

## Housing and Armed Forces sectors thanked for help on Housing Pathway for Veterans

The pathway aims to prevent homelessness amongst ex Service personnel and help them find suitable accommodation.

Echoing one of the eight 'asks' of Welsh Government in the Royal British Legion's 2016 Wales Manifesto – Live On – Building a better future for the Armed Forces Community in Wales.

Carl Sargeant said:

"I take very seriously the responsibility we have to those members of our communities who have served, or are still serving, in the Armed Forces. Helping them to find suitable accommodation is an important part of the much broader and wider package of support which helps them to settle back into our communities.

"We will continue our work to implement the Housing Pathway, particularly amongst organisations working on the front line of homelessness. We also aim to do more to raise awareness, with the publication of advice for veterans. This will build on the contents of the Pathway. It will be targeted at those due to be discharged from duty as well as those who were discharged at some point previously. It will include advice cards for those who are sleeping rough. The Pathway will also be shared widely amongst organisations providing support for the Armed Forces community in Wales.

"I am grateful to all the organisations who have worked with us on these developments. In collaboration with The Armed Forces Expert Group and partner organisations, we will continue to support and provide effective services for our Armed Forces community in Wales."

Antony Metcalfe, Area manager for The Royal British Legion Wales said:

"The Royal British Legion welcomes the new Housing pathway for the Armed Forces community and the commitment the Welsh Government has shown in addressing the issues around housing support for the Armed forces community in Wales.

"The Legion called for such a pathway in our Welsh Assembly election manifesto 2016, following a national conversation we held with the Armed forces community in Wales, who told us that accessing clear housing advice and support was difficult and that

too often they were being given inconsistent advice which was leaving them confused about access to housing in their local areas. This document should now help provide clear information for the Armed Forces community but also be used as a training resource for housing professionals so that everyone is clear about housing support that can be expected and delivered.”

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## Lesley Griffiths to hear views on Securing Wales' future

Lesley Griffiths is undertaking a series of visits to businesses and organisations in South Wales whose operations are likely to be impacted by the UK's impending exit from the EU.

The Cabinet Secretary will visit the Eastern Valleys Uplands Project in Blaenavon, the Two Sisters Red Meat processing site in Merthyr Tydfil and the Food Innovation Centre in Cardiff Metropolitan University. The day will culminate in a round-table cross-sector meeting with key agriculture and environment stakeholders in Cardiff Bay.

Among the issues likely to be raised during the visits and meeting are the importance of Welsh businesses having full and unfettered access to the European Single Market and how to achieve a balanced approach to immigration, linking migration to jobs.

Also expected to be discussed are maintaining the level of funding currently delivered by the EU to Wales' farmers and continuing social and environmental protections once these are no longer guaranteed through the UK's membership of the EU.

These are key issues that were set out in Securing Wales' Future, the comprehensive Brexit White Paper published last week by the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.

Lesley Griffiths said:

“The Environment and Rural Affairs portfolio is, probably more than any other, hugely impacted by EU funding and legislation. Wales' thriving food and drink industry also benefits greatly from selling its produce into the EU and many are able to operate effectively by employing people from EU countries.

“The UK's withdrawal from the EU will undoubtedly have a major impact on individuals, businesses and organisations represented by

my portfolio. Since the referendum result I have been eager that those who are going to be affected the most by Brexit have regular opportunities to feed their very real views and concerns into the highest levels of government.

“Through our White Paper, jointly produced with Plaid Cymru, we have clearly set out what we believe is a sensible starting point for negotiations. We believe our position balances concerns over immigration with the economic reality that makes full and unfettered access to the single market so central to Wales’ future prosperity.

“I look forward to meeting a wide range of individuals and organisations and hearing their views on how we can deliver a Brexit that works for Wales, and for the rest of the United Kingdom.”

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## Deals sealed on last three available residential sites on SA1 Swansea Waterfront

Contracts have been exchanged between the Welsh Government and Hale Homes – a family run company based in Neath – and with DT Technical Solutions, from Ebbw Vale.

Heads of Terms have also been agreed with a social housing group that is working up proposals for a 1.3 acre site – the last remaining site on the residential quarter.

This is the second development on SA1 being carried out by Hale Homes and will see 23 town houses built on a one acre site on a prime location. The energy efficient townhouses will be 3 1/2 storeys high with a balcony that spans the entire width of the roof space providing superb views.

DT Technical Solutions is to build 18 town houses on an adjacent half acre site.

