

“Obvious benefits” to Third Menai crossing – Ken Skates

Speaking ahead of the meeting, he outlined the work which has taken place to date and explained why the Welsh Government’s preferred solution was a third Menai crossing.

The Economy and Infrastructure Secretary said:

“I have long been clear in my commitment to a third Menai crossing, and the obvious benefits it would bring to local communities and the economy. The current system is often at or over capacity and with major projects such as Wyfla Newydd in the pipeline it’s imperative that we act quickly to look at how we can improve accessibility.

“We’ve looked in detail at all possible solutions to the existing Britannia Bridge, from providing three narrow lanes with tidal flow on the existing bridge to moving the eastbound merge to smooth traffic flow. These options have been ruled out following significant safety issues identified in risk assessments and concerns raised by the emergency services.

“We are now developing a preferred option for a new bridge in consultation with interested parties to see what’s possible. As part of this process, we continue to explore with the National Grid opportunities for a combined road and cable crossing – something which could provide added benefits to the scheme for all concerned.”

Turning his attention to other transport projects currently taking place in North Wales, the Economy Secretary said:

“The A55 is clearly another priority for Welsh Government, with several multi million pound improvement schemes to improve resilience, reduce traffic delays, tackle pinch points and upgrade junctions already in progress, and the consultation into the £200m Deeside Corridor project almost under way.

“Alongside rail modernisation, our first Wales and Borders franchise and our plans for a North Wales Metro, these are exciting times for transport in North Wales. I’m keen to progress these projects at the earliest opportunity so that communities across North Wales can feel the benefits as soon as possible.”

BBI Group and Welsh Government announce multi-million pound boost for South Wales Valleys

BBI Group, which is currently headquartered in Cardiff, has a number of manufacturing facilities in the UK. Following an internal consultation, the move to the Border Technology Park, Crumlin, will enable the company to centralise manufacturing and development activities from Blaenavon, Cardiff and Dundee under one roof, creating a Centre of Excellence for multiple technology streams and a new Global Headquarters for the Group.

With a Welsh Government grant of £1.8m, the investment will see employment in Wales increase from 180 to 366 by 2020. It will provide excellent career opportunities in the South Wales Valleys region, foster closer links to the scientific and academic community, and provide a significant boost for the local economy.

Economy Cabinet Secretary Ken Skates welcomed the news today and said:

“BBI Group is a made-in-Wales success story; a highly successful company and a strategically important player in the life science sector globally.

“I am particularly pleased WG support helped secure this significant investment for Wales. Founded in 1986 as a Cardiff University spin out, BBI Group has grown to become a £60m turnover company and this expansion project will secure the company’s long term sustainable future in Wales.

“It will not only create and safeguard a significant number of high quality jobs but will also support the local economy through an annual spend of more than £1m with supply chain companies. In addition, the fit out and alterations of the building will support around 75 FTE jobs in the construction industry.”

BBI Solutions operates in the global diagnostics market manufacturing enzymes and assays for use in diagnostics for a wide range of disease areas as well as the development of proteins for use in cell culture tissue.

CEO Lyn Rees, said;

“This investment represents a significant step towards realising our strategic goals. Through investing in our manufacturing footprint in Wales we are increasing our capacity to support long

term growth.

“Our new state of the art facility in Crumlin will allow us to operate more efficiently and to a higher regulatory standard, giving us the pedigree to compete more effectively in our expanding markets across Europe, USA and China. It also has excellent links to the M4 corridor and Cardiff International Airport.”

“We’re excited to embark on this new phase in the company’s growth, and sincerely grateful for the assistance provided by Welsh Government, Cardiff Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council.”

Skills and Science Minister, Julie James said:

“The life science sector in Wales continues to go from strength-to-strength and is certainly gaining a very strong reputation both nationally and internationally as the place to do business.

“Increasing the amount of research, development and innovation undertaken in Wales is vital for economic growth and creating high quality jobs and our commitment to increasing Wales’ STEM capabilities is unwavering.

“We already have a number of world class researchers and companies working in diagnostic and regenerative medicine and BBI’s expansion in Wales will undoubtedly be key to stimulating further growth and raising the profile of what Wales can offer this important sector.”

[Jobs Week gets off to a strong start](#)

The 256 jobs at BBI Group in Caerphilly, BT in Swansea, Siltbuster in Monmouth and SPC in Maerdy , kick off a week of jobs announcements by the Economy Secretary, which demonstrate the positive impact that Welsh Government support is having on the jobs market and wider economy.

Ken Skates said

“I am pleased to be kicking off a week of jobs announcements with 256 new jobs that will be located across Wales.

“The jobs at all four companies are an indication of the hard work going on behind the scenes by Welsh Government to support businesses and help them relocate to Wales or retain and expand their operations here.

“The Welsh economy has undergone incredible advances in recent years with close to a record number of people in work and our employment rate increasing more than the UK average over the last 12 months. We are working hard to continue this momentum and to safeguard and attract quality jobs to communities right across Wales.”

