

Newtownabbey metal packaging facility set to create around 200 new jobs

A new £150m drinks canning plant is set to create around 200 jobs on the outskirts of Belfast.

It comes after Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's planning committee approved one of the biggest investments in advanced manufacturing in Northern Ireland.

Ardagh Metal Packaging (AMP) intends to build the innovative 42,585 square meter facility at Invest NI's Newtownabbey site at Global Point Business Park.

The state-of-the-art Co Antrim plant will serve its growing customer base in Ireland, the UK and Europe, while continuing to supply key customers Diageo and Coca Cola.

The decision follows the recent approval of a £4million steel manufacturing facility for Steel Mac Distribution (SMD) Ltd.

Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Alderman Stephen Ross, said the planning approval paves the way to the borough cementing its reputation as an economic stronghold, bringing with it both investment and employment.

"This £150m announcement represents the confidence investors have in the area," he added.

"The economic importance of this development and the benefits it will bring not just to Antrim and Newtownabbey, but to the whole of Northern Ireland, cannot be overstated.

"The Ardagh facility is part of a high-quality portfolio of manufacturing projects planned for invest NI's Global Point Business Park in Newtownabbey.

“With other major projects in the pipeline, such as the Belfast Region City Deal Queen’s University Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) and the Sensata Technology Centre, this highly desirable site is fast becoming a hub of manufacturing excellence.”

Alderman Ross said the council is “well on track’ to hit its target of £1bn investment and to create 2,000 jobs by 2025.

He added: “Our reputation as the number one planning authority in Northern Ireland, coupled with our complete package of support for investors, gives us an edge when it comes to attracting major investments into the Borough.”

Granting planning permission in just over 18 weeks reinforces the borough’s position as the top planning Council and a prime investment location for major projects.

Planning permission was sought following a period of pre-application community consultation and engagement with the council and Invest NI.

David Spratt, CEO of AMP Europe, thanked Antrim and Newtownabbey Council for their support and said it was great news for the drink can manufacturer.

“We are delighted to be granted planning permission to deliver a new innovative manufacturing facility in Newtownabbey and progress closer to the creation of nearly 200 new jobs for the local employment market whilst also supporting circular economy growth,” said Mr Spratt.

“We appreciate the excellent support from the council and the constructive engagement with the local community.”

AMP, which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, is 75% owned by Ardagh Group, the international packaging group which traces its origins back to glass manufacturing in Dublin in the 1930’s.

Metal cans contribute immensely to the circular economy through leading collection recycling rates and significant use of recycled content, helping to meet the sustainability requirements of AMP customers and consumers.

The new manufacturing facility is expected to create approximately 160 positions on site, as well as another 30 indirect jobs through associated suppliers and businesses at the highly sustainable site.

AMP first revealed its intention to build the factory in November 2021.

Statistics published by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) this month showed that Antrim and Newtownabbey was the only council in Northern Ireland within the target of 30 weeks for major planning applications.

Approval for a new £10m Dobbies flagship store at the Junction Antrim was, for example, processed in under 25 weeks.

DfI's figures also revealed an increase in applications of 24.2% – the biggest hike across NI local authorities.