

CABINET STATEMENT

TITLE: SUPPORT FOR REMPLOY

DATE: 21st March 2012

BY: Councillor Russell Roberts, Leader of the Council

I take this opportunity to update Members in relation to Remplo. Members will recall the motion that was passed stating the Council's opposition to the proposed closures of Remplo factories at Aberdare and Porth and the subsequent presentation we received from the GMB representatives, at the Council meetings of 28th September and 26th October respectively.

At these meetings, I set out our opposition to the coalition Government's position following the Sayce Review in no uncertain terms and also subsequent on behalf of the Council in its consultation response last autumn. We also said that we would look at ways in which the Council could help in terms of its procurement and potential opportunities for Remplo.

I am pleased to inform Members that the Council and Remplo in Porth have created an important partnership that will see the e-cycle facility they have there recycle the Council's old computer equipment. I was delighted to visit the site last week in relation to this announcement. We believe it is important the public sector shows its support for Remplo and does all it can to help its viability. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is delighted to be putting its money where its mouth is.

The new partnership and the contract we have awarded to Remplo will see the specialist staff at Porth working to Government accredited standards to recycle or dispose of any old Council owned ICT equipment, from PC base units to servers and old telephone handsets, ensuring all equipment is professionally cleaned of all Council data so that any recycled equipment can be effectively re-used.

This news comes just days after the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Government at Westminster announced that following its withdrawal of funding, 36 of 54 Remplo factories in the UK are set to close – that is 7 of 9 in Wales including Aberdare. We strongly oppose and condemn this decision by the UK Government which is an attack on some of the most vulnerable members of the workforce in our society, leaving them with a very challenging future in terms of finding alternative employment.

We are encouraged that the Porth site is considered potentially viable and hope that contracts such as the one it has secured from the Council help it to demonstrate the strong viability of the business.

To reiterate, this Council stands right behind Remploy workers, has opposed all along risks to their future posed by government proposals, and is pleased to be able to support them through our procurement at this difficult time.