

Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone expands to include three new sites

The new sites – Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate, Waun y Pound Industrial Estate and Victoria/Festival Park – are already home to a large employment cluster with private and publicly owned developable land and ready to occupy units available.

They now join five other strategic sites within the Zone that include Bryn Serth, Rassau Industrial Estate, The Works, Tredegar Business Park and Rhyd-y-Blew which has the additional benefit of Enhanced Capital Allowances.

These five sites have 83.5 acres of privately and publicly owned developable land available as well as ready-to-let industrial units.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Elevating the status of these sites to be included in the Enterprise Zone will help raise their profile, make them a more attractive proposition for potential investors while also offering prime strategic locations for starts ups and businesses looking to expand.

“Ebbw Vale is already home to a number of world-leading manufacturing companies, some of which are based on these sites that have the space and capability to accommodate a wide range of manufacturing companies whether they are looking for new development sites or units that are ready for immediate occupation.”

Key companies already located on these new sites range from PCI Pharma Services, a Welsh Government Anchor Company to Tenneco Walker.

Press release: Ofsted launches new social care common inspection framework

A range of children’s social care settings will be subject to the same [social care common inspection framework \(SCCIF\)](#) from 1 April 2017, Ofsted announced today.

Last year Ofsted published a [consultation on the principles for children's social care inspections](#), with a new common inspection framework and proposals for a new approach to the inspection of local authority children's services. The online consultation received more than 200 responses, the vast majority of which supported the proposals. Ofsted also piloted the SCCIF and held face-to-face meetings with many interested people and groups.

From 1 April, the following three principles will link all our inspections of children's social care providers:

- to focus on the things that matter most to children's lives
- to be consistent in our expectations of providers
- to prioritise our work where improvement is needed most

At present there are several variations in the inspection guidance for social care providers across the range of settings, and differences in the criteria used by Ofsted to make judgements on each type of service.

The experiences and progress of children are central to the new SCCIF. The framework will support inspectors to focus on the difference the provider makes to the lives of children and other service users.

The SCCIF does not mean a one-size-fits-all approach to inspection. The framework is tailored to reflect and address each distinct type of children's social care provider. These are:

- children's homes, including secure children's homes
- independent fostering agencies
- voluntary adoption agencies
- residential family centres
- residential holiday schemes for disabled children
- boarding schools and residential special schools
- the residential provision of further education colleges

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said:

Ofsted and social care professionals have a shared goal: to give all children the best possible chance in life. The intention of our three principles is exactly this. I am pleased that sector leaders and providers responded so positively to our consultation on the framework, and we will continue to engage with them as we implement and evaluate it.

Eleanor Schooling, Ofsted National Director of Social Care, said:

The SCCIF is an important step forward in Ofsted setting out clearly and consistently what we think matters most to children's lives wherever they live or receive help.

For the first time, we are setting out the same expectations for

all social care establishments and agencies while still recognising the unique work that they do. We think this not only makes it clearer and more consistent for providers but also sets out how our inspections will consistently focus on the difference providers are making to children's lives.

Ofsted also sets out its future plans for the inspection of local authority children's services. These plans will be subject to piloting over the coming months, ready for implementation in January 2018. This will introduce proportionate inspections every three years, with a graded judgement, and focused visits between inspections to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and support local authorities to deliver good and better services.

The [social care common inspection framework and response to consultation document are available to download](#). There is further information in '[The social care common inspection framework: questions and answers](#)'.

[SNP's £1 million-a-year splurge on ministerial cars](#)

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- SNP's £1 million-a-year splurge on ministerial cars

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The Scottish Government spends more than £1 million a year on ministers travelling in luxury taxpayer-funded cars.

New figures have revealed the scale of the expense as the country prepares to mark Scottish Environment Week.

In 2011/12 ministers spent £1.07 million on the Government Car Service.

By last year that had risen to £1.15 million, despite claims from the SNP that it runs an environmentally-friendly administration.

In 2015/16 alone the Scottish Government spent £243,000 hiring vehicles, a new high, and £765,000 staffing them.

A further £11,000 was forked out on "travel and subsistence" while fuel costs dropped to £79,000.

In addition, nearly £50,000 was spent on repairs.

The statistics were obtained by the Scottish Conservatives through Freedom of Information.

Scottish Conservative transport spokesman Liam Kerr said:

“The SNP likes to pretend it runs a green-friendly government, but the reality is quite the reverse.

“Despite repeated claims to be a different kind of administration, it seems the nationalists are quite happy for ministers to be cutting around in luxurious cars funded by the taxpayer.

“Everyone appreciates the need for ministers to get from A to B, but many will question the sheer scale of these costs.

“It’s particularly ironic that this should emerge during Scotland’s Environment Week.

“The SNP is very happy to persuade other people to get out of their cars and find alternative modes of transport.

“Maybe it should be telling its ministers to be doing the same thing.”

[Debbie Abrahams comments on CAB report on workplace pension schemes](#)

Debbie

Abrahams MP, Labour’s Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on the findings of the Citizens Advice Bureau report, said:

“It is shocking to see that hundreds of thousands of low income workers, most of whom are women, are being blocked from these workplace pension schemes by the Tory Government.

“This month Labour demanded the Government look at how people working multiple jobs could be allowed to save. They refused.”

“While the Tories abandon older people, Labour wants to ensure that everyone can have the secure, dignified retirement that they deserve.”

The Government needs to concentrate on increasing capacity and improving schools in the areas that need it the most – Angela Rayner

Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Education, commenting on an NAO report on capital funding for schools, said:

"Hundreds of secondary schools in England are already full to capacity, while thousands more are crumbling and in desperate need of repair. Yet the Tories continue to waste millions opening free schools in areas that do not need them.

"The Government needs to concentrate on increasing capacity and improving schools in the areas that need it the most."