

General Council Statement to Conference 2013

The Welsh economy

The Wales TUC General Council commissioned the New Economics Foundation to produce an analysis of the Welsh economy. The report 'Towards a Welsh Industrial Strategy' is to be published at Conference and delegates have received a pre-publication copy.

The report makes compelling arguments regarding the long term structural weaknesses of the Welsh economy and provides pointers towards an active industrial strategy designed to drive economic recovery. We will present the report in its entirety to Welsh Government for its response however the content of the report underlines the need for urgent action across the whole of Welsh Government to ensure we have an economy which delivers for the people of Wales in terms of quality employment and resources to fund our public services.

The General Council will call on the Welsh Government to:

- Develop a specific industrial policy, with challenging but achievable targets, to ensure a 'whole government' approach to supporting the economy with a clear focus on delivering quality employment.
- Use all available powers and focus resources in support of this active industrial policy – including procurement, structural funds, regeneration programmes and skills policy.
- Work through the Council for Economic Renewal to develop the detailed policy by agreement with social partners and oversee the delivery of the policy.
- Review the plethora of structures which impact on delivery with a view to providing sharp focus by reducing the number ad hoc groups and better co-ordinating sector or geographic structures.
- Focus initially on expanding employment through anchor company supply chains in Wales.
- Increase the Welsh government 'ask' on organisations which benefit from government support or make their profits from providing goods and services to the people of Wales.
- Ensure that all major investments, whether public or private, deliver best value in terms of direct jobs and supply chains.
- Increase pressure on the UK Government to bring forward large scale infrastructure development projects for Wales - including transport and energy.

The General Council believes that the need for urgent focussed action in response to the crisis in our economy remains -as severe as it was when the Welsh Government convened the first economic summit in 2008. A similar degree of emergency response is now required through the Council for Economic Renewal.

The General Council has agreed, as we did in 2008, that the Wales TUC will work with Business Wales and individual employer organisations as appropriate to seek agreement on the measures required to revitalise the Welsh economy. Clearly there will be differences of policy and priority but where we can agree we have an obligation to work jointly with social partners to achieve the best for workers in Wales.