

[Press release: Welsh Secretary tells business leaders 'capitalise on Region deal'](#)

The Secretary of State for Wales will today (Friday 14th July) tell Swansea business leaders that now is the time to capitalise on the Swansea Bay Region City Deal.

Delivering his first key note address in West Wales since the General Election at Swansea Business Club, Alun Cairns will commend businesses for their role in creating record low unemployment rates in the region and challenge them to use the City Region deal as the springboard to generating increased economic growth.

Mr Cairns will say:

The UK Government has a responsibility to create the right conditions for a thriving and prosperous economy but it is the private sector who are the risk takers, driving that success. The Swansea Bay Region City Deal provides a fantastic opportunity for business leaders to capitalise and reap the long term benefits that it will bring. The deal is a great example of the UK Government coming together with local authorities, Welsh Government and the private sector to deliver a local plan that will have wide felt impact.

The Welsh economy grew 2.8% in 2015, second only to the North West for the UK's countries and regions, and since 2010 only growth in London has exceeded Wales.

Mr Cairns will go on to reassure business leaders in the room that the UK Government will help ensure certainty and stability as we leave the EU, through the EU Withdrawal Bill.

Mr Cairns will say:

We are under no illusion about the scale of the challenge we currently face as we prepare for negotiations to leave the EU. I am here to affirm that the Repeal Bill, introduced yesterday is about delivering certainty and continuity for businesses across Wales and giving assurance that the UK will not face unexpected changes on the day we leave the EU.

This is a Government that has been listening to businesses and hears their need for certainty. I want to reassure them it is their

interest that we have at heart and that we will continue to sell Wales across the globe.

Notes to editors:

- The Government yesterday (Thursday 13 July) introduced the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, known as the Repeal Bill, to Parliament. The Bill prepares the statute book for the exit from the European Union and delivers on the promise to end the authority of EU law in the UK. It provides maximum legal and administrative certainty for business, the public sector and everyone across the UK.

[Press release: Threatened native species finds safety in Lincolnshire](#)

Efforts to protect the UK's only native species of crayfish have seen almost 600 specimens moved to protected new homes in Lincolnshire.

The endangered white-clawed crayfish have been transferred to two secluded locations, chosen for their potential as safe havens.

Known as 'Ark Sites', the carefully selected refuges have all the characteristics needed for the crayfish to establish a thriving colony, including good-quality water, suitable habitat, and an isolated location.

Most importantly, they will be safe from the threat of their non-native counterparts, the North American Signal crayfish. This invasive species out-competes our own for food and habitat, and carries a fungal disease that devastates native populations.

Dr Chris Extence, Environment Agency team leader for Analysis and Reporting, said:

Bringing our native crayfish into the safety of an Ark Site is vital to protecting them from these threats, safeguarding their long-term survival and stability.

White-clawed crayfish are the only native species of crayfish in Britain. Although protected by law, numbers have declined dramatically in recent years and established populations are becoming increasingly vulnerable.

In Lincolnshire, the Upper Witham has long been a stronghold for native crayfish, but they are increasingly under threat from Signals. In total, 572 specimens were moved into two undisclosed locations in Lincolnshire two weeks

ago: a limestone stream in the county's south west and a chalk stream in the Wolds.

Dr Extence added:

In the case of the latter, this is the first time in many years that this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has been home to native crayfish.

A number of organisations, including the Environment Agency, Natural England, Lincolnshire Rivers Trust, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Lincolnshire Chalk Stream Partnership, were involved in the two-day operation. Environment Agency specialists will now monitor the colonies in their new homes.

Dr Extence continued:

The use of Ark Sites is nationally-recognised best practice, and just one of the ways we can safeguard the future of the native crayfish.

A previous attempt at creating an Ark Site in Lincolnshire has been successful, with evidence of breeding – a strong sign of an established colony.

[Press release: North West awarded £1 million funding for natural flood scheme](#)

People, homes and businesses across the North West will be better protected from flooding thanks to a £1 million natural flood scheme, the Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey announced Friday (14 July).

More than 1,000 properties across Delph, Uppermill, Stalybridge, Mossley, Hayfield, Glossop and Whaley Bridge will benefit from the pioneering 'Slow the Flow' project. The project will 'slow the flow' of water reaching rivers and watercourses upstream of communities at flood risk.

Measures to slow the flow of water – from peat restoration to woodland planting and leaky barriers – will trap sediment and help to reduce the need for channel maintenance. The project will be carried out by a wide range of partners, including the Irwell River Trust, United Utilities and Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

The scheme is one of 58 across England which will benefit from £15 million of government funding for natural flood defences.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

I am thrilled to announce £1 million to help communities across the North West make the most of the innovative natural flood management measures now on offer. By restoring peat and planting woodlands, multiple 'slow-the flow' schemes across the region will help protect families, homes and businesses from flooding, benefiting the wider environment and the people who live in those communities.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

Natural flood management is an important part of our approach, alongside traditional flood defences and helping homeowners to improve their own property resilience. There is no 'one size fits all' solution to flooding and this scheme is a fantastic example of how we can use a variety of measures that work together to reduce flood risk.

