

First Minister establishes a Commission on Justice in Wales

A new Commission on Justice in Wales has today been announced by First Minister Carwyn Jones.

The Commission, to be chaired by the current Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, will review the justice system and policing in Wales and consider how the system can achieve better outcomes for Wales.

The Commission will deal with the unfinished business from the Silk Commission, which made a number of carefully reasoned, evidence-based recommendations, in respect of justice – covering the courts, probation, prisons and youth justice. It will also address crucial issues relating to the legal jurisdiction and the challenges facing the legal services sector in Wales.

The First Minister said:

“In Wales, we have had a separate legislature for 6 years but, as yet, we do not have our own jurisdiction. By establishing the Commission on Justice in Wales, we are taking an important first step towards developing a distinctive justice system which is truly representative of Welsh needs.

“The Commission will consider how we can do things differently in Wales and identify options to develop a distinct Welsh justice system, which improves people’s access to justice, reduces crime and promotes rehabilitation.

“I am delighted that Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd will chair the Commission when he steps down as Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales in October. Having risen to the heights of the judiciary in Wales and England, Lord Thomas commands universal respect and brings his unprecedented wealth of experience to this important role.”

Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd said:

“I am very pleased to take on this challenge when I step down as Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales in October. As a small developing jurisdiction, Wales offers unique opportunities to identify new solutions to the complex challenges facing justice and the legal profession. These are crucial to Wales’ future prosperity and I hope the commission will make a valuable contribution to addressing them.”

Welsh Government outlines package of support for Tesco workers

The package has been specifically designed to offer the best level of support to all affected workers to help them access future employment opportunities.

The agreed measures and delivery timeframes are:

- Between now and the end of October Tesco's internal learning and development team will deliver CV writing and interview skills training to all staff. This will be supplemented by additional skills training and advice being offered by Careers Wales. Specialists from Careers Wales and JobCentre Plus will be at the Cardiff site to support staff from tomorrow (September 19)
- The Welsh Contact Centre Forum (WCCF) is working with Tesco and other key partners to deliver a rolling programme of visits by prospective employers throughout November 2017. These will also be repeated in January 2018. More than 20 successful and well-established businesses have already expressed an interest in getting involved with these visits.
- The Welsh Government, in conjunction with the WCCF, is developing a package of information for employers to make them aware of the potential support and incentives offered through programmes such as ReAct for taking on employees facing redundancy.

Tesco will issue invitations to employees to discuss their redundancy packages during the first week of January 2018. From this point all employees will become eligible for the Welsh Government's ReAct 3 programme and the wide range of additional support measures and incentives it offers.

Economy Secretary and Chair of the Tesco Taskforce, Ken Stakes, said:

"I know that Tesco's decision to close its Cardiff contact centre has come as a blow to its highly skilled and award winning staff and I promised at the time we would do everything possible to support workers through this very difficult time. While I appreciate many are still upset by the decision, I hope that by outlining what staff can expect over the coming months it will provide some sense of clarity and reassurance to everyone affected."

Skills and Science Minister, Julie James who leads on employability across the Welsh Government, added:

"We appreciate how difficult the last few months have been for staff and one of key our priorities throughout the summer has been to work with our taskforce partners to put in place a range of measures as soon as possible and ensure the best achievable outcome for affected workers.

"We have received indications from more than twenty successful and well established companies in South Wales that they would be interested in providing employment opportunities to Tesco staff at risk of redundancy, and many of those employers will be involved with the employer visits being staged for workers throughout November and January."

Tesco Customer Engagement Centres Director Rob Graham said:

"Since the announcement of our plans to close the Customer Engagement Centre we have been working alongside local representatives from Usdaw to support our Cardiff colleagues. We have had considerable interest from other employers in taking on colleagues currently employed at Tesco House and we have put measures in place to assist them in securing alternative employment. We are grateful to the Welsh Government for the additional help they will be providing."

