

# Why waste waste? A new sustainable hub for production in South Wales

Using a model designed to help businesses interested in setting up in Wales, the Welsh Government made a former RAF workshop available on the Welsh Government's Picketston Business Park in St Athan. They agreed a 10 year lease at a competitive commercial rent that reflected the work needed to convert the building to make it fit for purpose.

The workshop boasts a total of 4,550 sq m (49,000 sq ft) of indoor space, as well as a further 13,380 sq m (144,000 sq ft) of outdoor filming space. It also features a number of additional facilities, including unit bases and storage and rooms and offices which can be adapted to suit a productions needs.

Dresd have operated in the film and TV industry offering sustainable services to productions since 2012. Their work to reduce waste in the industry has allowed up to 99% of sets to be recycled and reused, while saving money for the productions they have worked with.

Their aim is for the studios to lower the carbon footprint of productions. Those who film at the studios are able to benefit from their cost-effective, unique and sustainable services.

Since Dresd moved in, the studios have already hosted filming for Requiem, a recent co-production by BBC One and Netflix. In the past they have accommodated TV productions such as Doctor Who, Torchwood and Sherlock, and features such as Mr. Nice and The Killer Elite.

They regularly employ workers registered with local employment agencies, and are looking forward to welcoming two more into their team when the positions open this year. They are also regularly in touch with local colleges and students who are looking to gain experience in the creative sector.

Managing Director Lynn McFarlane said:

"We aim to provide a sustainable hub for television and film productions, where filmmakers can access used materials for their work, reducing the need to build brand new sets.

"Most of the salvaged items would have ended up in landfill, but they now form part of a reclaimed prop house for the production industry, not only film and television, but theatrical productions, events and the interior design industry as well.

"We are grateful for the Welsh Government's assistance in helping us to set up in the premises with the room we need to be able to offer our services to companies across the creative industries."

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This is an excellent example of the support we can give new and established businesses that recognise the benefits we have to offer here.

“I am delighted the Welsh Government could help Dresd come into Wales.

“Over the last five years, film and TV productions shot in Wales and funded by Welsh Government have spent in excess of £100m in Wales. This is investment into local economies, providing hundreds of Welsh businesses and individuals with high quality work. Without a doubt there is a place within the creative sector for the sustainable services Dresd can offer.

“These studios will allow the company to move into a new phase of work, focused around providing a new, sustainable hub for the recycling of production sets, and will be the first of its kind in Wales. It’s a commendable idea and an admirable achievement, and I wish them every success in the future.”

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## [Welsh Government investing a further £25m in Tech Valleys by 2021](#)

In a meeting with Blaenau Gwent Council leader, Nigel Daniels, Economy Secretary, Ken Skates confirmed the Welsh Government would invest £25m in its Tech Valleys programme between 2018 and 2021, as part of the commitment to invest £100m over the next ten years. This is on top of Welsh Government investment to date in Tech Valleys, and will see Welsh Government support for the programme exceeding £30m by the end of 2021.

The investment will stimulate job creation and leverage public and private sector investment in the area whilst accelerating the development of high value, advanced technologies that support cutting edge industry.

The £25m has been allocated under the Welsh Infrastructure and Investment Plan and is part of the £100m the Welsh Government pledged to invest in the Tech Valleys project between 2017 and 2027 in order to support the creation of more than 1500 jobs, predominantly within new technologies and advanced manufacturing.

A key enabler will be Tech Valleys’ support for the development of advanced skills, both within the current workforce and future generations to deliver

better jobs closer to home.

In 2017 the Welsh Government announced it would invest £100m in the Tech Valleys project over ten years, in order to support the creation of more than 1500 jobs, predominantly within new technologies and advanced manufacturing.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“Ahead of this evening’s Blaenau Gwent Business Awards I am pleased to confirm that as part of our commitment to economic regeneration within Blaenau Gwent and the surrounding areas, we are committing £25m to the Tech Valleys project over the next three years. I am optimistic it will work to accelerate progress of this important programme, build up local skill levels, and leverage in a raft of additional private and public sector investment.

“This £25m is on top of the significant investment we have made in the area to date in property development and funding for dedicated interventions such as composite material training that will help future proof the current and future local work force for the types of jobs we are looking to attract.

“In line with our new Economic Action Plan, Tech Valleys will have the principles of growth, fair work and decarbonisation at its heart while seeking to spread the fruits of economic growth to areas that have not fared so well in recent years.

“And we are currently in discussions with a number of companies who are interested in being part of Tech Valleys and all that it represents. Our focus now is on working to convert that interest into tangible, high quality and sustainable jobs.”

Blaenau Gwent Council Leader, Nigel Daniels said:

“We recognise the opportunities presented by the changing nature of global production and technology and we welcome the engagement with Welsh Government and other partners to ensure the Tech Valleys approach delivers on these exciting developments. We support the announcement of the investment of £100m over 10 years in Blaenau Gwent and specifically the £25m for the next three years, with the early focus on skills which will be the key to securing the long term benefits offered by the advances in technology.”

Chair of Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone, Mark Langshaw said:

“I am delighted to hear the announcement of £25Mn funding over the next 3 years for the TechValleys project. This comes on the back of the publication of the TechValleys Strategic plan and demonstrates

a clear commitment from Welsh Government to the economic regeneration of Blaenau Gwent. I am convinced that this will be an important enabler to attracting employers to the area and contribute towards the ambition of creating 1500 high quality sustainable jobs over the next 10 years.”

