

High tech Newport building now home to IBM, BT, Nokia and others

The 750,000 sq ft building in Newport was initially specifically built for wafer fabrication production. Its specialist nature meant it was a very difficult property to let or sell which resulted in it remaining empty for many years.

However ten years ago Welsh Government entered into an agreement for lease with Next Generation Data to develop the building into a data centre – an innovative solution which has proven to be immensely successful, with companies such as BT, IBM and Nokia now working at the site.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This building is a real success story for both NGD and Welsh Government, having turned an unlettable building into something really quite special and economically successful.

“Working alongside Next Generation Data, this is now the site of a state of the art data centre which offers the capabilities and flexibility to meet the specific needs of its customers with great space, power and cooling capacities. For customers, big and small, this means the site offer optimum scale economies, expansive customer facilities and great capacity for growth.

“To now see it home to some of the finest tech and IT providers in the world, with more in the pipeline, is fantastic and bodes incredibly well as we look to ensure our economy is equipped with the technology and innovation needed to ensure our continued growth and prosperity.”

Next Generation Data provides solutions for clients requiring cloud hosting, private data halls or colocation. It caters for large organisations that require bespoke data halls constructed to the highest standards, through to smaller requirements for pre-built co-location. The NGD site is a highly secure data centre which is future proofed as a result of the modular construction model used.

As Europe’s largest facility, NGD has incredible growth potential and its flexible approach allows it to build to almost any design.

Justin Jenkins, NGD’s Managing Director, said:

“NGD has always benefited from the support of the Welsh Government right from the start of our business 10 years ago when we acquired our current site, a former semiconductor plant. Over the years NGD

has invested millions of pounds – with over £40 Million just this year – into transforming the facility into Europe’s largest data centre, successfully attracting some of the world’s largest companies into the region.

“At the same time, we provide employment as well as regular work for hundreds of contractors while also serving the IT needs of a growing number of fast growing local businesses.”

Nearly half of Wales’ electricity came from renewable sources in 2017

Last year the equivalent of 48% of the country’s electricity, a rise from 43% in 2016, came from renewable sources as the country edges towards ambitious targets for clean energy by 2030.

The Energy Generation in Wales 2017 report showed that Wales generated more than twice what it consumed in electricity last year, making Wales a significant exporter of electricity to England, Ireland and the wider European network.

The report, published ahead of a debate in plenary today (Tuesday, 20 November), also showed that:

- 22% of electricity generated was from renewable sources, up from 18% in 2016
- There are more than 67,000 renewable energy projects in Wales with a combined capacity of almost 3,700 MW. 84% of this capacity is renewable electricity, 16% is renewable heat capacity
- Approximately 66% of renewable electricity generated in Wales comes from wind
- Wales produces approximately 2.1 TWh of useable renewable heat, equivalent to 10.5% of Welsh domestic heat demand
- There are over 63,000 locally owned renewable energy projects, with a total capacity of 750 MW. This is a 30% increase in capacity from 2016
- Wales now has 529MW of renewable electricity capacity in local ownership, against a target of 1 GW by 2030

In September last year, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths announced she wanted Wales to generate 70 per cent of its electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2030. The Cabinet Secretary also set an ambitious target for 1GW of locally owned renewable electricity, and an expectation that all new renewable energy projects should have at least an element of local ownership by 2020.

The Welsh Government is supporting a number of projects through our Welsh Government Energy Service to in a bid to drive more locally owned energy developments. For example, Gower Regeneration's 1 MW solar farm at Dunvant is Wales' first community owned solar farm, whilst the Garreg Llwyd Hill wind farm in Radnorshire can provide electricity for the equivalent of approximately 26,000 homes and provides a significant community benefit fund.

Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths said:

"I am delighted that Wales is continuing to towards our ambitious renewable energy targets and this report shows the impressive progress over the last year.

"With nearly half of our electricity consumption coming from renewable sources, as well as us being over half of the way to meeting our target for renewable electricity capacity in local ownership, we are seeing the huge steps made by the sector.

"As a government we are committed to accelerating the transition of our energy system in Wales, particularly through the increased use of renewable energy. Our priorities are to increase energy efficiency, reduce our reliance on energy generated from fossil fuels and to actively manage the transition to a low carbon economy to benefit Wales."

[Wales continues to spend more on key public services](#)

Figures released by the Treasury today, show Wales spends £2,310 per person on health – 6.5% higher than spending per person in England.

Spending on health and social services combined increased by 3.8% in Wales – the highest increase of any of the 4 UK countries, according to the Country and Regional Analysis 2017-18, which is published every year.

Spending on health and social services per person in Wales stood at £2,916, some 11% higher than in England – equivalent to an extra £290 per person in Wales.

