

Economy Secretary opens new facility at Creo Medical in Chepstow

The medical device company specialises in the emerging field of surgical endoscopy, which aids minimally invasive surgery by applying microwave and radio wave energy.

In 2016 Creo Medical received a £2m investment from the Welsh Government supported Finance Wales – now the Development Bank of Wales which helped it to secure a £20m investment, facilitating the creation of 22 high quality, well paid jobs. In addition the company has received investment advice from the Welsh Government's Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme, part funded by European Regional Development fund, to support this investment.

Creo Medical has also received support from Welsh Government through a £3m equity investment from Finance Wales which secured the relocation of its head office from Bath to Chepstow and has provided crucial investment to aid the company's expansion.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“It is a pleasure to be in Chepstow to open the new facility here at Creo Medical.

“Not only will the new facility enhance Creo's role as a key player in the life sciences sector both in Wales and internationally, it will also enhance the company's ability to develop new products to address the ever increasing challenges within the health sector.

“I am proud that both the Welsh Government and the Development Bank of Wales have played their part in supporting Creo's growth.

“That support has contributed to the company's headquarters moving from Bath to Chepstow and has provided a real boost to the local economy, delivering an additional 22 high quality, well paid jobs to Chepstow.”

Craig Gulliford, CEO of Creo Medical said:

“We have been delighted to have the Economy Secretary formally open our new facility in Chepstow. Our facility has been designed to allow us to expand into as we continue to deliver on our milestones. With the continued support of the Welsh Government, the Development Bank of Wales and our other investors, we believe that we have the right platform to allow us to reach our ultimate goal of bringing a suite of innovative, minimally invasive,

surgical devices to market all operating from our ground breaking CROMA electrosurgery platform, with the aim of reducing the costs and risks involved in GI procedures while improving patient outcomes.”

Dr. Richard Thompson from the Development Bank of Wales said:

“We are proud to be a long standing equity investor in Creo Medical. It’s been great to work with such a passionate management team over the last five years. Since relocating to Wales Creo have gone from strength-to-strength, raising multiple funding rounds and listing on AIM in December last year. Their cutting edge technology and products have the potential to deliver patient benefits and ultimately to save thousands of lives.”

[Welsh experience on offer to help England with changes to their organ donation system](#)

On 1 December 2015, Wales became the first part of the UK to introduce a soft opt-out system.

People aged 18 and over who have lived in Wales for more than 12 months and who die in Wales are now regarded as having consented to organ donation unless they have opted out. This is called deemed consent.

People who want to be organ donors can register a decision to opt in or do nothing, which will mean they have no objection to being an organ donor. Those people who do not want to be organ donor can opt out at any time.

Vaughan Gething said:

“We firmly believe the benefits of a soft opt out organ donation system to those needing a transplant are literally, life changing.

“I was pleased therefore to hear the Prime Minister announcing her intention to follow our lead by consulting on a new opt-out system for organ donation in England.

“I’m extremely proud of what we’ve achieved so far and along the way we have gained a wealth of experience in implementing our own opt out system in Wales. We are on standby to help England in any

way we can as they take forward legislation on this important issue.

“On Wednesday [1 Nov 2017], I’ll be launching a major new campaign focusing on the role of families in the organ donation process. While we are always happy to offer our advice and expertise to England, and other nations considering making a change, we know there is still work to do in Wales to raise awareness of the changes to our organ donation system. We want to ensure there are as many organs available for those in need of a transplant.”

Welsh Government committed to reducing A55 noise for Abergele residents

A contract is set to go to tender soon with works on the proposed barrier due to begin in January. The barrier will act as a mitigation measure for properties that are experiencing noise levels over a predetermined value and have been identified as a priority area in the Welsh Government’s Noise Action Plan for Wales.

In 2015, the Welsh Government invested in a similar noise reduction barrier at Abergele and has now committed to this additional stand-alone measure.

Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates said:

“Each and every day thousands of vehicles use the A55 and we know with that comes a heightened level of noise from this key strategic route.

“A high level of noise is a serious issue and we fully understand how this can have an impact on people who live and work nearby, which is why we, as a responsible government, are taking action to help mitigate the effect of noise from the A55 in the area.

“Whilst there are details of the work still to be confirmed, I am keen to ensure construction of the barrier is carried out with minimal impact to the travelling public.

“This project is yet another example of our commitment to the A55 and to communities in North Wales.”

£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](#).