

Kirsty Williams sets out new Welsh approach for teachers' pay and conditions

The Welsh Government will take responsibility for this area at the end of September, with teachers' pay and conditions being set by the Welsh Government from September 2019.

After an eight week consultation, the Education Secretary today confirmed that the model would see teachers unions, employers and the Welsh Government coming together on an annual basis in a Partnership Forum.

This new Partnership Forum would be able to propose changes to a draft remit for pay and conditions and set the agenda for any other issues that needed to be considered.

Following consideration of the Forum's views, Welsh Ministers would submit a 'final' remit for scrutiny and analysis by an independent expert body – the Welsh Pay Review Body – prior to taking any final decisions.

Listening to concerns listed in responses to the consultation, Kirsty Williams also confirmed that a public consultation stage would not form part of the annual decision making process. Instead a written consultation would take place with key stakeholders only.

The Education Secretary said:

“This is an opportunity to develop a truly national model that enshrines a national approach to supporting and elevating the status of the teaching profession in Wales.

“What we want is a model that brings unions, employers and Welsh Government together to agree a fair, sensible and sustainable way forward – with the benefit of advice from an independent expert body.

“We'll now start talking through the finer details of how this new model is going to work and we enter into these discussions in the spirit of cooperation.”

Minister sees how £300k Welsh Government funding is helping Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru to protect Welsh Language

As the only standard historical dictionary of the Welsh language, the Geiriadur is the definitive record of Welsh vocabulary and therefore forms the basis for other dictionaries, thesauruses, terminology lists and reference works.

Work on compiling the dictionary began in 1921, and it is updated several times a year based on evidence of popular use of words. The dictionary, which is now published as an online only version, has received public funding since 1921 and the Welsh Government stepped in in 2015 when funding from other sources ceased.

New words can take years to enter the dictionary to ensure that they are established and aren't just a short-term fad. Words currently under consideration for inclusion in the future include hunlun (selfie), OMB (O Mam Bach, corresponding to OMG), trendio (trending) and aildrydar (retweet).

The role the dictionary will play in the future of Welsh language linguistic infrastructure, and how this can contribute to achieving the aims of Cymraeg 2050, will be discussed at a seminar of experts in the fields of lexicography, terminology, language corpora and the translation profession at the National Eisteddfod.

The Minister said:

“My visit to Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru was very informative. I was particularly interested in hearing about how it is recording the language as it adapts and evolves, which will ensure its longevity.

“As one of the most important works in the Welsh language, it is very pleasing to see that Welsh Government funding is playing a vital role in its future and therefore the future of the language.”

Arwel Ellis Owen, Chair of the Board of Directors at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies said:

“We welcome the Welsh Government's support as it ensures the dictionary's future and acknowledges the work the dictionary does to record and expand the use of Welsh.”

Professor Medwin Hughes, Vice Chancellor of the University of Wales, Trinity St David and Vice Chancellor of the University of Wales said:

“It is a pleasure to be a part of the Welsh Government’s work to promote the Welsh language. The university supports the aim of creating a bilingual Wales and developing the corpus of the language.”

[St Athan Airfield: Maximising the Economic Benefits](#)

A 10 year contractual joint venture between Welsh Government and Cardiff International Airport Ltd (CIAL) will drive efficiencies and integrated service provision.

Under the plans the business park, combined with the airfield activity, will generate significant economic benefits to Wales amounting to around £236m and approximately 2000 jobs, which includes the 750 already committed by Aston Martin.

The transition to civilian operation of the airfield and business park combined with the completion of the new northern access road in 2019 and the Aston Martin project make St Athan an exciting opportunity ready to deliver jobs and projects.

Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

“We know we do not have the internal expertise to operate and manage an airport directly. Under the current arrangements we have an obligation to the MOD to operate, manage and maintain the airfield for military purposes.

Our plan now is to transfer responsibility for airfield operations including management and maintenance, security, radar services and air traffic control to a single source supplier.

Cardiff International Airport Ltd (CIAL) has been identified as the only supplier capable of providing all services required, due in part to its proximity to St Athan.

We have developed a proposal to manage the transition of the airfield from Military Aviation Authority (MAA) to Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) licensing and have begun making submissions to CAA in this respect. We have also entered into a JV contract with

Cardiff International Airport Ltd which will enable operation of the airfield and air traffic control to be delivered by them in a phased manner to ensure continuity of service.”

News of the joint venture follows Cardiff International Airport Ltd beginning an exercise of public engagement on its Masterplan, which is aimed at further developing the importance of the Cardiff Airport and St Athan Enterprise Zone as a centre of aeronautical excellence.

