

Over £1.5m investment in Port Talbot landmark to support town centre regeneration

Rebecca Evans, Minister for Housing and Regeneration, announced the funding to create high-spec office space in the listed building, through the Welsh Government's £110m Building for the Future Fund.

Rebecca Evans said:

"Our investment, together with the support from Neath Port Talbot local authority will transform the former Magistrate's Court to create the Terminus. The building will provide modern, flexible office accommodation to attract further economic investment.

"The development will also provide training and employment opportunities to disadvantaged groups by linking with employability projects such as Workways+ and Communities for Work, which are also being backed by EU and Welsh Government funding.

"This part of Port Talbot is benefiting from significant redevelopment and regeneration, with improved transport links thanks to the new integrated transport hub and the development of Harbourside, part of the Port Talbot Enterprise Zone.

"There is a real demand for good quality office space to help local businesses grow and develop and I believe this investment will be a springboard for business success from the town."

Funding for the Terminus development includes around £500,000 from the Welsh Government and £1m of EU funds.

Building for the Future is regenerating town centres and surrounding areas in Wales by refurbishing or redeveloping derelict or under-used land and buildings and bringing them back to life.

The multi-million pound Fund, supported by £38m of EU funding and £16m from the Welsh Government is supporting schemes to drive business growth, create employment and increase footfall in town centres. Schemes supported through Building for the Future are being match funded from a range of public, third and private sector sources.

[New £6m Sustainable Production grant round for on-farm nutrient management and storage to open](#)

The fourth window of the SPG will give farmers the opportunity to take the lead in tackling agri-pollution to improve water, soil and air quality.

Grants will range from £12,000 to £50,000 as a maximum 40% contribution to project costs. The items supported will include, amongst other things, covered slurry storage and management equipment.

The SPG will only provide support where the investment exceeds compliance with slurry storage regulations, achieving a minimum storage capacity of 160 days, regardless of any existing on-farm storage.

The next round of the Sustainable Production Grant is planned to open on 3 September and closes 26 October. Contracts are due to start January 2019 and be claimed by August 2021.

Speaking ahead of the Pembrokeshire Show, the Cabinet Secretary said:

“The impacts of on-farm pollution affecting water quality and wildlife have increased recently, often due to poor slurry storage and dirty water handling facilities.

“The level of interest we have had in each Sustainable Production Grant round has demonstrated farmers are willing to invest in their farm businesses to become more sustainable, prosperous and resilient.

“Our next round of the SPG will focus on supporting farmers to deliver our objectives of enhanced nutrient management, safeguarding and improving water, soil and air quality by reducing pollution. The investment will support farmers to address these important issues and ensure current and future generations continue to benefit from our natural resources.”

The Cabinet Secretary will attend the first day of the Pembrokeshire Show, undertaking a range of events and meetings and wants to hear the views of farmers, Unions and partners about the Welsh Government’s recently launched proposals on future support for farmers in Wales after Brexit.

At the start of July, the Cabinet Secretary launched a 16 week consultation [Brexit and our Land](#), which proposes a new Land Management programme to replace the Common Agricultural Policy in Wales once the UK leaves the EU.

The new Land Management Programme will consist of two large and flexible

schemes – the Economic Resilience Scheme and the Public Goods Scheme.

Welsh Government officials will hold drop in sessions at the Welsh Government trailer providing an opportunity for farmers and the public to come along to find out more about the consultation and give their views.

The Cabinet Secretary added:

“Brexit brings with it significant challenges and opportunities. I have been clear maintaining the status quo is not an option and the Basic Payment Scheme will come to an end in Wales once the UK leaves the EU.

“We are currently consulting on our proposals for a new ‘made-in-Wales’ Land Management Programme which aims to keep farmers farming and ensure they thrive in a post Brexit world. This is 16 week, meaningful consultation which will help inform our plans.

“This year’s Pembrokeshire Show will be the last before we leave the EU. My message is simple – there has never been a more important time to get involved and help us shape the future of farming in Wales. I look forward to visiting the Show and hearing as many views as possible on our proposals.”

Bangor University secures further EU funding for new research hub

The EU funding will support scientific research and technology in establishing the university’s Shellfish Centre to help grow the industry in Wales.

It will support improvements to coastal water quality; the adoption of new technology and production methods and expansion into new markets – all priorities for Wales’ shellfish industry.

Based at the Marine Centre Wales, the Shellfish Centre will build on Bangor University’s excellence in coastal and marine sciences.

Over the next 3 years, around 20 businesses in Wales are expected to take part in scientific research programmes to support the growth of the shellfish industry in Wales.

The Finance Secretary said:

“EU-funded research is playing a vital role in maximising the expertise within our universities so Welsh businesses are at the forefront of science and technology.

