Budget Tour 2015

‘Investing in the Wales We Want’

End of Tour Report
Ministerial foreword

Responding to a prolonged period of austerity over the last five years, the Welsh Government has remained true to its priorities. We remain resolute in maintaining our focus on protecting the services which mean the most to the people of Wales despite managing the challenges of unprecedented cuts to our Welsh Budget. Over this Spending Review period, UK Government cuts mean that, the Welsh Budget is 8 per cent lower in real terms than it was in 2010-11. This equates to £1.3 billion less to spend every year on boosting economic growth and supporting our vital public services.

As we look ahead to 2016-17 and beyond, we are under no illusion tough economic times are set to continue. This was the context of my annual Budget Tour over the summer. Travelling throughout Wales, I listened to the experiences of our partners in local authorities, health, housing and the third sector, together with people who use public services. I visited projects, businesses and service providers to see the benefits and outcomes of our investment decisions and, importantly, the impact on peoples’ lives. I talked to young apprentices, social housing residents, students and parents to find out what matters most to them and their families.

In these difficult times, it is easy to dwell on the negative consequences of austerity and to overlook the good work which is already happening across our communities. I was encouraged to learn about what is working well and how partners are collaborating in developing new ways of working. Partners were invited to share examples of good practice and I am pleased to be featuring some of these examples as case studies in this report.

Frontline staff working in the NHS provided an insight into the reforms they are undertaking to secure the long-term sustainability of the health service in Wales. The importance of social services in their own right and the integral contribution that social services make, integrating with the health service was highlighted on many occasions. Recent official figures show that we spent more per head on health and on health and social services combined than in England in 2014-15. This has been achieved when our Welsh Budget has been under the most severe pressure.

Service users and providers alike recognised that the work to support the further integration of health and social services was important to help to address the increasing demand for social services resulting from demographic changes. This is the approach we have taken over this period through our investment in the Intermediate Care Fund, for example. This has helped to drive forward integration between health, social care, housing and the voluntary sector in reducing unnecessary admissions to hospitals or residential care.

Preventative spending has been central to managing in times of reducing budgets. This was recognised in the messages that I received throughout the Budget Tour. For example, the Supporting People Programme was acknowledged as an approach which provides support for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities to live as independently as possible.

The importance of planning for the long term was also reflected in the support I heard for investment in education and training opportunities to ensure we have the skills base to support our future economic prospects.

Throughout the Tour, I heard significant support for community asset transfers, which were recognised for their role in ensuring the long-term provision of valued community services.

The messages I received during my Budget Tour were overwhelmingly in favour of protecting our core public services. People recognised that, investing in prevention and early intervention can improve the outcomes we want to see for people in Wales, over the course of their lives. This is very much in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act which comes into force in April 2016.

The feedback that I received during my Budget Tour has helped to inform our budget planning as we prepare to publish the Draft Budget 2016-17 on 8 December.

I hope you find this report of the Budget Tour 2015 both informative and helpful.

Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Finance and Government Business
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Regional visits to service provider sites

North Wales

Projects benefiting from infrastructure investment were the focus of the Minister’s Budget Tour visits across the North Wales region.

The Minister visited the site of the new Ysgol Bro Llifon in Groeslon, Gwynedd, which received £2.42m from the Welsh Government’s 21st Century Schools and Education Programme. The state-of-art primary opened to pupils in September, this year, and delivers the best possible learning environment and facilities for pupils and the local community.

"Investing in the state of the art educational facility at Ysgol Bro Llifon for this community has been made possible thanks to the Welsh Government’s 21st Century Schools programme coupled with Gwynedd Council’s own investment programme."

Councillor Gareth Thomas, Gwynedd Council’s Cabinet Member for Education

The Minister also visited the Cefndy Road affordable housing development, in Rhyl, which has helped to transform a former factory site into quality, affordable, homes consisting of 16 houses and 8 flats following a £2.1m investment from the Welsh Government’s innovative Housing Finance Grant scheme.

Colwyn Bay waterfront has benefited from over £20m from the Welsh Government for coastal defence and regeneration funding. In addition to better protection from flooding for homes, businesses, and transport links the improvements to the promenade include a water sports centre and chef Bryn Williams’ Bistro, resulting in increased visitor numbers to the waterfront.

"Affordable housing is more important now than ever and this project at Cefndy Road is helping to make a real difference, as well as boosting the economy and giving the local community work and training opportunities."

Shayne Hembrow, Deputy Chief Executive and Commercial Director of Wales & West Housing

Engagement with business was once again a key feature of the Budget Tour and the Minister met the North Wales Economic Ambition Board on two occasions during the Summer to discuss how best to drive forward investment in the North Wales region, and how to making the best possible return on investments of European funds.

