

£3m for Llandrindod Wells War Memorial hospital redevelopment

The funding will go towards the continuing redevelopment of facilities at the hospital to improve the environment for staff and patients, and will support the Health Board's strategy plans for the delivery of services across Powys. This latest funding brings the total capital investment by Welsh Government in the Hospital to over £6.5 million over the last three years.

Redevelopment plans include:

- Increasing the number of clinical rooms in Outpatient departments to facilitate increased activity and support the 'do more in Powys' strategy
- enhancing the Endoscopy services provided at the hospital
- providing improved and compliant sanitary facilities
- ensuring the Dental department is fully accessible for disabled patients.

These reconfigured and redesigned services will result in significant benefits for the local community in Llandrindod and for the wider residents of Powys. They will help the health board facilitate an increase in day surgery procedures undertaken in Powys and to focus more on a model of prevention and the promotion of health and wellbeing, care and support in the community.

Dr Jon Matson from Llandrindod Wells Medical Practice said:

"These developments will bring significant benefits for the local community in Llandrindod Wells. This includes increasing and enhancing the range of outpatient services undertaken in our local hospital. This builds on the work that has already taken place to create the Ithon Birth Centre, including day assessments ultrasonography facilities, which opened earlier this year."

Chief Executive of Powys Teaching Health Board, Carol Shillabeer said:

"Today's announcement is great news for the people of Powys, and for Llandrindod Wells in particular. It supports us to provide even more care and treatment within the county, improving access and reducing travel for local residents. It helps us to deliver our vision for a Healthy, Caring Powys by focusing on wellbeing, providing more early help and support in the community, and providing more joined up care."

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“I’m pleased to announce an additional £3m worth of funding for the Llandrindod Wells War Memorial Hospital in Powys. It’s imperative that hospital facilities in Wales meet requirements of up to date standards to provide a safe environment for patients, and for health professionals to do their work efficiently.

“This will help to contribute to a healthier Wales, with a project that will create the provision of a facility that will be modern and compliant for the future.”

Accommodation Sector experienced busy 2016

The annual average bed occupancy rate for all serviced accommodation across Wales in 2016 was 47%, while the annual average room occupancy rate was 61%.

Annual average occupancy rates in the hotel sector, continue to remain at their highest levels of occupancy during the last 11 years. The annual average bed occupancy rate for Guest Houses/B&Bs rose from 31% in 2015 to 35% in 2016, with room occupancy rates rising from 37% to 39%.

For self catering sector and apartments, the annual average unit occupancy was 52% in 2016, two percentage points higher than in 2015

Performing extremely well in 2016 was the Caravan holiday homes sector which saw a significant rise during 2016 in the May to October average, up from 75% in 2015 to 91% in 2016, an increase of 16 percentage points and the highest recorded average over the period under review.

Touring caravan and camping parks also performed well with, the 2016 rate of 41% is one of the highest since 2011 and is 4 percentage points higher than the seasonal average recorded in 2015.

Ken Skates said:

“In what is an extremely competitive market place, the occupancy statistics for 2016 show a strong picture for tourism in Wales and continue to reflect the success we have experienced over the last two years.

“We will continue with our campaign work to promote Wales to both domestic and overseas markets to ensure that we make the most of the opportunities to attract overseas visitors and those looking to holiday at home due to the weak pound.

"With the success of our Year of Adventure and Year of Legends themed years, this month, Visit Wales have hosted Roadshows in all four regions in order to give the tourism industry an opportunity to explore how to get involved with Year of Sea 2018. I'm delighted with the way the industry has got behind the themed years – they show how we can all pull together to create a strong message and compelling reasons to attract visitors to Wales and we look forward to working with the industry on making 2018 a big success."

The Annual Report can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#).

[A welcome to Wales to the legendary Wales Rally GB](#)

The Dayinsure Wales Rally GB has grown to be a firm favourite in the events calendar and the rally will begin at the opening ceremony in Tir Prince in Towyn, Conwy. Cabinet Secretary, Ken Skates will be present for the official start and ahead of the event, he said:

"This year, Wales has been celebrating a Year of Legends – bringing the past to life like never before, celebrating emerging legends and encouraging visitors to create their own legends in Wales. The 2017 Wales Rally GB promises to be another spectacular event and a fitting way to draw Wales' Year of Legends to a close. Wales is home to some of the world's most legendary rally stages – the event is our opportunity to showcase the epic Welsh landscapes and scenery as some of the legends of the sport test their skills against what our spectacular Welsh countryside throws at them. I'd like to extend all the competitors and spectators a warm welcome to Wales.

"The Welsh Government's support for the Rally also shows our continued commitment to the event, which has significant links with the automotive sector. Wales is home to around 150 component and systems manufacturing companies and has 18,500 people employed in automotive manufacturing with an annual turnover of £3.4 billion."