Economy Secretary Ken Skates will attend the inaugural Blaenau Gwent Business Awards on Wednesday 9th May to celebrate the achievements of local companies and talk more broadly about his ambitions for the area.

On the same day the Welsh Government will publish its Tech Valleys Strategic Plan which builds on the Vision Document published in December 2017 and includes a particular focus on skills.

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## **Help to Buy-Wales homebuyers will see energy efficiency loan benefit**

The Welsh Government is the first organisation in the UK to put this in place.

Speaking to the UK Finance Annual Cymru Mortgage Lunch, she will explain how [Help to Buy-Wales](#) equity loan applicants will be able to borrow more money for a more energy efficient home.

Rebecca Evans said:

“From this June, the Help to Buy-Wales equity loan affordability calculator will include an energy efficiency element. This means when people look to see how much they can afford they will be given different options depending on the energy efficiency of the property they are looking to buy, and loans will be adjusted according to the energy rating of the home they choose.

“A more energy efficient home costs less in bills, so buyers will potentially be able to afford to borrow more. We know that energy spending can be a major household outgoing, which is why we want to make energy efficiency part of the consideration when people look to buy a home in Wales.

“We have worked closely with the Building Research Establishment on the LENDERS project which modelled this work, and we are the first government, indeed the first organisation in the UK to put this into practice.

“Whilst there is no obligation on mortgage lenders to change

existing practices or their own affordability assessments, we hope to see them follow our lead and make energy efficiency part of the mortgage consideration for all homebuyers in Wales.”

Andrew Sutton, Associate Director, BRE Wales, said:

“This announcement is a great step for the LENDERS project outcomes and fantastic news for first-time buyers in Wales. The more accurate forecasting provided by the research will help many onto the housing ladder who might have struggled to obtain a mortgage previously, and the research we will do in parallel with the adoption should help other financial institutions better understand the practicality of implementing.

“I am delighted to see the LENDERS project translated from research into reality and I hope to see other mortgage lenders follow suit.”

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## **Mark Polin appointed new Chair of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board**

Mark Polin is currently the Chief Constable of North Wales Police and has had 14 years executive experience in a number of highly demanding roles.

He will retire from his current role in July and take up the role of Chair of BCU from September.

Speaking in the Senedd this afternoon, the Health Secretary said:

“I am pleased to announce Mark Polin has been appointed to the role of Chair of BCU. He will bring a wealth of public sector leadership, governance experience, commitment to and knowledge of the communities of North Wales from his role as Chief Constable of North Wales Police. He will help to lead the Health Board through this next critical phase of its improvement journey.”

Mark Polin said:

“I am delighted to have been selected for the position of Chair of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. I look forward to working

with all members of the Board, including the executive team, to improve health and wellbeing across North Wales and develop a clear path by which to steer the Board out of special measures.

“My research prior to selection served to highlight the scale of the challenge we face but I am confident that through clear direction, leadership, joint endeavour and good governance – coupled with the continuing support and scrutiny of Welsh Government – the necessary improvements can be achieved. I would hope my public sector experience, my knowledge of and commitment to the communities of North Wales and my existing relationships with partner organisations will also assist us all to move forward together.”

Mark Polin has worked primarily in the Police Service and has been the leader of North Wales Police for almost nine years. He has worked in several other police forces and has a proven track record of leading and improving performance, underpinned by organisational development and cultural change, as well as managing risk and reputation.

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## [Lesley Griffiths sets out timetable for Basic Payment Scheme post-Brexit](#)

Speaking in plenary on the future of land management, the Cabinet Secretary confirmed that the Basic Payment Scheme will continue as planned for 2018 and for the 2019 scheme year.

From 2020 when powers return from Europe, a gradual and multi-year transition from existing to new schemes will take place. By 2025 the Cabinet Secretary would like implementation completed and will set out further details in July, which will be subject to consultation.

The Cabinet Secretary also reiterated her five core principles for the future of land and the people who manage it. They are:

- we must keep land managers on the land;
- food production remains vital for our nation;
- future support will centre on the provision of public goods that deliver for all the people of Wales; and
- all land managers should have the opportunity to benefit from new schemes.
- we need a prosperous and resilient agricultural sector in Wales, whatever nature of Brexit.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Brexit brings significant changes and we must have a well-planned and multi-year transition. I learned the importance of avoiding a cliff edge removal of subsidies during my recent trip to New Zealand.

“I have always been clear that we should not lose a penny of funding as a result of leaving the EU and I will continue to fight to protect a full and fair allocation of funding to support land management in Wales.

“The UK Government has so far failed to provide any detail or commitment beyond 2022 and I recently jointly wrote with my Scottish counterpart to Michael Gove seeking urgent clarity on future funding.

“Despite this uncertainty I want to set a timetable for Welsh farmers. The Basic Payment Scheme will continue as planned in 2018. I can confirm today that I will also continue to operate the Basic Payment Scheme for the 2019 scheme year.

“From 2020 powers will return from Europe. I then envisage a gradual and multi-year transition from existing to new schemes. By 2025 I want to have completed implementation. I will set out further details in July and can guarantee that changes will be subject to explicit consultation.

“The great challenge of Brexit is to ensure its impact does not undermine the true value land management provides Wales. The great opportunity is to put in place new made-in-Wales policy to help the industry to adjust to future market forces.

“As a Government, we are determined to put Wales in the strongest position to thrive in a post-Brexit world. I am confident our land managers can adapt but it is this Government’s role to provide the time and support needed to achieve this.”