The Minister’s visit to the Splash Magic Leisure Centre in Wrexham provided an opportunity to see how communities can safeguard the long-term use of assets and services across Wales through community asset transfers. The centre is now run by a small team of dedicated staff and a loyal group of volunteers. To date there have been over 70,000 visitors to the swimming pool and many thousands of users of the other facilities and activities provided at the centre.
Mid Wales

The National Eisteddfod in Meifod, Powys was the focus of the Budget Tour in Mid-Wales, this Summer.

During her time at the Eisteddfod Maes, the Minister was pleased to be able to meet a wide range of people who work across the voluntary sector and in public services, and to hear their views on budget priorities.

The Minister visited a number of stands, including Powys County Council, the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action and the Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations, British Red Cross and Community Housing Cymru and European Funding.

West Wales

The Minister visited Ysgol Bro Teifi – the new £14.85m 3-19 years 21st Century school in Llandysul. The school opened in September and delivered the first purpose built dedicated Welsh-medium 3-19 all through school in Wales, bringing together four primary schools and one secondary school within the Llandysul area for 1100 pupils. The facility incorporates an Integrated Children’s Centre, a four court sports hall, and external sports facilities, including a full size, 2G, floodlit, all-weather sports pitch.

The Minister was pleased to have the opportunity to see the positive impact of the new Flying Start centre in Aberporth. Following receipt of more than £480,000 of Flying Start capital funding from the Welsh Government, the new nursery building provides excellent childcare facilities for an increased number of children, as well as a proper outdoor play area for the children, and office space.

The rural nature of Ceredigion presents challenges for both parents and those delivering childcare services, and the Flying Start programme helps to address these challenges by delivering services in locations throughout the Cardigan area, as well as Penparcau, Llanarth, Llandysul and Aberporth.

The Minister also visited the ‘Pysgoty’ seafood café/bar on the South Promenade in Aberystwyth, which has been assisted by Business Wales through the ERDF New Business Start-Ups project. The seafood café/bar officially opened its doors in April after a complete renovation from its former life as public toilet and fisherman’s store. Business Wales assisted with advice and information on recruitment and staff matters, as well as help with an application for a start-up loan to finance the conversion and fitting out costs.

“With the assistance of the ERDF New Business Start-Ups Project funding we were able to complete our goal of opening a harbour-side seafood restaurant in Aberystwyth, helping to regenerate the area and support the local fishing community.”

Craig Edwards, Owner, Pysgoty Seafood Restaurant
South East Wales

The Minister was delighted to attend the official opening of the newly refurbished grade II listed Pontypool Indoor Market, which was funded through the Pontypool Settlement Area project, which has received £3.8m of European funds towards the whole scheme.

“Pontypool Market is a gem in the heart of the town centre and there is a real buzz about the place now that all the arcades are open, and the final refurbishment works have been completed.”

Lewis Jones, Executive Member for Regeneration at Torfaen CBC

Power Station Adult Learning Centre, in Cwmbran, was the venue for the Minister to launch the new Working Skills for Adults 2 project. Backed by £2.7m EU funds through the Welsh Government, it is expected to help 1,700 individuals gain new skills leading to improved job security and career prospects.

Led by Torfaen Council in partnership with local authorities, the project will deliver across Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil over the next three years. Job-specific technical training in areas including construction, accounting and IT, as well as opportunities to develop key skills such as digital literacy, will be provided at community venues and will be designed to fit around a variety of working patterns.

“We are delighted to have secured £2.7m of EU funds to launch the second Working Skills for Adults project which will enable us to support employed adults to gain the qualifications they need to progress in the workplace and to improve their chances of securing promotion or changing their careers.”

Cllr Bob Wellington, Leader of Torfaen Council

Central South Wales

As part of her Tour in Central South Wales, the Finance Minister announced £4.5m of European funding to help Cardiff University develop the £44m centre of excellence for brain research. The Welsh Government has also invested over £9m in the development of CUBRIC, including funding towards an ultra-high field Tesla MRI scanner.

CUBRIC (Cardiff University Brain Research Imaging Centre) will enable researchers to rapidly test new ideas and theories to gain a faster understanding of the causes of a range of health conditions, including dementia, schizophrenia and multiple sclerosis.

During her visit to Merthyr, the Minister met some of its residents at the Marigold Close social housing development in Gurnos, which has received £1.6m of Welsh Government Funding. The scheme has already seen 16 flats, 2 houses and 3 bungalows built, with a further 6 houses set to be completed by February 2016.
The opening of Pontypridd Lido within Ynysangharad Park following European Union investment of £3m has contributed towards making this project a key element of the wider Pontypridd Regeneration Strategy. The restored 1920s Grade II listed Lido has the potential to make Pontypridd a regional visitor attraction, creating growth and jobs in the local area.

