

First Act of Assembly term receives Royal Assent

Land transaction tax will replace stamp duty land tax in Wales when it is devolved in April 2018.

At an official sealing ceremony, the Land Transaction Tax and Anti-avoidance of Devolved Taxes (Wales) Bill became an Act of the Assembly. It is the first Act of this Assembly term.

A Bill receives Royal Assent when Letters Patent under the Welsh Seal signed with Her Majesty's own hand signifying Her Assent are notified to the Clerk of the Assembly.

The First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones applied the Welsh Seal to the Letters Patent at the sealing ceremony, which was also attended by Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“This Act is a significant step in our devolution journey – for the first time in almost 800 years we will have our own taxes.

“It will bring additional responsibility as we become responsible for raising a proportion of our own money and an opportunity to make a real difference to public services in Wales.”

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“ This Act will enable us to introduce a new made-in-Wales tax on land transactions to replace stamp duty land tax, ensuring public services continue to benefit from the revenues raised by this important tax.

“I would like to thank all those who have helped us shape this Act and look forward to continuing to work with them as it is implemented.”

Accelerated Growth Programme passes

the 1000 job creation milestone

To-date the programme – which offers a bespoke package of support helping businesses to grow faster, stronger and for longer – has created 1,200 jobs, helped participating companies attract £21.4m of private sector investment and generate £8.3m worth of exports.

It means that every £1 spent on the programme leverages a further £5 of private sector investment – and a further £2 of exports for the Welsh economy.

The programme, launched just two years ago with EU and Welsh Government funding, is currently supporting 370 companies, including start ups, working across Wales in a wide range of sectors.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“SMEs and start ups are the lifeblood of the Welsh economy and this programme is specifically designed to help these businesses overcome any strategic constraints that may be hampering their true high growth potential.

“This approach is working – these businesses are delivering results, creating jobs, increasing turnover and export sales which in turn are providing benefits to local communities throughout the country. I am pleased to note that a number have already created more than 50 jobs each and some have attracted in excess of £1m of private investment.”

One example is Laser Wire Solutions, based in Treforest Industrial Estate, Pontypridd, that has seen exports increase by more than £1m since it joined the programme in 2015 – and which it aims to double over the next twelve months.

The company manufactures laser based equipment that strips ultra-fine wires used in industries such as medical device manufacturing, high speed data and aerospace. The business has tripled turnover in the last three years and employs more than 20 highly skilled engineers.

CEO Paul Taylor said:

“We joined the programme to help us overcome the challenges we faced in rapidly scaling the business and fulfilling our true growth potential. We see ourselves as very much a global business and the support we have had has helped us to focus on growing an international company. The Accelerated Growth Programme has been a fantastic resource as it is so flexible and responsive to our needs as we develop.”

The company has benefited from: specialist 1-2-1 consultancy on market research to identify high value clients; HR advice to support management of people in a growing business and ICT advice to ensure they have robust systems critical for back office management and information.

Wales stands in solidarity with the people of Manchester – First Minister Carwyn Jones

First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, said

“Wales stands in solidarity with the people of Manchester, and all those families who are suffering today. There is a particular cruelty at work in this act directed as it was towards teenagers coming out of a concert. It is difficult to imagine an act more appalling and more senseless.

“I pay tribute to the police, the ambulance service, the NHS in Manchester and all those many others in the city who opened their doors and reached out the hand of help when help was needed. Already we have seen countless stories of bravery, generosity and solidarity which show beyond doubt that the people of Manchester, and this country, will not bow to terrorism. That hope, togetherness and unity will always beat hate, and those who seek to divide us.

“Manchester is well known and well loved to very many Welsh people, especially those living in the north. It has seen terrorism before and I have no doubt about the resilience and strength of that great city.

“I have written both to the Prime Minister and the Mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham, expressing our outrage at the attacks and offering our solidarity with the people of Manchester.

