

# Press release: Welsh Secretary: UK Government is investing in Swansea's infrastructure for the long term

- Alun Cairns calls for swift progress in the delivery of Swansea Bay Region City Deal during keynote speech in the city
- UK Government announces £800,000 new investment in Swansea University's SPECIFIC centre for UK's first energy positive office
- Welsh Secretary to visit city centre gallery as part of fact-finding visit for the race for the UK City of Culture 2021 title

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will call on all partners to "pull together and make the Swansea Bay Region City Deal vision a reality" when he addresses delegates at the Policy Forum for Wales event in Swansea today (26 October).

Mr Cairns' speech forms part of a wider visit to Swansea where he will also announce a £800,000 UK Government backed investment in Swansea University's SPECIFIC Innovation and Knowledge Centre.

The funding, delivered by Innovate UK, will be used to construct the world's first energy positive office, capable of generating more energy than it uses.

In March this year, the Secretary of State stood alongside the Prime Minister and local partners to sign the Swansea Bay Region City Deal.

It is a deal which is expected to deliver more than 9,000 jobs and £1.3 billion of investment through 11 targeted projects which will see Wales placed front and centre of global science and innovation.

Seven months on since the signing of the agreement, Mr Cairns will take to the stage at the Marriott Hotel to urge partners to now "push forward to delivery" so that the people of Swansea can start to "see the tangible benefits and investment being made."

During the speech, he will outline how Swansea is benefitting from the UK Government's prioritising of its infrastructure investment. The recent introduction of the innovative bi-mode Intercity Express trains will benefit passengers travelling across South Wales and the Government is also looking at making station improvements in Swansea and at ways to deliver direct services from London through to Pembroke Dock.

## **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

These are exciting times for the Swansea region – not only because the dynamism of the projects that will be delivered through the City Deal, but also through the other investments that are being made in infrastructure that will stand the test of time.

The UK Government is ambitious for Swansea. That is why we are empowering the area to make the decisions to support the city's own economic growth, boost employment and attract investment.

We need to seize the opportunities that are coming Swansea's way. The potential the region has is immense but it is crucial that all levels of government, private and public sectors work together to drive it forward and make the region the powerhouse of innovation it deserves to be.

The energy positive office will be manufactured using cutting edge off-site manufacturing techniques and incorporate cutting edge, innovative energy harvest, storage and release technologies. The building will be completed by April 2018 and will be occupied immediately by up to 40 members of staff.

SPECIFIC is led by Swansea University and works with more than 50 partners from academia, industry and government to deliver its vision for buildings as power stations.

The Active Office will be linked to the Active Classroom – an existing space which provides teaching space and a laboratory for Swansea University students, as well as a building-scale development facility for SPECIFIC and its industry partners.

### **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

The UK Government is committed to leading the world in delivering clean energy technology and today's investment shows that we are prepared to support innovation in this critical area.

Research and innovation has a proven track record of helping drive our economy. Swansea University is making a huge contribution in this area, making great strides in science and research which is receiving plaudits all over the world. I look forward to seeing this new investment come to life and hope it will provide another boost to the ground-breaking research being taken forward by the University.

### **Ruth McKernan, Chief Executive of Innovate UK, said:**

Building the UK's first office that creates more power than it uses is a significant step, and I'm proud that it is Innovate UK funding that is making it happen. The Active Office heralds the future for building design and is a testimony to the fantastic work being done at Swansea University by the SPECIFIC team. This flagship demonstration of the 'buildings as power stations' concept will draw visitors from around the world and give us a glimpse of the future.

**Professor Richard Davies, Vice Chancellor of Swansea University, said:**

It is exciting to see SPECIFIC's innovative 'buildings as power stations' concept becoming a practical reality. The Active Office at our magnificent Bay Campus follows closely on the heels of the ground-breaking Active Classroom. As well as demonstrating what is now possible off the grid, the new building will share energy with the Active Classroom, showing how buildings can work together to create energy resilient communities.

While in the city, the Secretary of State will also take the opportunity to find out more about the case being put forward by Swansea in the race for the UK City of Culture title in 2021.

He will visit the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery where curator Jenni Spencer-Davies will escort him on a tour of the gallery and provide an overview of the recent multi-million pound redevelopment of the space.

The Grade II listed gallery, which was founded in 1911, benefitted from a Thanks in part to a £576,500 Heritage Lottery Fund cash injection to help transform it into a destination art gallery of international significance, featuring new spaces for touring exhibitions, displays and lectures as well as a fully accessible entrance, café and shop.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency. Innovate UK drives productivity and growth by supporting businesses to realise the potential of new technologies, develop ideas and make them a commercial success.
- The Swansea Bay City Region includes the local authority areas of Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Pembrokeshire and Neath Port Talbot, joined by Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Hywel Dda University Health Boards, Swansea University and the University of Wales Trinity St David's, and private sector partners.
- Innovation and Knowledge Centres (IKCs) were co-funded by the Engineering Physical Research Council (EPSRC) and Innovate UK as a key component of the UK's approach to the commercialisation of emerging technologies through creating early stage critical mass in an area of disruptive technology. They are able to achieve this through their international quality research capability and access to companion technologies needed to commercialise research.
- IKC SPECIFIC was set up in 2011 with 5-year grant commitments from

EPSRC, Innovate UK and Welsh Government, with phase II commitment in April 2016. There has been further investment across both phases from Swansea University, strategic industrial partners (BASF, NSG Pilkington and Tata Steel) and additional support from Cardiff University. IKC Specific has generated more than £40m of funding for allied R&D projects such as Sêr Solar and Swansea University's Materials and Manufacturing Academy. The centre has developed research links with a number of other universities working in complementary research areas

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## **[News story: CMA CGM Vasco de Gama report published](#)**

MAIB's report on the grounding of the ultra-large container vessel CMA CGM Vasco de Gama on the western side of the Thorn Channel whilst approaching the Port of Southampton on 22 August 2016, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened and subsequent actions taken, [read more](#).