The Minister also visited Bike Park Wales, a £5m scheme supported by EU and Welsh Government funding. Based in Gethin Woods, Bike Park Wales is the UK’s first full scale mountain bike park and has already seen visitors from around the world come to South Wales to enjoy its first class facilities.

“It was a pleasure to have the Minister visit Bike Park Wales, and to have the opportunity to demonstrate how well-invested government funds can have such a significant impact on a local area and new businesses.”

Anna Walters – Director, Bike Park Wales

South West Wales

Swansea University’s new Bay Campus opened its doors to almost 5,000 students in September.

The £450m campus, which has been backed by over £100m Welsh Government and EU funds, has been developed over 65 acres and will house the University’s new Innovation Hub and Engineering Manufacturing Centre. The Campus will provide the University with world-class facilities for industrial research and development in engineering, advanced materials and manufacturing, and will offer a state-of-the-art learning environment for students.

The development is amongst the top five knowledge economy projects in Europe and aims to generate around £3 billion of economic impact over a 10-year period through construction activity, research, and student and business investment. It will bring cutting-edge research to Swansea and will play a key role in developing the manufacturing and high technology sectors in Wales.

“Our science and innovation Bay Campus is one of the largest knowledge economy projects in Europe and is driving the regeneration of the Swansea Bay city region and beyond. It would not have been possible without the support and funding provided by Welsh Government and the EU.”

Iwan Davies, Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor at Swansea University
Regional Meetings and Case Studies

The regional meetings provided opportunities for members of the public and frontline staff to talk about the services that mean most to them. There were consistent messages about making the best use of resources, planning sensibly for the future and investing in preventative approaches. These are fundamental to our approach to ‘Investing in the Wales We Want’.

Each of the meetings recognised the good work that is already happening across Wales to deliver services as efficiently as possible. There was significant support for further integration of our public services. The vital role played by the third sector and local communities was acknowledged.

As we look forward to the Well-being of Future Generations Act coming into effect in April 2016, the key messages from the meetings and the case studies received from partners provide examples of the five ways of working central to implementing the Act.

Collaboration

Integration

Case Study – ‘In One Place’

The ‘In One Place’ project was set up to explore ways in which collaborative working could deliver better accommodation services to those with a learning disability who were in receipt of NHS Continuing Health Care funding. The project brings together Aneurin Bevan UHB, five Local Authorities from within Gwent and eight registered social landlords. It was recognised that its scope could be expanded to include services not just for people with a learning disability but also for people with complex health needs. This enhanced provision applied to services funded by Aneurin Bevan UHB alone and to services funded jointly with the local social services department.

The first service users offered accommodation through ‘In One Place’ moved into their new homes at the end of 2014. One of the new tenants explained, “I am thankful for places like this to live in because I know it’s my last chance to move forward in my life. I appreciate what everyone has done for me and the flat has given me the chance to move on.” The second group of services users will be moving into their new homes before the end of 2015.
There was significant support for the important contribution that the Supporting People Programme makes to supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our communities to live independently, as well as the contribution it makes to prevention.

Services for people in older age groups were a particular focus of the Budget Tour meetings, and there was a focus on benefits of the preventative healthcare agenda support from community groups to help keep people healthier and more active as they get older.

**Case Study 1 – Touchstones 12 (Supporting People Programme)**

Touchstones12 is an abstinent based residential rehabilitation centre for adults who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless due to alcohol and/or drug abuse/addiction.

RW: “In the 18 months that I have been at (Touchstones 12) I believe I have changed my life around for the better with the kind support of staff & peers. My life was spiralling out of control before I came here and I didn’t believe I had a future nor indeed want one. My self-esteem & confidence has improved, I have had to face up to and deal with my health & family issues including ongoing divorce proceedings. I am now doing voluntary work which I enjoy and am now looking forward to moving to my own place with the belief that I can stay strong with a better future for myself which didn’t seem possible at all before T12 has saved my life”.

**Case Study 2 – Rhondda Housing Association**

Many Rhondda Housing Association tenants, especially those who had become most isolated, sought a pre-employment programme that offered opportunities to develop confidence and life skills. Formal training was considered too daunting by the tenants, who wanted a wider variety of learning opportunities that also involved peer support, which would particularly help those who had become most isolated.

The project aimed to engage with those who had become socially isolated due to difficult personal circumstances, poor physical and mental health and low confidence. The project engaged with 151 people and supported 85 to complete vocational training; 91 to build new skills (coping mechanisms, cooking, craft); 20 to take part in volunteering; and 30 into employment.

