

Wales 'invests to save' in e-trading

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An electronic trading project is one of the first projects to win Invest to Save funding from the Welsh Assembly Government

The xchangewales e-trading project at Merthyr Council will move the council from a paper based system and is predicted to provide £8m in savings over five years. It could be adopted by other organisations with Invest to Save backing, according to the Welsh Government.

Two other IT projects have been awarded some of the £8.2m in the initial round of Invest to Save Funding. A central CCTV control room is being set up for six local authorities in North Wales and the region's police force, and is expected to provide £450,000 per year in efficiency savings.

The second, an integrated electronic NHS web based expenses system which will replace the current paper based system, is predicted to release savings of £98,000 a year. It will be implemented by the North Wales Business Support Partnership.

Invest to Save funding is intended to "pump prime" the introduction of new, more efficient ways of working.

Andrew Davies, minister for finance and public services, said that since the £60m fund was announced in May 2009 more than 100 projects have been put forward for consideration.

"I am pleased that there is keen interest from organisations seeking support from this new fund," he said. "Public service providers need to find ways to work smarter and this fund will help them to implement changes that lead to the release of efficiency savings.

"Tighter budgets need to be framed around efficiencies - that means focusing on improving services and at the same time reducing costs and obtaining the greatest value possible for the Welsh pound."

Further projects are being considered and the application process will be opened again in November for new submissions.