

Signs positive for Better Jobs scheme

Better Jobs Closer to Home aims to create opportunities and sustainable jobs by utilising the spending power of public procurement. This is achieved through the use of innovative commercial approaches and, through the use of reserved contracts, using that lever to create jobs in areas of high employment need.

Four Better Jobs Pilots are currently being tested across the South Wales Valleys area and, if successful, similar interventions could then be replicated in other parts of Wales.

Julie James was in Ebbw Vale yesterday to visit EBO Quality Signs, one of the pilot projects. EBO are a social enterprise that employs local people with disabilities, and the Leader of the House was keen to see what progress had been made so far, and what the future may hold for success of the programme.

She said:

“EBO is already an excellent enterprise in its own right, which we felt was well suited to this special kind of intervention. Our team have worked with EBO to increase the hours of work by brokering discussions between the unit and supply chains across Wales to place further orders with them.

“I was delighted to visit and see the operation up close and hear more about the new orders coming in. I was especially pleased to learn more about the immediate benefits of working with our team and which intervention in particular they believe would work elsewhere in Wales.”

Jonathon Bell, Director at EBO said:

“We were delighted that the Leader of the House was able to find time to visit our site at Ebbw Vale this week and see the manufacturing operation.”

EBO Signs produces traffic and commercial signage such as highway signs, street nameplates, safety signs and hoarding boards.

Extra demand for their products has already resulted in orders placed with the factory with two local authority main contractors, and the Assembly Commission. Transport for Wales has also stipulated the use of this factory for their signage requirements, and meetings are currently underway with Keolis/Amey for opportunities during the mobilisation stage of the new train operator contract.

The four pilot programmes are being led by the Valleys Taskforce, of which Julie James is a member, and are contained within the recently published delivery plan Our Valleys, Our Future.