Education spending per person in Wales also increased by 1.8% in 2017-18. This is the fastest growth of any of the 4 UK countries.

Education spending per person is now 5% higher in Wales than in England – an extra £65 per person.

Professor Drakeford said:

“These figures show we are maintaining our focus to protect frontline services against the worst impacts of the UK government’s damaging policy of austerity.

“Investing in our NHS and social services is at the heart of our spending plans and today’s figures show our commitment to provide the best care for people across Wales.

“The investment we make in education is a sign of our determination to provide a system in Wales which gives children the best start in life.

“The figures published by HM Treasury are testament to the value we place on public services and highlight our commitment to doing everything we can to help our public services meet the very real challenges they face today.”

[Village with ultrafast broadband wins major European award](#)

The community, between Cardiff and Newport, enjoys broadband with an upload and download speed of 1Gbps or 1000Mbps after pulling together and taking advantage of the Welsh Government’s broadband voucher schemes.

The community scooped the award in the Innovative Models of Financing, Business and Investment category at a ceremony in Brussels last night.

Nominees and finalists are selected by an expert jury from across the European Union.

Villagers raised the money required to build the network in the knowledge that once built, the connections would be eligible to be funded by the Welsh Government’s Access Broadband Cymru scheme or Ultrafast Connectivity Voucher once the speeds had been reached.

Julie James said:

“This is a tremendous achievement for the community of Michaelston-y-Fedw who through impressive community spirit, hard work and backing from the Welsh Government now have access to ultrafast broadband. To come top in the awards which cover the whole of the EU does them great credit and helps put Wales on the map.

“While the digital landscape in Wales has been transformed by our Superfast Cymru project with more than nine out of ten premises with access to superfast broadband, we know there is more to do to reach the final premises. There is no single solution, and for some a community scheme will be the way forward.

“Michaelston-y-Fedw is a great example of what can be achieved when communities work together with support from the Welsh Government.”

To find out more about the Welsh Government’s Access Broadband Cymru scheme go to: www.gov.wales/broadband

[New projects to prevent youth homelessness announced by First Minister](#)

Last year the First Minister announced an extra £10million to support the Welsh Government’s mission to end youth homelessness in Wales by 2027. Today, he has set out how this funding will be used to identify those at risk of becoming homeless sooner and to take preventative action.

The funding includes:

- £3.7million for the Youth Support Grant to strengthen services to prevent youth homelessness and tackle its root cause
- £4.8million for an Innovation Fund to develop new housing approaches for young people, which could include support for young people leaving care
- £250,000 for targeted communications and engagement programmes: to improve awareness, understanding and take-up of the services available
- £250,000 for tenancy support work with Shelter Cymru and its existing helpline to ensure young people have better access to information, advice and support services to help them sustain tenancies

The funding also includes £1million to double the St David’s Day Fund which already provides practical financial support to care leavers in their move towards adulthood and independence.

Since it launched last year it has provided 1,900 care leavers with financial support to build a home life, such as a deposit for a new home or driving lessons to access employment and education.

The £10million funding is in addition to £20million already allocated by Welsh Government for wider homelessness prevention for 2018 to 2020. The Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Rebecca Evans, will today deliver an

oral statement on youth homelessness in the Senedd which will set out the programme of work to be funded in more detail.

The First Minister visited The Hangar Youth and Community Centre in Aberbargoed to meet with young people who have engaged with Caerphilly Youth Service's Engagement and Progression Framework partners to improve their life chances, including around homelessness / potential homelessness-related issues.

Ahead of the visit, the First Minister said:

"Too many young people are facing a future that can seem bleak, unfair and inevitable due to insecure housing. That's why we're committed to ending youth homelessness by 2027.

"Our approach is bold, innovative and focused on interventions that make a real difference to the lives of young people facing homelessness – already since 2015 over 18,000 have been prevented from becoming homeless."

The Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Rebecca Evans said:

"There are a number of complex, but often interrelated factors, which lead to young people becoming homeless. This is not just a housing issue; it is much wider than that.

"This is why earlier this year the First Minister asked me to chair a task and finish group looking at youth homelessness, which is working across government and beyond. We recognise tackling this requires a unified approach from youth services, social services, education, mental health, substance misuse, youth justice and other services."

Cllr Philippa Marsden, Caerphilly County Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Education and Achievement, said:

"The announcement of £10million additional investment from Welsh Government to tackle youth homelessness will improve the overall life chances of young people.

"Our Youth Services and the Engagement and Progression framework arrangements, which coordinate multi-agency support to the best effect, play a significant part in this. I welcome the Welsh Government's target to eradicate youth homelessness by 2027 and this funding is definitely a good step in the right direction."