“This investment will drive business competitiveness leading to the development of a strong and sustainable shellfish industry in Wales.”

Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Secretary Lesley Griffiths said:

“This is a valuable industry which already provides significant economic benefits to Wales and has the potential to grow further with support from the scientific research and technological expertise of our universities.”

Professor Lewis Le Vay, from Bangor University, added:

“We have a long and successful track record of collaborative research with Welsh shellfish producers and are very pleased this new and exciting initiative provides an opportunity for us to build on these very productive relationships.

“Our long-term aim is for the legacy of the Shellfish Centre to be a sustainable and growing shellfish production and processing sector in Wales. Supported by a science and innovation partnership, this initiative will help place Welsh shellfish producers in a leading position in the UK and internationally.”

James Wilson, of Bangor Mussel Producers, said:

“Our ability to withstand the impact of Brexit will, in part, depend on having the highest-quality scientific understanding of resources and the marine environment. This investment in the shellfish centre should very much help deliver that.”

[Minister visits Finland on early years' fact-finding mission](#)

As part of its five year programme for government, the Welsh Government is committed to transforming the early years' system in Wales to ensure it

delivers the right support for all children.

During a two-day visit, the Minister visited a number of different projects that promote alternative approaches to families, the early years and social care.

The visits included:

- The Family Centre in the city of Vantaa. The centre co-ordinates the public health, social and educational services intended for children and families into a network that also includes the services offered by NGOs, parishes and voluntary stakeholders as well as specialised services;
- Kasvun tuki, a service aimed at Early Intervention and brokering knowledge to support children. The service promotes Early Intervention as a resource for professionals to use evidence-based interventions to support children and families;
- Tuomarila Family Support Centre in the city of Espoo. The centre offers family support and rehabilitation services, development work of child welfare and child protection, and services for families with children are aimed at detecting potential problems at an early stage and providing high quality treatment. The centre focuses on prevention and supporting families to find themselves their own resources to cope with the daily issues.

The Minister also met officials from the country's Ministry for Education & Culture and Ministry for Social Affairs & Health, the Itla Children's Foundation and the Central Union for Child Welfare.

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"As the Minister in the Welsh Government responsible for children, the early years and social care, I want to ensure we provide the very best services that meet the needs of people across Wales. I was very pleased to visit Finland this week to learn more about Finland's approach to early years and social care.

"As a government, we are committed to ensuring all children from all backgrounds in all parts of Wales have the best start in life. This is why I'm leading work to transform our early years' system to ensure it delivers the right support for all children, particularly those from deprived backgrounds. Ensuring our children are given that best start in life is the best means of breaking the poverty cycle, and raising the aspiration and attainment for everyone.

"We will now consider whether we can transfer some of the best-practice approaches I saw being used in Finland, to Wales."

Superfast boost for North Wales tractor company

Leader of the House with responsibility for digital Julie James visited Mona Tractors' depot in Llanystumdwy to find out more about the impact superfast broadband has made on the business.

The company adopted superfast broadband in late 2016 and now benefits from download speeds of around 70 Mbps, compared with one or two Mbps previously.

The Llanystumdwy depot has access to superfast broadband as result of the Welsh Government's Superfast Cymru programme which has brought faster internet speeds to areas which would otherwise not receive them.

Benefits for Mona Tractors have included helping improve the efficiency of its operations by using cloud-based technologies. It has also helped ensure customer satisfaction, through improvements to the speed and reliability of the connection.

It has allowed the company to make full use of an advanced process control system, which integrates sales, promotion, HR and finance processes into one central platform, which can also be accessed remotely by employees.

The company also use mobile broadband technology, known as MiFi devices, to ensure remote access while out visiting clients. These are increasingly gaining superfast 4G capacity, further speeding up the process.

Julie James said:

"It's been great to see the difference access to superfast broadband has made to this long-established business in North Wales. There would have been no access at all to superfast broadband in Gwynedd without the intervention of our Superfast Cymru programme as commercial companies had no plans for a rollout in the area, but now the depot here in Llanystumdwy benefits from a high speed and reliable connection.

"Almost 733,000 premises across Wales can access superfast broadband as a result of the programme. Having access to superfast and ultrafast broadband is becoming increasingly important for businesses, which is why we have invested in the infrastructure which can deliver it.

"While the vast majority of premises across the country can now access superfast broadband, we are now looking at how to deliver

faster broadband speeds to those areas which are yet to receive it.”

Susan Jones, Director Mona Tractor Company said:

“Superfast broadband not only helps us run the businesses, it’s essential for us to do business. Before we had superfast broadband we had speeds of between one or two Mbps, but now it’s around 70. This is has made a huge difference for us and our customers as we can provide a faster more reliable service.”

More than 58,400 premises in Gwynedd can access superfast broadband following the Superfast Cymru programme.