The Economy Secretary announced that BBI Group is consolidating and expanding its UK manufacturing operations onto a single site in Caerphilly in a £8.5m investment supported by the Welsh Government. The investment will create at least 50 new jobs in Wales with the figure for jobs created and safeguarded standing at more than 360 by 2020.

BBI Group, which is currently headquartered in Cardiff, has a number of manufacturing facilities in the UK. Following an internal consultation the move to the Border Technology Park, Crumlin, will enable the company to centralise manufacturing and development activities from Blaenavon, Cardiff and Dundee under one roof.

Meanwhile SPC – a leading international manufacturer of rubber compounds – is to open a new facility in the Rhondda Valley that is set to create up to 40 new jobs over the next two years. The Welsh Government is providing support to ensure the investment goes ahead in Wales.

The investment by SPC follows its acquisition of two rubber compound mixing production lines from Avon Engineered Rubber’s site in Maerdy. As part of its long-term strategy to invest in its colour-compounding capability, SPC moved one line to its manufacturing headquarters in Westbury, Wiltshire, and initially planned to move the second line to its facility in Barcelona.

To retain the asset in Wales and support the creation of new jobs, the Welsh Government is providing a £150,000 grant to back the large investment SPC is making to refurbish and fit out the Maerdy premises.

In Swansea BT is expanding its customer service contact centre by creating 100 new jobs with support from the Welsh Government.

The company is creating the new roles in order to meet its commitment to answering 90 per cent of its customers’ calls in the UK by April 2017.

The new recruits will work at BT Tower in Swansea where an additional floor

will be refurbished and refitted to accommodate the new business that could have been housed at other BT centres in the UK which have available capacity.

In Monmouth, Siltbuster – the UK’s leading provider of portable water treatment solutions – is investing £4.3m to expand operations in Monmouth that will create 66 new jobs in a move backed by a £1.15m funding package from the Welsh Government and Finance Wales.

The deal is the first to be made from the £136m Wales Business Fund which is backed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Welsh Government and managed by Finance Wales.

Siltbuster, which currently employs 48 people, will more than double staff numbers creating 66 highly paid skilled jobs. The company forecasts doubling turnover by 2020.

100 jobs boost for Swansea with Welsh Government support

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The new recruits will work at BT Tower in Swansea where an additional floor will be refurbished and refitted to accommodate the new business that could have been housed at other BT centres in the UK which have available capacity. BT already employs around 500 people at BT Tower in Swansea.

The move is backed by business finance from the Welsh Government to support the capital investment and new jobs and helped ensure the expansion went ahead in Swansea.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“BT’s importance to the Welsh economy is reflected in its anchor company status. It has a significant presence in Wales employing more than 3,890 people here and spends around £284m with suppliers in Wales every year.

“BT has already created a significant number of new jobs across Wales recently and I am delighted to support this significant expansion that will now go ahead in Swansea. It builds on their highly successful existing operation in the city and will create a range of new jobs and employment opportunities.”

Alwen Williams, regional director for BT Cymru Wales, said “We are completely changing the way we serve our customers in order to

boost our service levels.”

“We are going to answer 90 per cent of our customers’ calls in the UK by Spring 2017, and that means we need to take on great people to fill these extra roles.

“BT is already a major employer in Swansea and these new roles reflect our commitment to the city and the skills and quality of our workforce.

“We’re also rolling-out our new ultrafast broadband technology in Swansea that will see the city enjoying some of the very fastest fibre broadband speeds available in the UK.”

Successful applicants will be answering calls and helping customers from across the UK, providing them with technical and billing advice and top class customer service.

The company has added around 500 UK and Ireland contact centre roles in BT Consumer, with around 900 to be filled by April 2017

Details of the new roles and how to apply can be found at <http://btcareers.manpower.co.uk/> (external link). The interview process will include online tests, assessment centres and interviews so the best possible candidates can be matched to the roles.

A recent employee satisfaction survey showed the Swansea centre had the distinction of being the BT Consumer site with the most engaged workforce in Wales and the South West England region.

£10 million for regeneration of town centres

The third phase of the Vibrant and Viable Places Town Centre Loans Fund will support town centre regeneration in 12 areas of Wales.

The fund works on a recyclable loan basis which means that once the money is repaid, it is used again to fund new loans.

The Local Authorities who have been allocated the loan funding are Denbighshire, Newport, Neath Port Talbot, Cardiff, Pembrokeshire, Wrexham, Conwy, Powys, Gwynedd, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Ceredigion and Anglesey.

Communities and Children Secretary, Carl Sargeant said:

“This funding will help Local Authorities regenerate their town centres by helping them find sustainable uses for empty sites and premises such as affordable town centre homes or tourist and leisure attractions.

“As well as making town centres more attractive places to live this loan scheme will help encourage investment into these areas as well as support the local economy.”