

Economy Secretary visits businesses in mid Wales to discuss local challenges and opportunities

The visits are part of the Economy Secretary's ongoing commitment to empowering and strengthening Wales' regions, so the fruits of prosperity are spread much more evenly across Wales.

It is an approach that is set out clearly in the Welsh Government's Economic Action Plan, which was launched in December.

The Economy Secretary has appointed three Chief Regional Officers , one for Mid and South West Wales, one for South East Wales and one for North Wales as part of his work to empower Welsh regions.

The role of the Chief Regional Officers is to engage with and listen to partners within their region and represent their views and interests back to the Welsh Government.

As part of the day of visits the Economy Secretary and the Chief Regional Officer for Mid and South West Wales, Rhodri Griffiths, went to global healthcare company, PCI Pharma who employ around 360 people in Hay-on-Wye.

They also visited Cellpath, a company that specialises in the manufacture and supply of products and services to the Cellular Pathology sector and employs 85 staff at its base in Newtown, and Wynnstay in Llansantffraid, an agricultural produce supplier that employs 400 people in mid Wales.

The Economy Secretary also attended a roundtable meeting in Newtown with local businesses who are keen to expand in the area but have concerns around whether their needs can be met by the existing supply of commercial properties.

Ken Skates said:

"I am committed to empowering Wales regions and to building on their individual strengths in order to secure maximum economic growth for Wales.

"My Economic Action Plan, recognises that each region of Wales has its own opportunities and challenges and that a one size fits all approach to Economic development will not go far enough to drive the regional economic growth that Wales needs.

"I have appointed three Chief Regional Officers to provide a regional voice in Government. They will listen to and involve local partners in decision making and feedback local intelligence that will help to tailor our work. Visits and meetings like the ones we

have enjoyed today will be absolutely key to making this approach a success.

“One consistent theme that has come out of today’s visits is the concern locally about the supply of good quality commercial property. This is a pressing issue, and one that we have identified in the Economic Plan Action. We will now be working with local authorities, the Mid Wales Manufacturing Group and the Growing Mid Wales Partnership, to address this in order to ensure that we can maximise the economic potential of this area of Wales.”

As part of the ongoing delivery of the Economic Action Plan the Economy Secretary and Chief Regional Officer will be visiting other businesses in Mid and South West Wales in the coming months.