

Builders' group reveals more on the 'National Construction Company' for Wales after briefing

Welsh Government recently announced a "cooperation agreement" with Plaid Cymru that included a range of policies for the current Senedd term.

This included an ambition to establish a "National Construction Company, Unnos" to support councils and social landlords to improve the supply of social and affordable housing.

There was little extra detail on the proposal with the cooperation agreement saying the Government will take "advice on its remit, parameters and location".

A government source said more details would be released in the coming weeks.

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It has sparked concerns that the move could tread on the toes of private sector developers who work with local authorities and social housing groups.

The Federation of Master Builders Cymru has taken the issue up with the government and were given reassurances about its remit.

Ifan Glyn, Director of FMB Cymru, said he had been told Unnos “will look to help fill the gaps in the process of delivering homes e.g. skills, rather than setting up a company that competes with the private sector.”

He added: “It’s to complement and assist SMEs rather than compete with them.

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“It aspires to provide advice, guidance, skills. Welsh Government are due to commission a piece of work to look into what those gaps are i.e. what is preventing SMEs from meeting demand, and how could this new company help alleviate these barriers.

“Some they won’t be able to help with, some they will.

“This all sounds very positive from my end. The use of the word ‘company’ a tad misleading perhaps. ‘Centre’ would have been a better term or ‘hub’.”

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Plaid Cymru said: “The Plaid Cymru Group in the Senedd and the Welsh Government will work together on the commitment announced in the Co-operation Agreement to establish a National Construction Company, Unnos.

“The company will support our councils and social landlords to improve the supply of social and affordable housing.

“We will take advice together on its remits, parameters and location and further announcements will follow in due course.”

Mr Glyn added: “The main point is that we are clearly not building enough social and affordable homes to meet the demand and done right this venture has the potential to help delivery.

“It has to be a meaningful collaboration between the public

and private sector, not one side telling the other what to do (both sides guilty of this). We are looking forward for the conversation to begin and will approach it in a positive and collaborative manner.”

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