

Balfour Beatty and Jones Bros to build Caernarfon and Bontnewydd Bypass

Detailed designs, preparations and ground investigations are currently taking place with the setting up of site compound and offices to begin shortly. Construction will then begin during this winter.

The 9.8km bypass connecting Caernarfon and Bontnewydd will be vital in improving journey times and reliability, as well as reducing traffic congestion on local routes which will provide improved active travel opportunities.

The scheme between Balfour Beatty and Jones Bros includes trainee, apprentice and graduate placements to work on the project.

Transport Minister Ken Skates said:

“I’m pleased to announce Balfour Beatty and Jones Bros will be working together to construct this significant development in North West Wales.

“I have made clear this scheme will deliver for the area and provide a boost for the region’s economy. Balfour Beatty Jones Bros will be putting this into action by offering local employment opportunities as well as placements for trainees, apprentices and graduates. There will also be a prime focus on local spend on materials and sub-contracts where possible and meet the buyer events will be held in due course to encourage local people and companies to apply for work on the project.

“The Welsh Government is investing substantially in the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass which will make a real difference to communities in the area as well as the travelling public.

“Design and development work continues at speed and construction will begin shortly.”

Thomas Edgcumbe, Managing Director for Balfour Beatty’s Regional North and Midlands business, said:

“Today marks a significant milestone in the delivery of a scheme which on completion will provide significant benefits to the economic landscape.

“Having worked with Jones Bros and the Welsh Government on a number of ongoing and historic projects, we are confident that we will successfully deliver this highly anticipated scheme to schedule and

leave behind a lasting legacy for the local community.”

Hefin Lloyd-Davies, contracts director at Jones Bros Civil Engineering UK, said:

“The progression of the contract is pleasing and we’re looking forward to providing benefits to the region including jobs, training, and skills.

“We have a proud history of not only delivering high profile projects in a joint venture with Balfour Beatty, but caring about the communities in which we operate.”

Extra funding to boost skills and tackle child poverty in final Budget

An extra £12 million will fund measures to create apprenticeships across Wales and a further £2 million will be used to help parents meet the costs of sending their children to school and extend the successful school summer holiday Food and Fun programme.

The final Budget will also include the package of additional revenue and capital funding proposals for local government in 2019-20 and £26 million to increase support for high street retailers and other businesses.

The final Budget 2019-20 includes:

- An extra £6.8 million revenue in 2019-20 to support the Welsh Government’s flagship commitment to deliver 100,000 all-age apprenticeships this Assembly term
- An extra £4.771 million revenue in 2019-20 to support further education pay
- A further £2 million to help tackle child poverty through:
 - An additional £1.6 million to further extend the PDG Access scheme, which helps parents meet the everyday costs of sending their children to school. This is in addition to the funding announced in the draft Budget to double the scheme.
 - An additional £0.4 million revenue in 2019-20 to extend the school holiday Fun and Food programme, which provides children with a meal and access to learning during the school summer holidays.

Rebecca Evans said:

“Apprenticeships are vital for helping people gain high-quality vocational training and providing opportunities for businesses and the economy to thrive.

“We are also committed to tackling child poverty in Wales. The PDG Access scheme and the Food and Fun programme provide important help to children who most need our support.”

These funding allocations are in addition to the package of additional funding measures for local government – worth £141.5 million over 3 years (2018 to 2021) – announced in November.

The Welsh Government has also announced a £26 million package in 2019-20 to enhance and extend the existing high street rates relief scheme.

The Minister for Finance added:

“The final Budget 2019-20 has been developed against the backdrop of continued austerity and the shadow cast by the ongoing uncertainty associated with Brexit.

“When we published our draft proposals, we committed to local government being a key priority for any additional funding following the UK Autumn Budget.

“I am pleased we have been able to make further allocations and invest in the services people rely on.”

The final Budget sets out the Welsh Government’s spending plans for 2019-20 and capital plans to 2021.

All the final Budget documents are available in English and Welsh on the Welsh Government’s website.

A debate on the final Budget for 2019-20 will take place on 15 January 2019.

First Minister announces new cabinet

The First Minister said:

“It is an enormous privilege for me to be appointed First Minister of Wales. Every leader needs a strong team around them, and I am delighted to introduce my new cabinet which is a strong mix of experience, talent and passion.

“Brexit is our greatest challenge. In the extraordinary and regrettable circumstances created by the UK Government, it is vital that we prepare for all outcomes. I have retained Ministers in posts where their experience of Brexit preparation is key, while creating a new post to reflect the priority I attach to international relationships and trade.

