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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

A manufacturing future for Wales: A framework for action

How we should work with industry, trade unions and academia to
future proof manufacturing in Wales

February 2021

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Introduction

The consultation '[A manufacturing future for Wales: A framework for action](#)' was open from 21 September to 19 October 2020 to seek the views on the proposed manufacturing plan and the actions needed by government, industry, trade unions and academia.

The public were asked to submit their thoughts against four key questions: and comment on any related issues, which had not been specifically addressed.

During the consultation period, online workshops were also held, hosted by regional departments of Welsh Government and industry forums.

The full text of responses is available on the Welsh Government web site; the following is a summary addressing the questions asked and includes suggestions, which may be developed as the plan progresses.

Q1: Do you agree with the definition of high value manufacturing as described and its importance in future proofing the sector?

Respondents generally agreed with definition but the following was noted:

- NETZERO carbon by 2040/50 needs to be stronger.
- The definition identifies the effects of 'activities', but does not adequately identify the activities themselves.
- Some sub sectors have services as their primary business objective, rather than the physical production of goods or provide services to the manufacturing sector. It should be reframed as a "manufacturing ecosystem".
- The definition must not lead to the exclusion of innovative projects or areas which might ultimately become high value.
- A clear definition needs to relate to whether it is feasible and viable for a product to be made in Wales from economic, resilience, supply chain, societal and skills perspectives.

Q2: Do you agree with the themes identified, which have to be addressed to help future proof the sector?

There was general agreement with the themes identified but the following were noted:

- Public sector pipelines could be a separate theme.
- All government sponsored projects should report on local content.
- The use of life cycle assessment to look at end of life, producer responsibility and sustainable consumption needs to be increased.

- We need to look at approaches like modern methods of construction and off site manufacturing for materials like Welsh timber to encourage innovation and skills development.
- We need to look at manufacturing facilities in England, who are supplying construction companies for Welsh Registered Social Landlords, and consider opportunities for Welsh manufacturing companies.
- There should be a specific theme on changing / disappearing markets associated with leaving the EU.
- We need to look at selling and promoting Wales internationally.
- We should address the levelling-up agenda across Wales and consider new high value manufacturing business creation through the formation of spinout companies from industry, higher education institutions and / or technology centres.
- We need to address issues such as precarious work: the displacement of career paths with subcontracted work, and the over use of agency labour, which de-skills work.

Q3: Do you agree with the actions proposed and do you have any additional suggestions on how the commitments in the plan can be delivered?

There was general agreement with the actions proposed but the following was noted:

- Government support must be utilised primarily in Wales.
- We should build an open but safe portal to connect organisations in Wales, sharing problems and solutions.
- Cyber resilience should be part of Supply Chain Resilience.
- Teaching methods must focus on applying logic, teamwork and soft skills so that students are “ready and prepared” for the workplace and government could support “sandwich” courses by contributing towards costs during a year in industry.
- Ageing factories are not energy efficient and improvement grants are required that focus on green cost effective energy.
- Inward investment projects must have a “local sourcing” caveat attached to support. Government should utilise international offices to determine how companies could relocate research & development and other decisions to Wales.
- Collaboration between government, Industry and academia is fragmented and confused so we need to integrate and exploit the different programmes and interventions.
- Industry must have a greater input before decisions are made on facilities such as the Advanced Materials Research Centre to improve appreciation of purpose /functionality.

- There needs to be greater engagement of clusters for new technologies and existing processes and the restart the Inside Welsh Industry Initiative which promoted cross sector learning / best practice.
- There should be government accreditation and recognition for deployment of good working practices.
- Integrity checks / audits throughout supply chain could be improved to enable ethical sourcing.
- We should Use Tier 1 companies to coach /train or share training for the supply chain.
- Leadership principles and skills must be embedded into foundation levels within curriculums & apprentice programmes.
- Careers advice could be improved to give a better idea of the jobs available and the skills and qualifications needed.
- The retraining of older workers is a solution to filling skills gaps.
- Attracting investment in headquarters functions to Wales, might be improved by relaxing planning requirements.
- All companies should adopt the social partnership approach to industrial relations, i.e. the expansion of employee voice/trade union recognition.
- The ethical procurement code should be implemented by all employers.
- We should review qualifications available and map into higher qualifications, then develop relevant qualifications where gaps are identified, including vocational qualifications, applied degrees and degree apprenticeships.
- We need to improve gender diversity and uptake of careers by BAME people, particularly in manufacturing leadership.
- We should identify industry champions / role models to promote career opportunities and input into curricula development and outreach strategies.
- We need awareness of the research, skills and Innovation taking in place in universities.
- We need to consider the wider innovation landscape – universities, regional, national and international industry and European Structural Funded projects.
- We should support the implementation of specialist innovation teams within companies to address new challenges.

Q4: We would like to know your views on the effects that the manufacturing plan would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

- The circular economy should boost business to business in Wales and therefore increase the opportunities to develop the Welsh language.

- If high value manufacturing is encouraged and supported in sectors such as agriculture, fishing, forestry and textiles, this would create opportunities for the manufacturing in areas where Welsh is the first language..
- There is an opportunity to create a 'Made in Wales' brand which draws upon elements of Welsh heritage, language and culture to create a distinctive and unique value proposition for local and international customers including the wider picture ""created in Wales"
- Greater emphasis on the potential in the Bio economy would enable greater engagement with areas of dispersed population where Welsh is more intensively used.

Q5: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed:

- We need to set out all of the renewable resources available.
- We should provide detail around the scale of aims of growing indigenous, micro and SME businesses, compared with bringing inward investment, aspirations around the size of the sector and success factors.
- We need to recognise the roles played by all companies rather just the direct supply chain of material to finished goods including make, repair, service, recycle, digital platforms, business processes, technical & professional services private training providers and industry-led business and innovation development services.
- We need to develop innovation hubs to promote collaboration between industry and key partners.
- Wales' regions are all different with unique selling points. This can be identified via SWOT/ PESTELE analysis.
- Teaching methods at universities and schools should look to avoid focusing on "chasing finance based on numbers".
- Cardiff Airport and its relatively poor links requiring hub stop overs can influence international decision makers.
- Transport delays result in productivity losses, inefficiencies, line stoppages and generally a poor impression
- Electric vehicle infrastructure requires significant and timely improvements
- Readily available building infrastructure is essential.
- Effective management skills must be embedded into foundation levels within curriculums & apprentice programmes and must be in leadership programmes
- There needs to be "one owner" offering a coordinated approach to marketing available to support from government.
- Monopoly energy / water providers are expensive and significant is stopping expansion of current facilities.

- We need middle size companies who research and develop products in Wales rather than arms of multi-nationals.
- We need to look at corporation tax on small engineering manufacturing companies.
- We need to have at least one Freeport / Zone.
- We must use the success of global businesses to learn from them about how to develop people and leaders.
- Policy and planning must be looked at to address the need for storage, expansion, digital needs and the ability to remain agile.