National housebuilder Persimmon Homes West Wales is currently onsite constructing a £6m residential development of 37 new town houses and 24 apartments. Coastal Housing Group’s latest £5.5m development is also underway and will provide a range of affordable 1 and 2 bedroom apartments as well as 22 three and four bedroom homes for sale. Both have previously developed a range of new homes on SA1.

There is now only one remaining residential plot on SA1 which is currently used as storage for dredged sand and is expected to become available on the market in 2018.

SA1 has proved to be a popular development attracting investment by local and national developers as well as housing associations that have built a wide range of accommodation offering a diverse variety of architectural styles.

To date 643 apartments, houses and retirement homes have been completed, with a further 133 under construction. Of this total 213 units will be 'affordable housing'.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"SA1 is transforming 96 acres of disused dockland into a dynamic and vibrant new mixed-use quarter for the city and has acted as a catalyst attracting significant investment into Swansea, helping to raise the city's profile as a great place to live, work and invest.

"I am particularly pleased that the proportion of modern, high quality affordable homes – built by the private sector and housing associations – is more than double the percentage required under planning obligations.

"The residential development on SA1 has helped the Welsh Government meet its affordable housing targets and will continue to contribute to the latest target of delivering 20,000 affordable homes during this term of Government."

Jonathan Hale said:

"Welsh Government were extremely helpful when we built our first phase at SA1, the townhouses in question were the first houses built at SA1 and were a resounding success.

Agents who have been acting for Welsh Government are Cushman & Wakefield.

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## **[Come together: Taskforce visits Cymmer to #TalkValleys](#)**

The Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys is holding a series of public meetings across the region to seek the views of local communities about priorities for their local areas.

Last month, the Minister for Lifelong Learning Alun Davies, who chairs the taskforce, met with pupils at Ferndale Community School and business leaders in Caerphilly to answer questions about the role of the taskforce and listen to suggestions for priority work areas.

Julie James will join other taskforce members to host a public engagement session at Croeserw Community Enterprise Centre on Thursday (February 2) and wants to hear from local residents about the challenges and opportunities for people living and working in the valleys.

She said:

“The taskforce has made some significant strides forward in recent weeks and it is clear that understanding and awareness of our work is growing.

“The engagement sessions we’ve held to date have been invaluable in helping to shape our priorities but it’s vital we continue to work with and listen to communities throughout the lifetime of the taskforce.

“From the discussions we’ve had with the public so far, some key themes have emerged. These include the importance of linking businesses with local schools to give young people the confidence and skills they need to enter into the world of work and the importance of linking infrastructure like industrial sites, schools, colleges and transport initiatives together, ensuring true connectivity for the valleys.

“I am sure more will continue to emerge in the coming weeks starting this week in Cymmer. I would urge anyone who feels passionately about where they live to come along and have their say. We’re here to listen and your views will help shape our shared vision for the valleys.”

The taskforce was set up by the Welsh Government in July and aims to build on work previously undertaken across the South Wales Valleys in a more coordinated and targeted way to meet the needs of valley communities.

This week’s session will follow a full meeting of the valleys taskforce which will take place in Llanhilleth Miners’ Institute and will focus on public services.

To learn more about the work of the taskforce or to sign up to attend one of the public meetings, please visit the [Facebook](#) page.

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# “Reform is an essential part of the future” says Vaughan Gething

Speaking ahead of the conference, Vaughan Gething said:

“2016 was a tumultuous year for our country. A year of unprecedented political upheaval and uncertainty that will impact on society and public service delivery for many years to come.

“But despite that uncertainty and despite record demand, our NHS delivered better health care for people across Wales. Welsh Ambulance performance is now the best in the UK, cancer survival rates continue to improve faster in Wales than any other part of the UK and overall waiting times are down 20% on last year.

“Whatever services people use – hospitals, GPs, social care, mental health services – they expect good quality care in a timely manner. Above all else, delivering on that is our prime concern.

“Our staff have worked extremely hard this winter and we have seen diagnostic and planned care waiting times reduce dramatically over the past year. I want to thank them for their dedication and commitment to the values of the NHS and to providing high-quality care.

“I’m proud of our achievements, but I want us to be more ambitious for 2017. I want us to continue to reduce planned care and diagnostic waits. I want us to build a health service that meets and delivers on the needs of our patients and that is sustainable, in spite of the challenges.

“Reform is an essential part of the future. If we do not reform then we will not deliver the change and improvement that is needed.

“This is our mission. It won’t be easy but it will be worth it.

“It’s time good performance was recognised. I want to encourage the boards and trusts that are operating well, that are delivering for local people, and incentivise excellence in our health service. We will be exploring how we can best make that happen.”