

Press release: Welsh Secretary: “Wales must be ready to respond to dynamic devolution in England”

- Alun Cairns to call for swift devolution of powers to local authorities in Wales during keynote speech in Cardiff
- UK Government announces first cross-border Summit to bolster economic opportunities between South East Wales and South West England

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will call on the Welsh Government to rise to the challenge and compete with the new dynamic of devolution being rolled out across England when he addresses local government leaders in Cardiff today (23 November).

Speaking at the Welsh Local Government Association seminar at City Hall, Mr Cairns will say that the Welsh Government “must respond to devolution on the other side of the border” where Metro Mayors are encouraging growth and creating opportunities tailored to the needs of local people. Ministers in Cardiff Bay must make sure local government in Wales has “the scope, the power and the resources to act.”

Mr Cairns will also say that “every part of Wales faces different challenges and different opportunities, and it’s time we put a one-size-fits-all approach behind us.

The speech comes following the commitment made in the Budget yesterday, to formally enter into negotiations over a growth deal for North Wales as well as kick starting discussions for a growth deal for Mid Wales. The UK Government has already delivered City Deals for Cardiff and Swansea giving people the tools to transform their local communities, their economies and their lives.

He will say “The simple fact is that these deals recognise that local people know their areas best. We want a long-term, bottom up approach from local authorities, local businesses and local communities who know and understand the character and make up of their patch.”

The Secretary of State will also announce that he will host the first cross-border business summit early in the New Year where he will bring together local partners from across the South West of England and the South East of Wales to explore how links between the two economies can be strengthened following the announcement of the abolition of the Severn Tolls.

He will say: “It is time we make politics fit business, rather than business fit the politics. It’s the importance of the cross border economy which is driving our commitment to bolster relationships and develop new partnerships across the nations. Our individual strengths are many. But brought together, we can develop corridors of growth that can put the UK on a strong platform

to compete on a global scale.”

The Secretary of State for Wales will later travel to North Wales where he will address an audience of business leaders at the Wrexham Business Professional dinner.

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