**Case Study 3 – Powys Befrienders**

**Powys Befrienders** provide befriending support to people aged 50+ in Powys to help them to maintain their independence and social networks and to live in their homes for as long as they are able. Clients may need support as a result of an illness, mental distress, disability, bereavement, isolation, loneliness, retirement or having recently moved in to the area and having no social network.
Supporting young people into work through apprenticeships and training was regarded as a key element in bringing long-term benefits to the economy and to communities across Wales. It was recognised that dependable and affordable public transport plays a key role in enabling young people to access these opportunities. Continued support was urged for a concessionary fare scheme to enable young people to access work, education, training and apprenticeships.

**Case Study 1 – Mobile Construction Classrooms**

City and County of Swansea’s Corporate Building & Property Services and the Construction Youth Trust have worked together to develop sustainable skills through providing training for young people and making it possible for them to access training opportunities.

Young people in some parts of Swansea were not applying for apprenticeships due to not having the parental support or the means to travel to participate in initiatives. In 2013, the Council began working with the Construction Youth Trust to provide training within disadvantaged communities for young people to learn construction and employability skills. Benefits include raising young people’s aspirations and confidence, whilst providing them with the qualifications and skills necessary to take their first career step.

A key initiative in this programme has been the development of mobile classrooms. The mobile classroom delivers all the necessary tools and materials for the trainers to provide accessible introductory ‘pop-up’ training projects in hard to reach communities.

To date 31 people from some of the most disadvantaged areas in Swansea have completed the Construction Youth Trust course.

**Case Study 2 – Colwyn Bay Waterfront Project**

The Colwyn Bay waterfront project being developed and delivered by Conwy County Borough Council is intended to secure the long-term protection of the town from the threat of flooding. It will also provide improvements to the Promenade, making it an attractive area for visitors and tourists, which includes the successful Porth Eirias development.
The need to target resources effectively at the services most needed by local communities was highlighted throughout the Budget Tour meetings. Accurately identifying local need was considered a vital element of this process.

**Case Study 1 – Building Communities**

The **Building Communities** model of engagement has been used as a process for engaging communities in designing and delivering public services in the Seiriol area of Anglesey for the past two years. To date, the Pobol Seiriol groups have co-produced three community hubs in the area, bringing healthcare services (blood pressure checks, community nurses) and social services (through the role of a Local Area Co-ordinator) into the heart of communities. The project’s success has been recognised and it is now supported with funding by WCVA through Public Health Wales to encourage learning-in-action.

**Case Study 2 – Families First Joint Commissioning**

City of Cardiff Council’s **Families First Joint Commissioning** involved people using Families First services in the decision-making process. A range of partners, providers and service users, including young people, parents and grandparents, were consulted to ensure the services commissioned were appropriate. A Young Commissioners Group (aged 8-21) was given specialist support and training to enable meaningful involvement in evaluating tender submissions under the Families First programme and was involved in questioning tenderers. This process was recognised as best practice in winning a National Procurement Award.

Community asset transfers were viewed as prime examples of the way in which groups of individuals can work with public bodies and the third sector to secure long-term provision of valued community services.

**Case Study 3 – Plasnewydd Community Centre**

Cardiff YMCA formally took ownership of Plasnewydd Community Centre from the City and Council of Cardiff, in April 2015. Work is underway to transform the centre into a community hub, with enhanced gymnasium and sporting facilities, community rooms for groups and a community café and nursery on site.
# Annex A

## Budget Tour meetings and visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>Number of people whom the Minister met</th>
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</table>
| North Wales    | Llandudno Junction | • Cefndy Road Social Housing Development, Rhyl  
                              • New 21st Century School in Groeslon, near Caernarfon  
                              • Plas Madoc Leisure Centre  
                              • Colwyn Bay Waterfront  
                              • North Wales Economic Ambition Board | 60+                                      |
| Mid Wales      | Newtown        | • National Eisteddfod                                                  | 20+                                      |
| West Wales     | Aberystwyth    | • Ysgol Bro Teifi - the new 3-19 years school in Llandysul  
                              • Flying Start Centre in Aberporth  
                              • Pysgoty seafood café/bar on the South Promenade | 35+                                      |
| South Wales West | Penllergaer | • Social housing development at Ty Llew, in Cwmdu.  
                              • Swansea University’s Science and Innovation Campus.  
                              • Carnegie House, Bridgend community asset transfer  
                              • Dalton House, Port Talbot – NSA Afan | 51+                                      |
| South Wales East |                | • Pontypool Market reopening  
                              • Bridges to Work 2 | 8+                                       |
| South Wales Central | Cardiff | • Plasnewydd Community Centre  
                              • Cardiff University Brain Research Imaging Centre  
                              • Marigold Close social housing development - Gurnos Estate, Merthyr.  
                              • Bike Park Wales – Gethin Woods, Merthyr Tydfil  
                              • CBI Wales dinner  
                              • Council for Economic Renewal | 114+                                     |