Two other projects aiming to 'slow the flow' of water in catchments in the Pennines have each been awarded £50,000 funding from the natural flood management pot. One will reduce flood risk to nearly 300 homes in the Upper Dove catchment, while the other will benefit approximately 50 homes in the Upper Dean catchment.

David Brown of the Environment Agency said:

In the Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire area, we are pleased with this funding allocation and are keen to work in partnership going forward on projects that will benefit nature at the same time as reducing the risk of flooding.

The more of these schemes we have, the more we can use our natural habitats to build-up flood resilience, so it really is a win-win situation. We are now looking forward to developing a programme of projects in the catchment to 'slow the flow' and reduce flood risk.

Natural flood management involves restoring the natural function of catchments, rivers, floodplains and coasts. This can include methods such as reinstating floodplains, creating wetlands, installing debris dams and planting trees.

The government's natural flood management drive builds on the 1,500 flood schemes the Environment Agency is already building across the country to

better protect more than 300,000 homes by 2021.

The £15 million of government funding also includes the £1 million competition for smaller community projects to fund natural flood management schemes.

[Press release: HS2 reveals station design and Euston master development partner shortlists](#)

High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd today revealed the designers and engineers in the running for the prestigious station design contracts for London and Birmingham as well as a partner to take forward long-term development around Euston station.

The winning designers will work with HS2 Ltd to develop and refine the detailed plans for three brand new stations, at Birmingham Curzon Street, Birmingham Interchange and London's Old Oak Common, as well as a major expansion of London Euston.

The shortlists for the station design contracts include, Arup, Mott MacDonald, WSP, Arcadis and a Jacobs/BuroHappold/Idom joint venture. All the bidders have been invited to tender for at least two station packages.

The stations will welcome tens of thousands of passengers every day from all over the UK, providing easy and accessible onward connections to local transport, airports and connecting rail services as well as step-free access from street to seat. In total more than 170,000 new jobs are expected to be created in the wider development areas surrounding the four stations.

HS2 Ltd Chief Executive, Mark Thurston said:

Today's announcements are a major milestone for the project, setting the scene for the next stage of the station design process. Together with the successful bidders, we will go on to deliver one of HS2's most tangible legacies – three brand new stations and the long-term transformation of Euston.

All four projects represent exciting opportunities to showcase the very best in engineering and design while also delivering value for money.

We are looking for partners to help us deliver stations which not only provide unparalleled levels of accessibility, ease and

convenience for our passengers, but who will work with local communities to ensure we also help unlock wider regeneration, new jobs, homes and opportunities.

HS2 Ltd today also published the names of the bidders in the running to win the Euston Master Development Partner contract. The winner will advise on, and later take forward, sustainable mixed-use development opportunities, including new homes, offices and retail space above and around the revamped London Euston. This includes working with HS2 Ltd, Network Rail, the station design contract winner and local authorities to deliver a unified masterplan to unlock the full potential of the area.

The following bidders have been shortlisted and invited to participate in dialogue:

- Westfield Europe Ltd
- Euston Regeneration Partnership (Led by Argent Related Services LLP)
- Canary Wharf Group
- Land Securities Property Holdings Limited
- Lendlease Europe Holdings Limited

This comprehensive approach has the potential to deliver up to 22 hectares of development space as well as improving accessibility and creating new public and green spaces across the wider Euston site.

Managing Director, Network Rail Property, David Biggs, said:

This brings us another step closer to realising an exciting and vibrant new district in the heart of London.

The opportunities are vast. A regenerated Euston Station not only affords us the ability to improve connectivity and exceed the expectations of those travelling by train. It also allows us the rare chance to create new space for homes and businesses, to craft a desirable destination for people to live, work and meet.

The new station can be a catalyst for local regeneration and increase connection across the local community, bringing huge benefits both to the area itself as well as the country as a whole.

Contracts for the station designs and the Euston Master Development Partner will be awarded early next year.

Press release: Water scheme keeps River Slea flowing

The river that gives Sleaford its name is being given a helping hand by the Environment Agency with the switch-on of a groundwater scheme.

Around 1.1million litres of water a day is being drawn up from an underground limestone aquifer, via a 44-metre deep borehole, and fed into the River Slea, keeping it from drying out.

The 'augmentation scheme' ensures the river continues to flow during its driest months, benefiting local habitat and preserving the look and feel of the town's water environment.

Almost 150 years ago, the river was described as "a never failing source of pure water" but natural and man-made changes to the environment and water cycle saw it dry up for extended periods from the 1960s.

The augmentation scheme was established in 1995 in response to calls from the local community, which values the river as an attractive feature.

For most years since, it has been supplementing the flow during the river's driest months, which tend to be between July and December. Without it, the river would typically run dry during this period.

Claire Anderson, environment planning specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

The Environment Agency exists to create better places for people to enjoy and wildlife to thrive. This scheme achieves both. By supplementing the flow of water, we contribute to the town's cherished water environment and we minimise the environmental impact of dry weather, protecting the habitat in which dozens of species live.

After activating the scheme, Environment Agency officers monitor the Slea between the borehole and Cogglesford Mill, ensuring everything is working as it should.

The Slea augmentation scheme was activated on Saturday 15 July.