

Welsh Government investing £2.5m to build new facility for Qioptiq in support of its new £82m contract

Work will now commence immediately on the new 24,900 sq. ft. facility that the Welsh Government will construct on land it owns adjacent to Qioptiq's premises on St Asaph Business Park. It will provide secure warehousing and manufacturing space to enable Qioptiq to achieve full operating capacity to deliver the MoD contract within the required timescale. Qioptiq will be investing c£2m in fit out and IT systems.

Ken Skates said:

"Winning this major contract is hugely significant for Qioptiq and for North Wales. Qioptiq is one of our key Anchor companies working in a priority sector and is one of the most dynamic and innovative companies in Wales.

"I am delighted the Welsh Government was able to support the company's successful bid from the early pre qualification stage through to the development of a purpose designed facility that is vital to deliver the contract.

"This new contract secures the long term future of the company in St Asaph where it has a significant economic impact on the local economy through expenditure by employees and through local supply chains. It is another high value manufacturing company whose future has been secured by the work of Welsh Government."

Peter White, Managing Director at Qioptiq said

"We are delighted to have received this major contract from UK MOD to support equipment vital to the safety of our soldiers in front line operations. The support from Welsh Government and the hard work, capability and commitment of our employees were the key factors in our success. We look forward to continuing the successful relationship we have with UK MoD and supporting our troops with this important contract."

Under the new six year contract Qioptiq will supply and maintain a large range of Surveillance and Target Acquisition equipment for the MoD. The company specialises in the design and manufacture of optical and photonic products and solutions that serve a wide range of markets and applications in areas of defence, aerospace, medial and life sciences and industrial manufacturing.

It is a recognised, first-tier supplier to many of the defence and aerospace sector's leading companies with a product range that includes some of the most sophisticated advanced optical technologies ranging from Night Vision Sights, to Head Up Display Optical modules, through to Space Components

Qioptiq is part of the US owned Excelitas Group which has a worldwide presence with locations throughout Europe, Asia and the USA employing more than 5000 people. It employs over 500 people in North Wales on two sites at St Asaph and Bodelwyddan.

[Long-Bailey writes to Greg Clark to demand guarantee of jobs for Vauxhall workforce](#)

Shadow

Business Secretary, Rebecca Long-Bailey, writes to Greg Clark about potential sale of Vauxhall to Peugeot-PSA

The

Shadow Secretary for BEIS has today written to Greg Clark, Secretary of State for BEIS, urging him to guarantee that jobs and terms and conditions of the Vauxhall workforce will be protected in the event of the company's sale to Peugeot-PSA.

Rebecca

Long-Bailey has also requested an Urgent Question on the matter in the House of Commons, which will be taken at 3.30 today.

On

the threat the proposed takeover poses to the UK workforce, Rebecca Long-Bailey said:

"These reports are deeply worrying to the 4,500 workers employed at Vauxhall's Luton and Ellesmere Port plants, and to the tens of thousands of employees in its retail, support and supply chain operations. PSA's history of axing jobs in the name of rationalisation are also concerning. Britain's automotive industry has become a world-leader by developing its skilled and highly-committed workforce and becoming more productive, not by ruthlessly driving down costs."

On

the implications of the proposal for the Government's industrial strategy,

Rebecca Long-Bailey said:

“a piecemeal, ad hoc approach will see our automotive sector lurch from crisis to crisis as the uncertainties created by Brexit begin to take their toll. Waiting for car makers to go to the brink before offering them support is the very antithesis of an industrial strategy.”

On the need to give workers in the UK the same protections given to European counterparts, Rebecca Long-Bailey said:

“failure to provide equivalent Government support to Opel’s UK sites as that seen in France and Germany, and to ensure full parity of treatment between Opel’s UK and French workers would be a betrayal of the UK workforce.”

Ends

Editors’ notes

- It has recently emerged that General Motors is discussing the sale of Opel, which includes Vauxhall, to PSA Group.
- 4,500 workers are employed at Vauxhall’s Luton and Ellesmere port plants, along with tens of thousands more who are employed in the retail, support and supply chain operations.
- These jobs are under threat from the proposed sale, should Vauxhall cut back production, a particular concern given the PSA Group has a reputation for cutting jobs to rationalise production.
- The French Government owns a 14% stake in PSA and the German government is providing financial support to its Opel sites.
- The full text of the letter is as follows:

Dear
Rt Hon Greg Clark MP,

I
am writing to request an urgent meeting to discuss reports that General
Motors
may be about to sell its European business, Opel, to PSA, the owner of
Peugeot
and Citroen brands.

