity of Wales. That is why the UK Government is investing record amounts in Wales' railway infrastructure – over £1.5 billion into the Wales and Borders route between 2019 and 2024 – which will build a bigger, better railway for Wales, delivering improved journeys for passengers on the most advanced new trains. This includes the Great Western Mainline into South Wales, where our £5.7 billion investment in brand new Intercity Express Trains will cut journey times from South Wales to London by 15 minutes and offer 130 more seats per train than a typical High Speed Train. It will also, with the completion of Crossrail, reduce journey times between South Wales and Canary Wharf.

The UK Government's £50 million investment to upgrade the North Wales Coast Main Line will boost the region's transport links, maximising the benefits to be gained from the HS2 line between Crewe and London. HS2 will mean an economic transformation for the whole country and bringing HS2 to Crewe in 2027 – six years early – is a tremendous opportunity for North Wales to feel the benefits even sooner. The UK Government's £16.1 million contribution to upgrading the Halton Curve will also enable direct train services from North Wales to Liverpool for the first time in decades.

Last December, the UK Government delivered on its manifesto commitment to abolish the Severn Crossings tolls. This will help strengthen the links between communities and transform the joint economic prospects of South Wales and the South West of England, with a potential £100 million annual boost to the economy of South Wales alone.

The UK Government is also supporting investment in improving connectivity in Wales. Recently Cardiff and North Wales were awarded £6 million and £8 million respectively from the Full Fibre Networks Programme to help deliver the fastest and most reliable digital communication network available.

3) Support economic growth across Wales

The UK Government has laid the foundations for a stronger economy and is delivering for Wales. Wales has seen the highest increase in the employment rate of any region in the last year and there are 165,000 more

people employed in Wales than there were in 2010. Increasing the Personal Allowance is lifting 61,000 people out of income tax altogether and 1.4m people will have gained by an average of £183.

At the most recent Budget, we announced £120 million for the North Wales Growth Deal. We continue to support the Cardiff Capital Region to deliver their City Deal, into which we have invested £500 million, alongside £115 million into the Swansea Bay City Region Deal.

Local Growth Deals are a key part of our Industrial Strategy, delivering for the whole of the UK and in many sectors. For instance, the Cardiff Capital Region was promoted at MIPIM in Cannes and supported by UK government. The region has started to develop an investment pipeline and a new streamlined Investment Framework, which will prioritise the City Deal Fund into three areas: innovation and investment; infrastructure and; a Challenge Fund.

We have also continued to ensure that Wales remains a competitive place for investment in defence industries. In February, MoD Sealand was awarded a £500 million contract from the United States Department of Defense for the F35 programme. The UK Government has also recently signed a £250 million, 11-year contract to support the RAF's Shadow Aircraft fleet at Broughton, securing 200 jobs. This means that overall defence procurement in Wales has increased to £960 million, up from £946 million, in the last financial year.

EU Exit: ensure Wales' interests are fully represented as we leave the EU

We are working closely with departments across the UK Government and with the Welsh Government to ensure that the UK's exit from the EU delivers for all parts of the UK.

4) Ensure Welsh interests are fully represented in UK Government planning for all EU exit scenarios and future economic partnerships

The department is working to ensure the views of stakeholders the length and breadth of Wales feed into the Government's work on EU exit and its plans for a flourishing and prosperous Wales within a strong United Kingdom once we have left the EU. This includes through regular meetings of the Secretary of State's EU Exit Expert Implementation Panel. The Panel has recently been joined by representatives from Welsh local

authorities and the environment and food and drink sectors. Its remit has also been expanded to enable it to focus on wider issues around EU exit, including the implementation period and how common frameworks should be designed and implemented, as well as continue its discussions on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). Joint meetings of the Expert Panel and the Secretary of State's Economic Advisory Board also provide a useful platform for Members to feed views directly into the heart of Government decision making on EU exit.

We will continue to work with other departments to facilitate their engagement with wider stakeholders in Wales, building on the recent session with BEIS and HMT officials to explore views on the UK internal market post exit. We will also build on the engagement that has already taken place with stakeholders in Wales ahead of the consultation on the UKSPF.