“I received a National Security briefing from the Cabinet Office by phone this morning, and we will continue to monitor events as they develop. The priorities at this stage must be to give families the support they need, and allow the police the time and space required to conduct their fast-moving investigations without distraction.

“We must never get used to terrorism – at home, or abroad. We can never accept these attacks as a fact of life. We should continue to call it what it is – alien, cruel and hateful. The message from

this Chamber is that we will not be cowed, we will not shrink into the shadows and we will not change our way of life. That is the best tribute we can offer to the people of Manchester today.”

New top-class Welsh primary school for Cardiff

Funding to build a brand new Welsh language primary school in Cardiff has been approved by Welsh Education Secretary Kirsty Williams.

Tuesday 23 May 2017

Cardiff Council has been awarded £3.9 million against a total project cost of £7.8 million to build a new build 420 Welsh medium primary school with 80 Nursery places on Lewis Road, Splott (Maltings Park). Education Secretary Kirsty Williams said:

“The demand for Welsh medium education in Cardiff has increased significantly in recent years and it’s great that we have the 21st Century Schools and Education programme that allows us to respond in a planned way to that growth.

“I’m eager to ensure that children within communities across the county, wherever they live, have access to the best possible educational resources. Children in this area of Cardiff will benefit from a modern Welsh-medium teaching environment as well as a new outdoor play and educational area.

“It’s not only the pupils and teachers who’ll benefit from this new development, but the wider so will the wider community, as this is a major construction scheme creating employment and providing opportunities for local suppliers.”

New facility for Zip-Clip helps secure new contracts as business ramps up

global exports drive

Zip-Clip's international growth plans were outlined by CEO Steve Goldsworthy at the official launch of their new £1.8m facility on Offa's Dyke Business Park in Welshpool which was built by the Welsh Government and opened by Economy Secretary Ken Skates.

Exports currently account for 38% of sales by the company which designs and manufactures innovative suspension systems for installing heating, ventilation and air condition systems in industrial and commercial buildings. It also supplies the electrical market and specialises in Seismic bracing for the building services industry.

Zip-Clip has more than 50 key distributors globally – many of whom were present at their opening – and plans to increase its presence overseas.

This year it is opening a new distribution centre in Melbourne, appointing two distributors in Japan and has already appointed a global manufacturer of cable management containment systems to represent their range in South America, Portugal and Spain.

It is currently in discussions regarding representation in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and has appointed a new commercial manager to support its exports and liaise with a number of OEM clients operating across Europe.

Its export drive has benefited from support from the Welsh Government's Export Support Programmes which enabled the company to explore and access new international markets including New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, the Middle East, India and Europe.

Congratulating the company on their export growth Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"This is a great illustration of how SMEs can really benefit from exporting and find new lucrative markets for their products. The Welsh Government can offer companies a raft of help, advice and support to target overseas markets and I am delighted Zip-Clip has benefited from these programmes.

"I am also pleased the Welsh Government is supporting the company's expansion and that Zip-Clip is already reaping the benefits from operating from larger premises having already secured a new £1m plus contract and taken on five new members of staff to service growing orders."

At 17,500 sq ft, their new premises are more than twice the size of their previous facility in Newtown and since moving they have hosted business visits from Finland, Italy, US and Australia.

Managing Director Matthew Clay-Michael added:

“Without this new facility we couldn’t even consider growth and now we have the space to expand and target new markets. As well as securing a three year £1m contract with a major global manufacturer of electrical containment systems we are in talks with one of the world’s largest manufacturers of lighting products to make a bespoke lighting suspension system.

“We experienced a 24% growth in UK and overseas sales last year and plan to achieve at least 15% growth year on year over the next three years which is achievable given the increased capacity in our new facility and new products being developed.”

Zip-Clip’s products have been used on numerous prestigious buildings worldwide – ranging from Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi to the Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Texas – from Kuala Lumpur Tower in Malaysia to The Gherkin and Shard in London.