These
reports are deeply worrying to the 4,500 workers employed at Vauxhall's Luton
and Ellesmere Port plants, and to the tens of thousands of employees in its
retail, support and supply chain operations. PSA's history of axing jobs in
the
name of rationalisation are also concerning. Britain's automotive industry
has
become a world-leader by developing its skilled and highly-committed
workforce
and becoming more productive, not by ruthlessly driving down costs.

I
understand that you met with PSA executives on 16th February and that the
Prime
Minister is due to meet PSA CEO Carlos Taveres shortly. I am keen to hear in
detail what assurances they were able to give you about their plans for
Vauxhall, and what you and your Government are doing to ensure that PSA do
not
turn their backs on Opel's UK workforce.

Like
you, I welcomed Nissan's decision late last year to continue to invest in the
UK, but argued at the time that all car manufacturers should be given the
same
assurances. Recent developments have underlined this point. It was reported
over the weekend that PSA have now been given the same guarantees, but I
remain
concerned that a piecemeal, ad hoc approach will see our automotive sector
lurch from crisis to crisis as the uncertainties created by Brexit begin to
take their toll. Waiting for car makers to go to the brink before offering
them
support is the very antithesis of an industrial strategy.

This
is particularly so given that the French Government owns a 14% stake in PSA.
In
light of predictions by analysts and industry experts that French workers
will
be left unscathed by any buy-out, and that job losses will fall elsewhere,
including in the UK, it is hard not to worry that the British Government's
hands-off approach is letting workers down. Even the German Government is
providing financial support to its Opel sites, and workers in Germany are
much
harder to sack than those in the UK. Under such circumstances, failure to
provide equivalent Government support to Opel's UK sites as that seen in

France

and Germany, and to ensure full parity of treatment between Opel's UK and French workers would be a betrayal of the UK workforce.

In the longer run, it is clear that the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper launched last month has done little to reassure manufacturers weighing up whether or not to stay in the UK after we leave the European Union. Urgent action is needed to encourage the reshoring of manufacturing supply chains and secure single market access for key exporting industries. Without this, there is a real danger that many of our finest manufacturers will fall victim to new import and export tariffs.

The next few days will be critical in determining the future of Vauxhall in the UK.

I would therefore be most grateful if you would agree to meet me as a matter of urgency to discuss what action you are taking to protect the jobs and terms and conditions of Opel's UK workforce. It may also be welcome to involve those MP's representing areas directly affected by this issue in our discussions for example those members representing Luton and Ellesmere Port.

Yours
sincerely,

Rebecca
Long-Bailey

Shadow
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

[Container terminal in court after worker injured](#)

London Container Terminal (Tilbury) Limited (LCT) has been fined after a worker was seriously injured when the 'straddle' carrier he was driving overturned at Tilbury Docks in November 2014.

Basildon Crown Court heard that on 16 November 2014 a worker inadvertently drove his straddle carrier into a large excavation at the docks. The court was

told that looking down from his cab, the driver did not see the road cones, small flashing lights or the ticker tape around the excavation because it was dark and the weather conditions were poor.

The straddle carrier, a vehicle used in the port terminal for stacking and moving freight shipping containers, toppled over. The worker suffered life changing injuries, his head wound required 29 staples to close and he continues to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the precautions taken by LCT were wholly inadequate to prevent the vehicle from being able to enter the excavation. The court heard that all of the straddle carrier drivers working in the vicinity of the excavation had been exposed to the risk for several days during the course of the excavation works.

London Container Terminal Limited of Northfleet Hope House, Tilbury Docks, Tilbury pleaded guilty to breaching sections 2(1) and 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have been fined £180,000 and ordered to pay costs of £73,296. London Container Terminal ceased trading in December the fine will be paid by the Port of Tilbury (London) Limited.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Nicola Jaynes said: "This was a serious incident and that could have been much worse. This was preventable if LCT had the correct safety precautions in place. This case serves as a reminder that suitable precautions are required to protect both pedestrians and vehicles from entering excavations."

Further information on how to reduce the risks involved with workplace transport can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm>

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. [hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/) ^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at [http://press.hse.gov.uk](http://www.press.hse.gov.uk)

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

President of India calls upon Shri Ram College of Commerce to set itself higher benchmarks of excellence

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee addressed the inaugural Ceremony of the 90th Anniversary of Shri Ram College of Commerce today (February 20, 2017) in New Delhi.

More than 20 lakh people visit Hunar Haat so far

The second “Hunar Haat” of Minority Affairs Ministry, has become a hit among the visitors and more than 20 lakh people have visited it so far.