The Office also provides support to Ministers and officials from across the UK Government in giving evidence to the Assembly. In April last year the Secretary of State for Wales gave evidence to the Assembly's Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee as part of its inquiry into the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill. In October the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union and the Minister of State for Trade Policy separately gave evidence to the Assembly's External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee on matters relating to the UK's exit from the EU.

5) Ensure legislation on EU exit reflects the interests of Wales and the UK

The department will continue to work with bill teams as they prepare key legislation to ensure the UK leaves the EU in an orderly manner. This includes continuing to work with DEFRA on the Agriculture Bill and Fisheries Bill as well as the upcoming Environment Bill to ensure they fully reflect Welsh interests and the Welsh devolution settlement.

Our close engagement with the other parts of the UK Governance Group, DEXEU and with the Welsh Government on the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill (now European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018) reached a successful conclusion with the National Assembly for Wales granting consent for the Bill on 15 May 2018. This was supported by an intergovernmental agreement and Memorandum on the Bill and the

establishment of common frameworks signed on 25 April 2018 by the UK Government and Welsh Government.

The office has worked closely with other Government departments and the Welsh Government to deliver the large amount of secondary legislation needed to ensure a functioning statute book on exit day. Over the next year we will bring forward an Order in Council under section 109 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 to make necessary modifications to Schedules 7A and 7B of that Act in light of EU exit. We will work constructively with the Welsh Government as we deliver this. The draft Order will need to be approved by Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales.

United Nation: promote and strengthen the Union, and Wales' role within it

6) Ensure a strong Welsh voice at the heart of the Union

The Office will continue to act as the centre of expertise within Government on the Welsh devolution settlement. Ministers and officials provide a strong voice for Wales within Whitehall, engaging with their counterparts in other departments to contribute to the development of UK Government policy at an early stage so that any implications for Wales are actively considered.

More widely, we work ensure that Wales is at the centre of departments' thinking on the Union. As part of this we work closely with other departments as they update their Devolution Engagement Plans, ensuring that plans appropriately champion Wales' interests.

We will also continue to co-ordinate UK Government activity in Wales including Ministerial visits which demonstrate and support the Government's commitment to Wales and to the Union. Over the past year this has included the Environment Secretary's attendance at the Royal Welsh Show in July, and the Chancellor's visit to Swansea in September.

7) Ensure the current Welsh devolution settlement works effectively.

We are continuing to ensure that the devolution settlement works effectively in the interests of people in Wales and the rest of the UK. The reserved powers model of Welsh devolution, put in place by the Wales Act 2017, came into force on 1 April 2018, alongside the majority of new

powers devolved under that Act. To support departments in working with the new settlement, we published a new Devolution Guidance Note 'Parliamentary and Assembly Legislation Affecting Wales'. Following publication of this guidance, we held seminars across Whitehall and in Wales to ensure colleagues fully understand how to work with the Welsh devolution settlement.

We transferred the remaining Minister of the Crown functions in devolved areas through the Welsh Ministers (Transfer of Functions) Order 2018 which was made on 23 May. We also delivered our commitment to extend the borrowing powers of Welsh Ministers by enabling them to issue bonds to borrow for capital expenditure.

8) Support Welsh cultural interests in Wales, across the UK and globally

We are continuing to champion the Welsh language and are working with other departments to ensure there is Welsh representation on UK public bodies. The Office worked closely with DCMS on the appointment in July of Rhodri Williams, Owen Derbyshire and Anita George as trustees to the board of S4C and the reappointment of Hugh Hesketh-Evans in November. These appointments help ensure the continuing strong governance of S4C and that the interests of Welsh language and culture remain paramount in S4C's operation.

The Office will continue to support Welsh cultural events throughout the UK. For the third year running the Office played a pivotal role in Wales Week in London, which took place from 23 February to 9 March. We hosted four successful events with established and new partners. The annual St David's Day event at 10 Downing Street was a key success, allowing the Office to engage with stakeholders across a variety of sectors.