“As a government we will continue to speak up for Wales, to fight our country’s corner and make sure the government in London is never in any doubt at all of what matters to the people of Wales.”

Cabinet and ministers:

Vaughan Gething

Minister for Health and Social Services

Julie Morgan

Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services

Eluned Morgan

Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language

Dafydd Elis-Thomas

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

Ken Skates

Minister for Economy and Transport

Lee Waters

Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport

Julie James

Minister for Housing and Local Government

Hannah Blythyn

Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government

Rebecca Evans

Minister for Finance and Trefnydd

Kirsty Williams

Minister for Education

Lesley Griffiths

Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

Jeremy Miles

Counsel General Designate and Brexit Minister

Jane Hutt

Deputy Minister and Chief Whip

Welsh Government pledges ongoing support for Food Sector

The visit to Peter's Foods in Bedwas comes exactly one year on from the launch of the Economic Action Plan which focuses on growing Wales' regional economies and spreading wealth and well being across Wales and identifies food as one of four foundation sectors where the Welsh Government wants to work proactively with businesses to improve sustainability, quality and long term prospects.

The other three Foundation Sectors identified in the Economic Action Plan are Tourism, Retail and Care.

Peter's Foods began as a family owned business in the mid 1970s selling pastry products. While its management has changed over the years, its reputation for producing award winning savoury pastries and sausages remains firmly intact. It currently employs 700 people.

Speaking at the visit to Peter's Foods Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

"One year ago I was proud to launch our new Economic Action Plan which sets out a clear vision for building stronger foundations for growth, supercharging the industries of the future, and empowering Wales' regions.

I have been really encouraged by the positive response it has received from the business community and as a result of the Action Plan we now have over 100 Economic Contracts in place with companies across Wales who are seeking our support.

The Plan also identifies four foundation sectors – food, tourism, retail and care – that really are the backbone of our local economies.

These are sectors that provide vital jobs and essential goods and services to people right in the heart of our communities. Indeed food and drink manufacturing alone contributes turnover of £4.8bn to our economy and employs 23,000 people across Wales.

Today I want to reiterate my commitment to supporting our regional economies and working the food sector and with companies just like Peter's, so we can help them to seize opportunities to innovate, evolve, increase their productivity and grow. We are also working closely with the sector to promote working in the food sector as an attractive career option that can offer long term prospects and a clear progression route."

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs said:

“I am impressed by the range of award winning savoury pastries produced by Peter’s Foods over many years here in Bedwas where the company is a major employer and I welcome the appointment of David Lloyd from Food Innovation Wales as the new Non Executive Director.”

Mike Grimwood, managing director, Peter’s Food Service, said:

“We welcome the visit by both the Cabinet Secretaries to Peter’s today.

Welsh Government has been extremely supportive of this iconic Welsh company over many years, recognising the important role the company plays in both the sector, and the local community – we are a major employer, employing almost 700 local people.”

Boost for Llanelli as Welsh Government helps create 85 new jobs at Calsonic

The plant currently employs a workforce in excess of 300 to manufacture cooling systems and air conditioning components for many of the major automotive companies worldwide.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“First and foremost, this is a real vote of confidence in the workforce at the company’s Llanelli plant. To have a company of such international standing commit to securing their current workforce alongside creating a further 85 jobs during such uncertain times is excellent news.

“For our part, our £4.4m investment has not only helped secure these jobs over a period of at least the next 5 years, but also ensures that Calsonic Kansei, and Wales have the necessary capacity and expertise to be a global leader in emerging Electric Vehicle technologies, particularly battery cooling developments.

“This move to a more sustainable model aligns directly with our Economic Action Plan and sees the company commit to growth, fair work, reducing their carbon footprint and promoting health, up-

skilling and learning in the work place.

“It’s an opportune moment to for us to ensure this important regional employer plays a continued role in our growing economy and builds on our commitment to make sure our businesses are ready and equipped to make the most of the opportunities presented by the technologies of tomorrow.”

Keiichiro Miyanaga, CEO of Calsonic Kansei in Europe greatly welcomed this award, adding:

“This support will help us secure the necessary skills, products and investment in our Llanelli site to meet the rapidly evolving requirements from electrification within the Automotive Industry. Through investment in product development and manufacturing capacity within the site, we can ensure we have the required capability to meet the future product needs of our key customers.”