

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.

£4m investment in major expansion by Dyfed Steels will create and safeguard 200 jobs in Llanelli

Despite the current crisis affecting the steel industry, MD David Thomas who founded the Llanelli based business 41 years ago, is currently turning away a significant volume of business annually due to lack of capacity.

By adding further value to their products Mr Thomas has identified expansion opportunities and with £750,000 support from the Welsh Government the investment will be undertaken at its Llanelli site, as opposed to another of

its sites in England.

Dyfed Steels plans to redevelop an existing property adjacent to their site in Llanelli into a new processing centre to increase capacity, capability and efficiencies and will invest nearly £3m in new equipment to support the growth of the business increasing throughput by 10,000-15,000 tonnes per year.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Dyfed Steels is an indigenous Welsh company of considerable importance to both the economy of Llanelli and West Wales. It is the company’s 41st year of trading and in that time it has achieved considerable success without the assistance of the public sector. It is now operating in what is an extremely difficult climate for the steel industry and I am delighted the Welsh Government is supporting its investment to safeguard their Llanelli operation.

“This major investment by an indigenous business in a critically important industry will safeguard and create new high value jobs and help the company increase capacity and grow its market share in more profitable processed work.

“As a major customer for both Tata and Celsa steel their expansion will also have a beneficial knock on effect for the wider steel industry in Wales.”

MD David Thomas said:

“We are very grateful for the support shown by the Welsh Government, which during a time of great concern for the Steel Sector in the UK, their support became a necessity. Dyfed Steels Ltd needs to remain competitive in order to continue its leading presence within a challenging market. We will now continue to strive to ensure not only the future of the business but to encourage growth, safeguard jobs and create as many new staff opportunities as possible. We aim with this additional support to increase our production capacity, attract new business opportunities and to continue as a growing, established family business in West Wales.”

The business services more than 2000 customers across a range of sectors including agriculture, construction and engineering and offers a complete range of processing services from the simplest cut bar to high volume sophisticated processing of the highest specification.

It currently employs 270 people across 10 sites across the UK, of which 173

are employed at its head office and main processing and distribution centre in Llanelli. Its Welsh operations are in Port Talbot, Newport and Newtown.

New online safety zone for Welsh learners launched

Safer Internet Day is a global awareness day to promote good practice in online safety and gives advice and guidance on the risks posed by new technologies such as social media and how to stay safe while using them.

Kirsty Williams, who today hosted an event with schools from across Wales in the Senedd celebrating Safer Internet Day, also said countries around the world were now looking at Wales with envy for our work on digital learning and online safety.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Modern technologies, like social media, are now more prevalent than ever in our lives and can play an important role in informing and educating our young people. It is vital that we continue to promote the safe and positive use of these technologies to our children and Safer Internet Day offers an excellent opportunity to raise awareness to do this.

“I have been hugely encouraged to learn about the large numbers of teachers and pupils across Wales downloading the online safety resources we have made available on Hwb, our national digital learning platform.

“There they can access a range of classroom resources, create and share lesson plans, start discussion forums and access their own school’s virtual learning platform.

“Today we are launching another new exciting initiative on Hwb; the Online Safety Zone. This dedicated area, which has been developed for, and with the sector, will host news, articles and a range of resources on various safety issues to help keep learners safe online. It will also help direct those dealing with the effects of online bullying or any online safety issues towards appropriate support services.

“The success of Hwb is drawing attention from organisations around the world. At the recent BETT education technology show in London, our stand welcomed more than 400 visitors to hear about our distinctive national approach to digital learning“

We recently held a competition to design a logo for the new Online Safety Zone and received over 125 entries from all over Wales. Finalists were invited to attend the Safer Internet Day Keeping Learners Safe Online event in the Senedd today, where all the entries will be exhibited.

✘ The Cabinet Secretary announced the winning entry was by Isabel Bate, a year seven pupil, from Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School, Rhondda Cynon Taff .

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[Skills Minister outlines plans for aligning Apprenticeships to the needs of the Welsh Economy](#)

That is the message from Skills and Science Minister, Julie James, as she launches the Welsh Government’s new Apprenticeship policy today (7 February).

Aligning the Apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh Economy sets out the Welsh Government’s vision for addressing the needs of Welsh businesses and the wider economy and has been designed to increase skills levels in priority areas, including where shortages have been reported.

Developed in consultation with businesses, the policy and its five year action plan sets out how the Welsh Government will support the delivery of its manifesto and Taking Wales Forward commitment to create a minimum of 100,000 high quality apprentices in Wales over this Assembly term by focussing on four priority areas:

- Increasing the number of apprentices aged 16-19 by increasing the take-up of quality apprenticeships amongst school leavers.
- Addressing skills shortages by developing apprenticeships particularly in growth and emerging sectors such as the ICT, Engineering, Construction and Financial and Professional Services.
- Developing higher level skills by focussing on apprenticeships at level 4 and above where returns tend to be higher.
- Developing skills pathways by integrating apprenticeships into the wider education system and making it easier for someone to enter into an

apprenticeship from another learning route.

Skills and Science Minister, Julie James said:

“This policy highlights our intention to prepare for the jobs of tomorrow, which will require higher levels of competence than in the past.

“It also contains a stronger focus on both technical and professional skills needed for high quality employment opportunities within our communities. This will send a strong message about the value of apprenticeships and technical education in supporting people into sustainable employment and self-employment.”

The policy and supporting information also outlines how the impact of the Apprenticeship Levy – a UK Government employment tax due to come into effect on 6 April 2017 – will be managed in Wales.

The Minister added:

“We have said all along that this levy directly conflicts with areas of devolved responsibility, completely overlooks and undermines our very distinctive approach to supporting apprenticeships in Wales and its introduction means that no new significant money is coming to Wales.”

“To help minimise the impact of the levy in Wales the Welsh Government is taking a different approach to its counterparts in England, one which is better aligned to and supports the growing needs of Wales, its people and economy.”

Support for businesses to recruit new apprentices is already available in Wales and will continue to be available to both levy and non-levy paying employers provided the funding supports apprentices in the identified priority areas.

To deliver these priorities the Welsh Government will be increasing its investment in apprenticeships from £96m to £111.5m for 2017-18. This brings our total investment in apprenticeships and traineeships next year to over £126m.

Of the additional funding, £15.5m will be invested this year to ensure that both public and private sector employers are not disadvantaged as a result of the Apprenticeship Levy.

Julie James added:

“Our public services are essential to maintain functions related to

education, fire services, waste management, social services and healthcare. We are committed to working with public sector organisations to help them achieve greater consistency and meet future challenges. This will include the publication of specific apprenticeship plans for Local Authorities, the NHS and the 'blue light' services."

The announcement is being made during the Welsh Government's Jobs Week.

The policy: Aligning the Apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh Economy, its five year [action plan and additional supporting information](#) (external link) is available on the Welsh Government website.