### **Press enquiries**

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

Press enquiries out of hours 020 7944 4292

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## **[News story: UK Government ministers host Poppyscotland launch](#)**

The Scotland Office hosted the launch of this year's appeal, with ministers encouraging everyone to use their old 'round pounds' to purchase their poppy.

Although the deadline for the old 'round pound' coin passed on 15 October, they can still be banked or donated to charity, with Poppyscotland happily accepting donations.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell and UK Minister for Scotland Lord Duncan welcomed representatives of Poppyscotland and guests to Dover House this

evening [25 October], including Harriett Baldwin MP and Tobias Elwood MP from the Ministry of Defence, to show their support for Scotland's Armed Forces community.

Speaking before the event, Lord Duncan said:

It is a pleasure to launch this year's Poppyscotland campaign in Dover House, as we remember all those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

I visited the Lady Haig Poppy Factory and met the ex-servicemen who create the more than five million poppies every year and saw first-hand the support Poppyscotland provides for our veterans.

It is important to remember also that Poppyscotland will still be accepting your old pound coins, so dig down the back of the sofa, check your loose change and buy a poppy to show your support for our armed forces.

During his visit to the Lady Haig's Poppy Factory, Lord Duncan learnt how to put together the distinctive four-leaf crimped poppies.

[Lady Haig's Poppy Factory Visit – October 2017](#)

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## **Press release: First Secretary Meets the Elders to Discuss Global Issues**

Today Damian Green, First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office, met with the Elders to discuss a range of global issues that the UK is helping to tackle.

The Former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson; former president of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo; and the former Algerian Foreign Minister and UN Special Representative for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, met the First Secretary in his offices on Whitehall.

Damian Green, First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office said:

It was a pleasure and an honour to meet the Elders and I am glad that we could have a constructive meeting. We discussed issues including Syria, modern slavery, refugees, climate change and the

Northern Irish border after Brexit.

I reiterated the importance the UK places on tackling external threats to our environment and global security, and upholding the fundamental values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. I also restated the Government's commitment to avoiding a 'hard border' between Ireland and Northern Ireland and protecting the Common Travel Area.

The UK is a global nation, never more so than now, and the Government firmly believes Britain should play an active, leading role in the world. I look forward to continuing this dialogue with the Elders and other international groups in the months and years ahead.

Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland and lead for the delegation said:

We have held positive discussions today with the First Secretary of State on a range of global issues from the war in Syria and tensions over North Korea, to the Iran nuclear agreement, refugees and migration and climate change. As one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the United Kingdom has a special responsibility to play in this forum and beyond to promote peace, diplomacy and the indispensability of multilateral institutions in solving global problems.

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## **News story: UK hosts international nuclear disarmament verification exercise**

Experts from Norway, Sweden and the United States travelled to join UK experts from the Atomic Weapons Establishment at RAF Honington, Suffolk where the exercise, named 'Letterpress', took place.

The first of its kind, the exercise began to address the greatest technical obstruction to nuclear disarmament – the absence of an established or agreed process of checking the dismantlement of a nuclear weapon. Letterpress is part of an ongoing arms control research collaboration. In a concluding event yesterday personnel simulated the very early stages of dismantling a mock-up nuclear weapon and there were a range of talks from international experts the subject.

Exercise Letterpress included a simulation of of the early stages of dismantling a mock-up nuclear weapon.

**Speaking on the exercise yesterday, James Franklin, Head of Nuclear Policy for the UK Ministry of Defence said:**

International exercises of this scale are hugely important to ensure the possibility of a world without nuclear weapons. This exercise was part of our commitment made at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Committee 2017 and makes a tangible contribution to the UK's commitment to Article VI of the treaty itself which remains the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation framework. I'm proud the that UK remains a responsible nuclear weapons state, exercises like this and the reduction of our nuclear forces by over half since the Cold War continue to reinforce this

Disarmament verification constitutes a central part of Norway's non-proliferation and disarmament work. We must focus on effective and concrete steps to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Exercise Letterpress is a core building block of our common efforts and exemplifies a fact-based approach to disarmament that we strongly believe in. International cooperation of this kind is essential in developing trust and confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states. Norway's long-term cooperation with the UK on disarmament verification -the UKNI – has greatly improved our understanding of the technical and security related challenges associated with nuclear disarmament.

Signing in 1968, the UK has been a long-term member of the Treaty on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has a key aim of achieving the long term goal of nuclear disarmament. Exercises like Letterpress are key to fulfilling our commitment to the Treaty.