Deb Barber, CEO of Cardiff Airport, added:

“The Minister’s announcement complements the release of our draft Masterplan which sets out our vision up to 2040. Since Cardiff Airport came under public ownership in 2013, we have worked tirelessly to improve the terminal infrastructure, increase passenger numbers and welcome new routes and airlines to Wales.

As we enter the next phase of our journey, we remain focused on delivering a sustainable airport business focused on continued passenger growth, improving infrastructure and maximising opportunities to diversify the business.

As such, we welcome the opportunity to take over the operation, management and maintenance of the St Athan airfield and business park and remain grateful to our shareholder for recognising the potential of Cardiff Airport, both as a key asset for Wales and a contributor to the local economy.”

Next steps to strengthen local government announced

In March he published ‘Strengthening Local Government – Delivering for People’ – our Green Paper consultation aimed at invigorating the debate on the future of local government in Wales.

The Green Paper set out a vision for stronger, more empowered councils which can provide bold, determined and focused local leadership. The Green Paper offered three possible ways of achieving this: voluntary mergers; phased mergers; and comprehensive mergers at the earliest opportunity.

The Cabinet Secretary today published the responses to that consultation, and announced he was establishing a new group to take forward the reform programme which would enable councils to merge voluntarily and which will design new structures and ways of working which will deliver on a new vision

for empowered local government.

Alun Davies said:

“For a great deal of time many groups and individuals, including local government leaders, told me that the current system and structures for local government were not sustainable.

“I want to work with local government on a shared vision for the future, and to jointly develop solutions to the challenges they face. Those challenges – about how we maintain progressive public services in the context of long-term austerity – are not going to go away.

“The consultation responses suggested there was an appetite amongst local government to work together to progress voluntary mergers and increase and improve regional working. I therefore intend to introduce the Local Government (Wales) Bill early next year to legislate to enable this to move ahead at the earliest opportunity.

“Therefore I also intend to establish, in partnership with the WLGA, an independent working group to drive a shared approach which will shape the future of local government in Wales.”

Derek Vaughan has agreed to lead this work and will chair this working group. The membership of the working group will be drawn largely from local government and supported by a joint Welsh Government and WLGA secretariat, taking into account the broad range of views and ideas expressed during the consultation.

The group will be asked to identify common ground and to propose a way forward on structures, additional powers, flexibilities and support for change. They would be tasked with creating a plan for change, which would include proposals for voluntary mergers driven by local government and how those mergers might best be supported.

Councillor Debbie Wilcox – Leader of the WLGA stated:

“This approach to taking forward the issue of local government reform is to be welcomed. The WLGA’s position is clear. We are supportive of any councils who desire to merge voluntarily and are committed to working collaboratively to deliver services and this group will consider the potential support that might be available should councils choose to merge.”

“The key point is that sustainability is not achieved by structures but resources and service transformation. The formation of this joint working group is therefore timely to address such issues, and

strengthens the democratic base and powers available to councils.”

Brexit means it is time to come up with a new way of funding the nations of the UK – Mark Drakeford

He will also call on the UK government to make good the promise made during the referendum that Wales will not lose out on funding as he launches the Welsh Government’s latest Brexit policy paper setting out proposals to design a new funding system to guarantee fair and continuing investment for Wales and the rest of the UK.

The proposals include:

- Development of a new approach to funding which promotes fairness across the UK, encourages balanced economic growth across all parts of the country and based on the consent of all the nations of the UK.
- Replacing the Barnett formula with a new, rules-based system which makes sure the allocation of resources within the UK is based on relative need.
- Wales must not lose a penny of funding due to Brexit, with the UK Government replacing EU funding without any top slicing or conditions attached.
- Wales must have continued access to important European partnerships and networks such as Horizon 2020, ERASMUS+, the Creative Europe Programme, the European Investment Bank and others.
- A new way of the 4 nations of the UK working together to agree fiscal issues to replace the current EU framework.
- New bodies independent of government to oversee the new system and resolve disputes.

Mark Drakeford said:

“The current way money is allocated across the UK is not fit for purpose. More than ever Brexit shows the time has come to change it for the better.

“We need a new system for how we work out the funding needs for each nation and benefit all parts of the UK. This is about fairness and making sure areas of greatest need get the resources they require.

“Brexit brings considerable uncertainty and will have an impact on

every nation and region of the UK and we must consider how all this will function outside the EU. We have put forward proposals on how funding can be agreed, and how disputes between the UK Government and devolved governments can be resolved.

“We also need ongoing access to EU programmes that bring investment and opportunities for Wales.

“Our proposals are for all of the UK, not just Wales. The UK government must now work with the nations, regions and cities of the UK to develop fair funding systems that will ensure a better future for all.”