

21<sup>st</sup> March 2022



# CECA Wales Monday Briefing

## *Developing our workforces and future leaders*

Last week I had the pleasure of welcoming young apprentices, technicians and graduates to our fifth Leadership Challenge and our first in the north at Kinmel Barracks, Bodelwyddan. The two-day Leadership Challenge has become an important fixture in our calendar of events and is a cornerstone of our drive towards “attracting the brightest and the best” to our sector, retaining them and developing them. It also represents an important and long term partnership between CECA Wales and the Armed Forces which continues to go from strength to strength.

We developed the Challenge about 5 years ago and our partnership with the Armed Forces seemed such an obvious one given the similarities in terms of skillsets and transferable skills. We both face logistical challenges in what we do, we need to plan our work carefully, we solve problems, we apply a disciplined approach to our operations and we make great use of technology to help us deliver. And all of this is underpinned by strong leadership and teamworking. It’s no wonder that we see many ex-service people joining our sector after their term of duty and many in our sector join the Reservists (TAs).

So, the Challenge is very important to us. However, we also invite many construction clients to take part in the Challenge. This time we were joined by Transport for Wales, North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency, Natural Resources Wales and Network Rail Wales and Borders. This provides a great opportunity for all those involved to start to develop networks for the future which will hopefully support them in their future working relationships.

We welcomed participants on Thursday morning and enjoyed two days of almost unbroken sunshine (I understand it’s always sunny in the north!) which was great given that all the activities took place outside. “Unfortunately”, previous storm damage on the site meant that overnight accommodation was in the barracks building rather than outside (that will change for future events). Nevertheless, all those taking part were able to test themselves and their leadership and teamwork skills in a challenging “military” environment. The feedback from all was hugely positive and we will take this and build in further improvements for future events.

Employers joined us on the Friday to observe how their employees were performing. Even over just 2 days the difference in confidence and self awareness was apparent. We now need to see participants build on this in their workplace.

*Cwrt y Gollen in the south has been home for the Challenge for four years so it was really important that we extended this to the north. We will now alternate future challenges every 6 months (Spring and Autumn) between the north and south and I hope that all CECA Wales members will continue to support this event as we all strive to address the skills challenges that our industry faces.*

## CECA Wales Political Update

Infrastructure news from the Senedd and Westminster :

- **North Wales Transport Commission:** The panel of independent commissioners who will recommend how to build a sustainable and integrated [transport system for north Wales](#) have been announced by Deputy Minister for Climate Change Lee Waters.
- **20mph:** The Deputy Minister for Climate Change has published the [summary of responses](#) on the public consultation to reduce the default speed limit on restricted roads in Wales from 30mph to 20mph in 2023.
- **Flood protection:** The Climate Change Minister Julie James has revealed the Welsh Government’s largest ever [flood protection programme](#), totalling more than £214 million over 3 years.
- **Tidal energy:** During questions to the First Minister Jayne Bryant MS [highlighted](#) the fragility of the current energy system and emphasised the potential of “clean, green and infinite” tidal power.
- **Grid:** The [Welsh Affairs Committee](#) held two evidence sessions on Grid capacity in Wales. A full transcript will shortly be available [here](#).
- **Solar:** The UK’s first [hospital-owned solar farm](#) funded by a Welsh Government loan scheme has surpassed expectations by covering 100% of Morriston Hospital’s demand for 50 hours.
- **Labour Market Data:** The [latest data](#) on the labour market, employment, unemployment and economic inactivity has been released.
- **Digital:** The Deputy Minister for Climate Change [provided](#) an update on the Digital Strategy. The Welsh Government’s top up to the UK Government gigabit broadband voucher scheme will cease on 31 March 2022 because of budget pressures.

- **Skills Policy:** Vikki Howells MS [asked](#) the First Minister about what how the Welsh Government is addressing the twin challenges of collaboration across all partners and levels of training and the need to support SMEs to upskill their workforce. Paul Davies MS [called](#) for a net-zero skills audit to identify the gaps to secure Wales' economy for the future.
- **Degree Apprenticeships:** The Welsh Government has [accepted](#) the Economy Committee's recommendation that it should set out how the allocation for degree apprenticeships is to be spent and plans for expanding the courses and increasing diversity of degree apprentices.
- **Net zero:** The Welsh Government has [published](#) an infographic showing how it will reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

## CECA Wales Director Activities

My activities over the last week included :

- Hosting the CECA Wales Leadership Challenge in the north at Kinmel Barracks
- Meeting with the Roads Review Panel to discuss how the industry and the panel can support each other through these changes
- Reviewing questions for the new Groundworker qualifications
- Preparing feedback to UK Government on impacts of loss of red diesel rebate
- Launched the CECA Wales Annual Review 2021/22 (copies have been sent to members along with membership certificates)

## Client engagement and business opportunities

Whilst our engagement with construction clients is continuing, I wanted to advise you of two specific opportunities.

We have been contacted by Severn Trent Water to establish a supplier engagement event with members to set out opportunities for working in the Severn Trent and Dee Valley areas. We are currently working with them to establish a format and as soon as we agree dates I will let all CECA Wales members know.

The second opportunity has been set out in previous briefings but I wanted to give you a final reminder of Transport for Wales' current plans in terms of tendering opportunities. TfW are currently inviting tenders for delivering a £300m programme of station upgrades and improvements over four years. This investment into over 200 railway stations will improve the way they look, make them safer and provide more commercial and community opportunities. Work packages have been split into seven lots covering anything from low-value simple improvements to waiting rooms up major station upgrades.

The Stations Modifications and Infrastructure Enhancements Framework comprises :

1. Pan Wales > £500k Non-Complex Station Projects
2. North Wales < £500k Non-Complex Station Projects
3. South & West < £500k Wales Non-Complex Station Projects
4. Pan Wales Station Information and Security Systems Projects
5. CVL Structure Interventions
6. CVL Major Station Works
7. TfW Infrastructure Owner Works

To register interest visit the [Sell2Wales website](#).

## Training Events

Please note that our events programme for 2022 has been launched and will be constantly refreshed throughout the year. Here's the link <https://www.ceca.co.uk/wales/events/> .

Our series of NEC4 workshops for members will recommence this week, on 22<sup>nd</sup> March with further dates for the 2022 programme available via the link above. Due to higher demand for these courses we have arranged additional dates for June 6<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup>. Further information will be updated to the website as soon as the content is agreed. Please be assured that we will ensure that CECA Wales members are able to access these courses albeit over a phased programme.