

URGENT - Notice of Motion – Tata Steel

Notice of Motion from Councillors R C Stewart, D H Hopkins, A S Lewis, C Anderson, A Anthony, R Francis-Davies, L S Gibbard, H J Gwilliam, E J King, R V Smith, A H Stevens, C A Holley, W G Lewis, M B Lewis, L V Walton & N L Matthews.

“This Council is deeply concerned following the announcement by Tata and the UK Government to cease virgin steel production at Port Talbot with the closure of both blast furnaces and the loss of some 2,500 jobs.

The loss of 2,500 jobs will mean an annual direct loss of over £100m to the local economy and the loss of over £300m annually, when associated jobs and the supply chain impacts are included.

Leaders across Wales have already expressed their anger at this announcement.

Steel making in the UK is viewed as a strategic industry and part of the UK’s critical national capability.

Closure of virgin steel-making capacity in the UK in this way, with a gap of several years and considerable uncertainty over investment in alternative electric arc technology, will leave the UK exposed and increasingly reliant on imported steel.

This will repeat the mistakes made in the energy market by leaving the UK the subject of market forces and reliant on foreign powers for its steel supply.

Whilst we fully support the need to decarbonise the economy and steel making, we are strongly of the view that there must be a managed transition towards low and zero carbon.

Tata’s proposal will result in large scale direct job losses and far greater numbers of indirect job losses in associated service and supply companies. For the communities involved this will be disastrous. We have seen the impact of major industrial closures in Wales before and many of our communities have never fully recovered from the impact such events have on people’s lives.

There is huge potential for new, green industry in Wales, especially associated with developments in the renewable and low carbon energy industry, currently being funded and delivered by the City Deal, that can help us transition to more sustainable ways of living and working.

Retaining one of the blast furnaces would avoid a situation from which there is no return. It would sustain more jobs whilst allowing more time for adjustments in the labour market and exploration of other technologies that may enable virgin steel production to be retained in Wales and the UK.

This council asks that the Leader as Chair of the City Region write to the UK Government and Tata to demand that the UK Government work with the Welsh Government, Tata, and the Unions to explore all opportunities to protect the UK steel making capability and protect jobs in the steel industry.

We ask that a fully representative regional task force be established to examine all the options to protect jobs and steel making opportunities.”