Ahead of the official start, the Cabinet Secretary will also visit the 'Big Bang' Industry Awareness STEM exhibition in the Rally Village. This is the event's dynamic hub, where all the WRC teams are based throughout the high-profile motor sport event. More than 1,500 students studying key STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects at educational

establishments throughout Wales and Cheshire will visit the Big Bang fair on Thursday and Friday. The showcase will be open to all those visiting the Rally Village – one of a number of free-to-view opportunities available to the public. The Cabinet Secretary will also be unveiling the new Toyota sportscar with livery designed as part of a schools competition.

Ben Taylor, Managing Director of Dayinsure Wales Rally GB, said:

“It looks like we are in for a fantastic event; the weather forecast is promising and the drivers have already been through the forests doing their first reconnaissance runs. The new generation of WRC cars, combined with the prospect of a thrilling title fight coming to a head in Wales, has really captured the imagination of the fans. Ticket sales are significantly ahead of last year which means that the stages are likely to be very busy out there. It’s going to be an exciting weekend and one for which we must thank the Welsh Government for its ongoing enthusiasm and support.”

Finance Ministers call for 1% public sector pay cap to be lifted

The UK Government must set out plans to lift the public sector pay cap and reverse planned cuts in expenditure in this year’s Autumn Budget.

This was the message Welsh and Scottish Finance Ministers delivered to the Treasury at the Finance Quadrilateral meeting in London today.

They urged the UK Government to change course on austerity and invest in public services by lifting the 1% public sector pay cap.

Wales’ Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford, said:

“We are fully behind our public sector workers and have repeatedly called on the UK Government to end the cap on public sector pay and give workers across the UK the pay rise they deserve.

“However, we have been equally clear this must be fully funded by the UK Government. Those who implemented the cap must be responsible for funding its removal.

“We have already committed to use any funding consequential we receive from the UK Government as a result of public sector pay rises in England to raise the pay cap for public sector workers in Wales.

“I urge the UK Government to do the right thing and lift the 1% pay cap for all public service workers and provide the devolved administrations with the funds to do likewise.”

Scotland’s Finance Secretary, Derek Mackay, said:

“We believe that the time is now right to give public sector workers, both in Scotland and across the UK, the recognition they deserve.

“We have committed to lifting the 1% pay cap and in the forthcoming budget we will deliver a pay policy that is both affordable and acknowledges the real life circumstances of our public servants.

“ However, the UK Government budget will be a key factor in determining the resource that the Scottish Government has available to invest in public services and public sector pay.

“I would therefore urge the UK Government to use any fiscal headroom that they have to reverse planned cuts in expenditure, lift the 1% pay cap for all public service workers and provide sufficient funds to invest in public services.”

Wind farm funding boost for community projects in Conwy

A training facility for young people with autism and special needs, a replacement bus shelter in an isolated area used by schoolchildren and the elderly and restoration work at a castle are amongst the projects to benefit from Rhyl Flats Wind Farm Community Fund. Rhyl Flats Wind Farm is operated by Innogy Renewables UK Ltd.

CreataSmile have been awarded £10,000 to expand the services they offer and develop a training tea room which will help young people with autism and special needs to gain skills and build confidence working with people from the local community.

The same amount will benefit Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust to support the next phase of work at the Castle which includes the Creation of a coppice in the woodlands and repairs to the Melon House roof.

Community and Voluntary Support Conwy will also benefit from £10,000 investment to support the role of a Programme Development Officer to pilot the Veteran Hub in Conwy. The officer will provide a holistic and bespoke

service to each veteran to successfully transition into civilian life.

Sport Conwy is set to gain £9,860 funding to purchase adapted cycles to provide a range of cycling sessions for disabled people.

Benefits Advice Shop is to receive £6,300 in this financial year and again in 2018/19 to continue to provide a weekly outreach service to residents in Abergele and Colwyn Bay to access advice and advocacy.

Abergele Town Council will be supported by £2,257 funding towards the cost of providing a replacement bus shelter located on an isolated and exposed coastal bus route, used by schoolchildren and the elderly.

Funding of £1,900 will help Colwyn Bay Model Boat Club to help control and manage the widespread presence of invasive aquatic weeds at the new boating lake.

Community or voluntary groups, charities, and town and community councils in eligible areas of Conwy are being encouraged to apply to the Rhyl Flats Offshore Wind Farm Community Fund, which is administered by the Welsh Government and provides grants of between £2,000 and £10,000.

Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, Carl Sargeant said:

“This funding will be a real boost to local communities in Conwy and help improve lives.

“From helping people gain new skills to supporting local services, the Rhyl Flats Wind Farm Community Fund is investing in projects which are an important part of the area. I encourage all groups interested in applying for funding to find out more about the scheme.”

Katy Woodington, Senior Community Investment Officer for innogy said:

“It’s exciting to see the Rhyl Flats Wind Farm Community Fund supporting such a wide range of projects again this year. I will be really looking forward to hearing more about how these projects use their funding to make a positive difference for local people.

“This funding, which is administered by the Welsh Government, is available each year the wind farm is operational, so please think about whether the community groups you are involved with could benefit from applying for funding in the future.”