

£6m Welsh Government and Development Bank investment to redevelop Cardiff Bay landmark

The Corys' Buildings is a five storey Grade Two listed building on the corner of Bute Place and Bute Street, built in 1898. The dilapidated buildings will be redeveloped into a mix of residential and retail space.

Cardiff Council has been awarded the £1m Town Centre Loan funding to support the Merchant Place regeneration which they will use to support the development by Sky View Estates Ltd. The project is also supported with £5m funding from the Development Bank of Wales. It is the largest property development deal ever completed by the development bank.

Rebecca Evans said:

“Our £27m Town Centre Loans Fund supports local authorities to regenerate town centres across Wales. Once the loan is repaid, the money is used again to fund new loans, as is the case with funding provided by the Development Bank of Wales.

“Together we are working to bring derelict sites in towns back into use and support activities that increase footfall on our high streets, tackle empty sites and help businesses grow and prosper.

“The Corys' Buildings are part of Cardiff Bay's historic past, but I'm looking forward to seeing them revitalised and creating jobs and homes in the near future.”

Cenydd Rowlands, Property Director for the Development Bank of Wales said:

“With funds to aid residential, mixed use and commercial developments in Wales, we are focused on supporting small and medium-sized developers who want to breathe new life in to local communities. The rejuvenation of attractive, landmark buildings is an important element of local regeneration.”

Nicola Crocker led the deal for the property team at the development bank. She added:

“It has been particularly pleasing to work with Sky View Estates and the other funders to bring forward Corys' Buildings as an iconic and historical landmark in the heart of Cardiff Bay. At £5m this deal is a reflection of our commitment to the property market

in Wales.”

Economy Secretary committed to working with business to make Wales' economy stronger

Speaking at an event at Money Penny, which brought businesses from across North Wales together, the Economy Secretary said he wanted – in collaboration with the business sector – to find new ways of working that break down traditional barriers and borders.

The Economy Secretary said:

“My Economic Action Plan sets out a clear blue print of how we can drive inclusive growth and future proof the economy in all areas of Wales.

“With the plan now published, our Economic Contract and Economy Futures Fund now launched, and our Fair Work Commission and Expert Panel on Automation in operation we have made excellent progress on the first phase of implementation on the plan.

“My focus now is on delivering the wider objectives of that plan and part of this is finding new ways of working that break down traditional barriers and borders such as the ones between government departments, between local authorities, between governments and across borders.

“For me, the next phase of devolution in Wales has to be about helping businesses to trade, invest and develop their people in creative ways that promote new collaboration and new relationships across borders.

“This is a challenge for Government and it is one I am committed to taking on, with business, over the coming years in order to make our economy stronger.

“I also want to continue my focus on supporting the rise of Wales' regions in order to stimulate new opportunities and growth.

“We know a “one size fits all” approach will not give us the economic growth we need and this was very much in my mind when I visited Stena Line in Holyhead, BioComposites in Gwalchmair, Bee Robotics in Caernarfon and Siemens Healthcare in Llanberris to

hear their views on the real opportunities and challenges facing North Wales.

“I want to build a genuine partnership approach that will enrich and empower the local economy and overcome obstacles. A partnership approach like the one shown between the Welsh Government, Wrexham Council and Glyndwr University this week through our collective plans for a business and transport hub at Wrexham General that will open up new and exciting opportunities for jobs and commercial growth.”

The Economy Secretary also said the Welsh Government would be looking at how it could develop indicative budgets for economic development and infrastructure in the regions across Wales.

In thanking Moneypenny for hosting this business event, Ken Skates added:

“Our Economic Action Plan is all about public investment with a social purpose and helping business to prepare for the future.

“Moneypenny, in the way they support their employees, the way they bring new talent into the business and the way they are planning for the future is a great example of a business doing things the right thing and I am grateful for their co-operation and hospitality.”

Rachel Clacher, co-founder of Moneypenny, the world’s leading outsourced communications provider in Wrexham said:

“We were delighted to host the Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, here at Moneypenny and hear about the plans to work more closely with businesses to encourage trade, investment, and development of people in Wales. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship with the government and local businesses to help further improve everyone’s future.”

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Food and Fun scheme offered to 2,500 pupils in most deprived parts of Wales

The funding, announced today by Education Secretary Kirsty Williams, will go towards the Food and Fun/Bwyd a Hwyl scheme – a school-based programme that sees schools providing breakfast, lunch, education about healthy eating and a range of different activities for pupils to keep learning and keep active.

The £500,000 is part of a match funding arrangement involving local authorities and participating schools.

An estimated 2,500 learners will take part in the scheme which will run in approximately 56 schools, covering 16 local authorities and all 7 Local Health Boards. Approximately 1500 children benefited from the scheme in 2017.

Food and Fun / Bwyd a Hwyl will run in two special schools this year and two local authorities will receive additional grant funding for special needs

provision.

One of the aims of the scheme is to help close the attainment gap between pupils from deprived communities and those from more prosperous areas.

The Welsh Government has worked closely with the Welsh Local Government Association to distribute the funding.

Kirsty Williams said:

“The summer holidays can be a difficult time for some of our young people because they don’t have access to the kind of meals they would get in school. In some cases they could even miss out on meals.

“Activities and different play schemes can also be very costly and this means that once again pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds could lose out.

“The Food and Fun/Bwyd a Hwyl scheme is an ideal way for pupils to get two healthy meals a day as well as a wide range of food education, physical activity and other fun sessions. They also get to make the most of local school facilities.

“Being able to eat healthily and keeping active and engaged also makes a real difference to pupils’ attainment when they go back to school in September.

“Reducing this attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers is at the heart of our national mission for education. That’s why I’m so pleased to announce this funding today and look forward to visiting the schools taking part over the summer.”

Councillor Debbie Wilcox, WLGA Leader said:

“The Summer school holidays can often be a daunting time for families who are already struggling to make ends meet. The Food and Fun programme has firmly established itself in recent years not only as a fun and healthy way for children to socialise with their friends, but also as a lifeline for those families.

“By working together with colleagues in health and Welsh Government, and with the investment announced by Welsh Government, I look forward to seeing more children than ever take part in the Food and Fun programme.”

£7.3m EU-backed package to boost Wales' food sector

Led by Aberystwyth University's Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) the investment will support two initiatives, Future Foods and BioInnovation Wales.

BioInnovation Wales will receive over £3m EU funds to help employers address high level skills shortages in the agri-food and biotech sector.

BioInnovation Wales, in partnership with Swansea University, will target people already working in the sector, offering bespoke qualifications and industry accredited skills tailored to industry needs. This includes technicians, consultants, researchers and managers working in the food and biotechnology supply chain.

Future Foods will receive £1.9m EU funds to drive forward growth among Welsh food businesses, improving their competitiveness through research, science and technology.

Future Foods, working with BIC Innovation, will deliver world class expertise in food science, technology, and nutrition research and development to ambitious Welsh based businesses seeking to develop healthy, market creating products targeted at UK and international markets.

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, said:

“The agri-food and biotech sectors are vital to Wales. Investing in high level skills and research to drive forward these sectors is essential for economic growth and jobs, ensuring businesses are on the cutting edge of innovation and competitiveness. I am really pleased that focus areas will include consumer wellbeing and healthier products, assuring product quality and food safety and protection from food fraud”

Professor Mike Gooding, IBERS Director, said:

“We welcome this comprehensive EU funding package at a crucial time for the food and agriculture sector. This is a vote of confidence in the expertise of IBERS and its partners, enabling us to make science accessible to more companies in Wales to further develop their employee skills, and to create innovative, healthy products that are fit for the future”.

Further funding will come from the University and partners involved in the projects, including BIC Innovation.