[Economy Secretary hails success of company helping to turn black cabs green](#)

Economy Secretary Ken Skates is attending the reopening of Norwegian owned, Sapa's Bedwas site today which will be producing aluminium components for the TX-5 – the all new zero emissions capable London cab.

This will replace the diesel powered black cab with a model that utilises a plug-in hybrid powertrain.

The investment is backed by £550,000 from the Welsh Government, which helped bring the project to Wales, despite competition from another European facility.

First Minister Carwyn Jones met senior officials from the Sapa group during his visit to Norway in January and pressed the business case for bringing the investment to Wales.

The Bedwas site was mothballed in 2014 following significant changes in market conditions but was retained by Sapa. The opportunity to re-open the facility occurred when Sapa Components UK, which supplies all the major vehicle manufacturers with aluminium based sub-assemblies and components, secured contracts to supply the new London cab.

Sapa has been working with the London Electrical Vehicle Company (LEVC) since 2015 and invested significantly in researching and developing lightweight aluminium prototypes and components for the new vehicle.

Economy and Infrastructure Secretary Ken Skates said:

“The Welsh Government is proud to have supported Sapa’s extensive investment in the refurbishment of its site in Bedwas which will create at least 130 jobs over the next five years.

“Wales has a growing reputation for supporting innovative new technologies and opportunities, and the Low Carbon Vehicle sector is a particular growth area and a key sub sector for our advanced materials and manufacturing industry.

“I am delighted that SAPA is reopening its operation in Bedwas and proud that Wales will be playing a key role in the production of a new generation of environmentally friendly black cabs.”

Calvin Carpenter, MD Sapa Component UK, adds:

“This is a proud day as it is a culmination of nearly 3 years working with London Taxi throughout its development phases to enable us to supply major body components to the ‘new state of the art’ facility in Ansty, Coventry.”

Record Numbers Use Airport Bus Service

The period between March and August 2017 saw over 86,000 people use the service, up 15% on the same period last year.

With Cardiff Airport continuing to grow and Wales being increasingly recognised globally as a premier tourist destination, Economy Secretary Ken Skates said he was encouraged to see the T9 service playing an increasing role in facilitating travel.

Mr Skates said:

“Cardiff Airport is one of the fastest growing airports in the UK and continues to go from strength to strength. I’ve been clear that a reliable, frequent bus service linking the airport to Cardiff and beyond is key, never more so as the airport moves into the exciting next stage of its development.

“Alongside the airport’s increased stature, destinations and possibilities, these T9 passenger figures are hugely encouraging and demonstrate the growing appetite for regular public transport between Cardiff Airport and the capital.

“Over half a million passengers have now used the service since it was introduced in July 2013 and I look forward to the T9 continuing to form part of Wales’ offering, building on these positive trends and facilitating further travel to and from Wales for thousands more over the coming months and years.”

The figures for the past six months compared to last year are as follows:

March 2016 – 13,041 – March 2017 – 13,223

April 2016 – 8,653 – April 2017 – 12,969

May 2016 – 10,695 – May 2017 – 15,786

June 2016 – 13,358 – June 2017 – 15,264

July 2016 -14,589 – July 2017 – 13,976

August 2016 – 14,500 – August 2017 – 15,089

New Riverdee centre opens thanks to £499,950 Welsh Government funding

The newly refurbished centre has been made possible thanks to £499,950 from the Welsh Government’s Community Facilities Programme and £491,397 from the Big Lottery’s People and Places Fund.

The building, which is owned by River Dee Community Church, now has an accessible improved layout and has increased its capacity to be used by various community groups.

Carl Sargeant said:

“The Community Facilities Programme has to date provided funding

totalling over £16 million to 60 projects across Wales. The programme is not just about improving buildings. In applying for these grants community organisations, such as the Riverdee Community Church, have had to demonstrate how the facilities they offer provide vital community services which help prevent or tackle poverty.

“I enjoyed meeting staff and volunteers at the centre and having the opportunity to see the work that has been undertaken thanks to the grant from the Community Facilities Programme.”