

Welsh Government investment in steel creates and safeguards 550 jobs

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates confirmed that the Welsh Government had invested £2.8m to help create 90 new steel jobs in Wales and safeguard a further 477.

Ken Skates said the investment at Code Serve in Brynmawr, Dyfed Steels in Llanelli, Express Reinforcements in Neath and Celsa Steel in Cardiff would help to secure a sustainable future for the Welsh steel industry.

The Economy Secretary said:

“The future of the steel industry and steel related businesses are hugely important to manufacturing in Wales.

“Indeed the steel sector is a key priority for the Welsh Government and I am delighted to announce support for four businesses that between them are investing £8.75m in new facilities, new equipment, expansion projects and environmental improvements in Wales.

“Together their and our investment will create 90 new jobs and safeguard a further 477 highly skilled jobs in Cardiff and the South Wales Valleys.

“The announcement of new jobs is of course always welcome, but at a time when the sector faces extremely difficult trading conditions and stiff global competition, the safeguarding of existing jobs is more important than ever to the sustainability of the sector and the growth of our economy.”

The Economy Secretary announce that Dyfed Steels – the largest independent steel stockholder and processor in Wales and the south west – is investing more than £4m in a new manufacturing facility.

The expansion is backed by £750,000 of Welsh Government support and will create 30 new jobs and safeguard more than 170 in Carmarthenshire.

The company are currently turning away a significant volume of business annually due to lack of capacity. They have identified expansion opportunities at their Llanelli site, rather than at another of their sites in England.

Meanwhile fifty new jobs are being created at Code Serve in Brynmawr following an expansion and relocation plan supported by funding from the Welsh Government.

Code Serve provides comprehensive and specialist fabrication and coded

welding services nationwide as well as structural steelwork for major infrastructure projects around the UK.

The company has outgrown its current facility at the former AIC Steel site in Newport and is relocating to the former Tecweld building on Noble Square Industrial Estate in Brynmawr.

The £1m investment includes the purchase of new equipment and is backed by £400K from the Welsh Government's Repayable Fund for SMEs.

Express Reinforcements in Neath, a company that specialises in the manufacturing and supply of steel reinforcement products for the construction sector, are investing £150,000 in bespoke machinery and IT hardware and software to increase capacity.

The move will create and safeguard 22 jobs and has been supported by £65,000 from Welsh Government.

Finally the Welsh Government is providing £1.6m towards major environmental improvements at Celsa Manufacturing (UK)'s two key steel production sites in Cardiff.

The move will safeguard up to 280 jobs and support the growth and sustainability of the business.

Celsa Manufacturing (UK) is the UK's largest manufacturer of steel reinforcement products with 100% of its output produced from recycled scrap. Across its two main sites in Cardiff, it directly employs 600 people, together with 194 full time contractors while its activities in Wales support around 3000 supply chain jobs.

The investment will help safeguard the future of around 280 jobs including employees, contract workers and supply chain personnel.

[Relaunch of the West End Community and Sports Hub – survey](#)



I recently participated in a very well-attended meeting at Harris Academy aimed at relaunching the West End Community and Sports Hub. There was a great mix of local sports clubs there and much enthusiasm.

To help the West End Community and Sports Hub relaunch to assist with and build community sport in the West End, there is now an on-line survey. This takes just a couple of minutes to complete and you can access it [here](#).

[China's fixed broadband speed hits almost 12Mbps](#)

A report released by Broadband Development Alliance, a third party research organization, shows the development of broadband speed in China. According to the report, China's broadband speed grew steadily in the fourth quarter in 2016, with average fixed broadband download speed reaching 11.9 Mbps, that of 3G and 4G network respectively hit 3.89 Mbps and 11.93 Mbps.

With efforts from the Chinese government, broadband speeds have grown very fast since 2015. The coverage of the 4G network expands and the speed increases continuously. China has built the largest 4G network worldwide. The amount of 4G network users accounts for 55% among all mobile users.

There are 13 provincial administrative regions with an average fixed broadband download speed over 12 Mbps. The report ranked the top five provincial administrative regions in fixed broadband download speed as Shanghai, Shandong, Jiangsu, Beijing and Fujian. Among the capital cities and municipalities, Shanghai, Jinan, Fuzhou, Zhengzhou and Beijing are the top five cities in the fixed broadband download speed list.

Judging from the speed of mobile broadband of different operators, China Unicom's 3G and 4G network download speeds are the highest among the three major operators, which are 4.81 Mbps and 13.72 Mbps respectively.

Meanwhile, according to the report, the average time for fixed broadband users to open the first page is 1.15 second in the fourth quarter in 2016, and the average download speed for web video has reached 9.34 Mbps. Both are faster compared with the previous quarter.

[That article 50 letter](#)

Yesterday the various amendments proposed to the Leaving the EU Bill were

voted down. Labour decided not to press one of their main one to a vote because the government offered assurances that Parliament will get to vote on the final deal, to be held before the European Parliament votes on it. That vote will be about whether to accept the new Agreement or to leave without one.

During the exchanges the fundamental question of whether sending the Article 50 is irrevocable or not came up. I argued it is. The Treaty makes no provision to withdraw the letter or to cancel exit two years later, which is automatic with or without a deal. The Treaty says if you start to leave and change your mind you need to reapply for membership. You do not simply keep or reinstate the membership you proposed to quit.

I reminded the Commons that both the Attorney General and the Remain lawyer in the Supreme Court case argued that the notice to leave is irrevocable. In finding against the government on one count the Supreme court had to rely on the irrevocability of the process. It is only because the change of leaving becomes inevitable when the letter is sent could the Court say Parliament therefore had to pass an Act and could not just do it by debate and vote. Predictably the Remain side who were so keen to use this argument to win in court now have changed their mind and say it may not be!

I will post the exchanges later today.

[Yemen: UN, partners seek \\$2.1 billion to stave off famine in 2017](#)

8 February 2017 – The United Nations and humanitarian partners today launched an international appeal for \$2.1 billion to provide life-saving assistance to 12 million people in Yemen in 2017 – the largest-ever humanitarian response plan for the war-torn country.

Two years of war have devastated Yemen... Without international support, they may face the threat of famine in the course of 2017 and I urge donors to sustain and increase their support to our collective response, said UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien in a press release on the launch of the Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen in Geneva.

Humanitarian partners are ready to respond. But they need timely, unimpeded access, and adequate resources, to meet the humanitarian needs wherever they arise, said Mr. O'Brien, who is also the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

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He noted that since March 2015, violent conflict and disregard by all parties to the conflict for their responsibility to protect civilians have created a vast protection crisis in Yemen and millions of people face threats to their safety and basic human rights every day. In addition, deliberate war tactics are accelerating the collapse of key institutions and the economy, thereby exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities.

This has left an alarming 18.8 million people – more than two thirds of the population – in need of humanitarian assistance, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which also estimates that 10.3 million people are acutely affected and nearly 3.3 million people – including 2.1 million children – are acutely malnourished.

“We remain committed to the principle that our plans must be grounded both in evidence and actual capacity, and I ask donors today to help Yemen in its moment of great need,” said the Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, Jamie McGoldrick.

In 2016, 120 national and international partners including UN agencies and non-governmental organisations working out of humanitarian hubs in Aden, Al Hudaydah, Ibb, Sana’a, and Sa’ada assisted more than 5.6 million people with direct humanitarian aid.



Source: OCHA 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen