



Our ref: OQ59738

Alun Davies  
MS for Blaenau Gwent

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11 July 23

Dear Alun

During Plenary on 28 June, I stated I would write to you regarding Welsh Government investment in businesses in Blaenau Gwent.

I mentioned the 12 businesses in Blaenau Gwent over the last two years that have received over £230,000 as part of the Business Productivity Enhancement Programme (BPEP), a programme developed specifically for the Tech Valleys but now being rolled out across south east Wales. The aim of the BPEP is to increase productivity, develop new products and markets, improve energy efficiency and reduce waste. Evaluation to-date with the first six of the businesses has shown an increase in sales of over £1.6 million.

In addition, the Tech Valleys programme to-date has helped create 298,000 sq.ft. of new and refurbished floor space enabling a figure of 600 potential jobs. These figures will grow as projects in development come to fruition. Alongside this investment, the Welsh Government has brought forward the Rhyd y Blew site with the first 50,000 sq. ft. unit near completion at a cost of £11million.

We have also introduced the Tech Valleys STEM Facilitation project and have made a three-year commitment to the Welsh Valleys Engineering Project with the Royal Academy of Engineering. These highly collaborative initiatives with businesses are providing young people in Blaenau Gwent schools with more access to careers experiences in areas such as engineering and tech as well as building the skills that businesses need. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has told us that these activities have made a significant contribution to improved STEM achievement in its schools.

Our investment in the design and development of the High Value Engineering (HiVE) facility in Blaenau Gwent will provide high quality training opportunities for post 16 students and companies from across the region, and the HiVE Hubs in schools are providing pupils with

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

equipment that introduces them to the opportunities of careers and further skills development in robotics and automation.

In addition, the Development Bank of Wales offers wide-ranging support to help businesses, start-up, strengthen and grow with specific consideration for businesses in Enterprise Zone areas. Business Wales also plays a key part in ensuring that entrepreneurs and businesses can navigate the business support landscape here in Wales to access the most appropriate support for them.

Dedicated Relationship Managers based in the South East regional team continue to support businesses to become established, to grow and to futureproof within the regional area. The Economic Futures Fund is available to companies to invest in research and development and innovation, capital expenditure and to assist them to grow into overseas markets.

Looking forward, our officials continue to work with Ciner in respect of its investment at Rassau Industrial Estate which it is anticipated will create 598 new jobs with an average salary of £36,300. Due diligence is being undertaken in respect of a request for grant and investment to bring this project forward. The Tech Valleys team also continues to investigate further investments and programmes that will provide new employment opportunities in the area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**  
Gweinidog yr Economi  
Minister for Economy