

Two EU backed property development funds set to create £40m infrastructure boost for West Wales and the Valleys

The £7m Property for Business Development Grant Fund (PBDG) and the £7m Property Infrastructure Fund (PIF) are each expected to attract £13m of private sector investment and geared to stimulate the market to meet the needs of businesses.

Both Funds aim to bridge the financial viability gap that exists in parts of Wales between the cost of building, expanding or refurbishing properties and the completed market value of the property.

It is expected that together the schemes will deliver around 51,100m² (550,000sq.ft.) of new and refurbished floor space in areas that will provide tangible benefits to local economies, address market needs and support business growth.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“We know that private developers and businesses are reluctant to invest in some geographical areas simply because the cost of building or refurbishing a property is more than the end value of that property.

“These two new schemes, backed by EU funds, are geared to address this specific issue and will provide a significant investment boost. The grant support will stimulate the market, create new high quality industrial space and offices to accommodate jobs and meet the needs of business.”

Both funds are for new build and refurbishments/extensions/adaptions with the Property Infrastructure Fund aimed specifically at advance build developments and the Property for Business Development Grant Fund targeted at supporting businesses with bespoke expansion projects. The overall grant intervention rate for both Funds is 35%.

The successful projects, selected in conjunction with the regional stakeholders across Wales, will be those that achieve best value for money and create the greatest economic impact. The primary focus will be on projects in Enterprise Zones, Local Growth Zones and City Regions.

Stage 1 Applications, providing brief information on the project requiring support, will need to be submitted by the **30 April 2017** in order to be considered for a provisional allocation of funding.

For more information and an application form for businesses interested in the Property for Business Development Grant or developers interested in the Property Infrastructure Fund to support advance build development should email gde.pdg@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Free advice service for landlords

A new telephone advice service is available for private landlords. The service is free and offers information in confidence

Partnership between Jesus College Oxford and Wales' brightest students unveiled at major education summit

The partnership between the University of Oxford College and the Welsh Government's Seren Network will see a selection of Wales' brightest students attend a bespoke summer school at Jesus College in August this year.

Students from each of the 11 Seren Network hubs across Wales will be given the opportunity to apply for the four-day summer school, where they will sample student life and attend lectures on demography, artificial intelligence, climate, trade, politics and literature.

Unveiled today by Welsh Government Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language at the Seren Network's second annual Beyond the Curriculum conference in mid-Wales, the summer school is thought to be the first aimed at solely Welsh students.

Speaking at the event, Welsh Government Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language, Alun Davies, said:

“Raising the aspirations and attainment levels of Welsh school pupils to help them reach their academic potential is an ongoing priority for Welsh Government, and the Seren Network is playing a pivotal role in this ambition.

“Since its inception in 2015, the Network has quickly grown to a recognised and valuable vehicle through which some 2000 of the brightest pupils in Wales are now channelling and honing their

academic talents.

“Today’s announcement adds another tangible benefit for students. By enabling Wales’ most academically gifted pupils to sample life at one of the world’s best academic institutions, we are demonstrating that educational excellence is well within their reach, and equipping them with hands-on support and guidance to make sure they reach the top.

Professor Sir Nigel Shadbolt, the Principal of Jesus College, Oxford, said:

“Jesus College is incredibly proud of its enduring connection to Wales, a connection that goes back to the College’s foundation in 1571. This new initiative will help ensure that we continue to welcome future generations of talented Welsh students here in Oxford.

“The Seren Network works in partnership with organisations including the Sutton Trust to identify all opportunities and support Seren students to make informed decisions about their futures. Morgan Cronin, from the Merthyr-RCT Seren hub, attended a Sutton Trust-organised summer school at Yale and now has an unconditional offer to study there.”

[Construction worker seriously injured in wall collapse](#)

A Manchester building contractor and a company owner have appeared in court after a worker was seriously injured on a refurbishment site.

The 53-year-old father of two from Salford was employed as a labourer at the site of a refurbishment project at Manchester One, Portland Street Manchester when the incident occurred on 29 August 2014.

The incident was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and on 9 March 2017 Workspace Design and Build Ltd, the principal contractor for the project, and Paul Harrison former director of Access Flooring Specialist Ltd were prosecuted for serious safety failings.

Manchester Magistrates’ Court heard how two operatives working for Access Flooring Specialist Ltd had started the demolition of a freestanding concrete

block wall on the site using a demolition hammer.

One of the men had started to cut into the wall just above the half way point, when the second man took over and continued from the top using step ladders for access. As he did so, the top half of the wall collapsed knocking him from the ladder and landing on top of him.

The injured person suffered fractures to his neck and back and spent three months in hospital following the incident. He has been unable to return to work since.

The HSE investigation found there was no suitable risk assessment in place for the work that was being carried out and the workers had not been provided with suitable work instructions for carrying out this task safely.

In addition to this no checks had been made regarding the injured workers training or experience, he was not provided with a site induction or adequate PPE for the task and the work on site was not being supervised.

Workspace Design and Build Ltd of Manchester One, Portland Street, Manchester pleaded guilty to breach of Regulation 22(1)(a) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 and was fined £14,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2972.

Paul Harrison of Kirkfell Drive, Tyldsley, Manchester pleaded guilty to a breach of Section 37 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 relating to his companies' breach of Regulation 13 (2) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 and was fined £1300 and ordered to pay costs of £2851

Speaking after the hearing HSE Inspector Laura Moran said: "The risks associated with the demolition of the internal walls at Manchester One were not properly considered and, as a result, there was no safe system of work in place for the operatives to follow.

"Together with a lack of adequate supervision, these failings resulted in one man suffering serious and life changing injuries, which could have been prevented had the work been properly planned and managed."

For more information about working safely at demolition sites visit:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/buildings.htm>

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training, new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement [hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)

3. Further HSE news releases are available at press.hse.gov.uk

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

[It is deeply concerning that millions remain in low paid, insecure work – Debbie Abrahams](#)

Debbie Abrahams MP, Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on today's Labour Market Statistics, said:

"We welcome the overall increase in employment, but are deeply concerned that millions remain in low paid, insecure work.

"The Government has also failed to close the employment gap faced by women, disabled people and ethnic minority groups, who are all less likely to be in work.

"Working families face the increasing costs of basic essentials, stagnating wages and the Government slashing social security, leaving families £1,400 a year worse off up to 2020.

"Labour would reverse cuts to in-work support that could see working families lose £2,600 a year, ban the exploitative zero-hours contracts being used on hundreds of thousands of workers, and guarantee a real Living Wage."