

Tata Steel UK starts consultation on restructure that will see nearly 2,500 going

Tata Steel has started a formal 45-day consultation on its restructuring which is set to lead to thousands of job losses.

The company is planning to shut down blast furnaces at its plant in Port Talbot, south Wales, and switch to a more environmentally friendly way of producing steel.

The Indian-owned steel maker said 2,423 jobs across the UK are at risk, with 1,929 of those in Port Talbot, which employs 3,859 people.

At Port Talbot Tata is to end its two blast furnace operation with investment in an new electric arc furnace that will make steel from scrap.

A spokesperson said: "Today we have started the formal consultation process with our trades union partners regarding the proposed restructuring of the UK business.

"This information sharing and consultation process will continue for a minimum of 45 days, through which we hope to have an open and constructive dialogue regarding the challenges the business is facing.

"As required, we have submitted the headline numbers of roles that would be impacted at each of our UK sites, and shared these through the UK Steel Committee.

"We understand what an unsettling time this is for our people and we are determined to give every support to our employees, contractor partners and communities with the help of the

Transition Board, which met again yesterday.”

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “Tata’s announced plans are short sighted and are not in the best interests of the company, the workforce or Britain. This consultation period must be used to take stock of where we are now.

“Following talks with Unite, Labour has been very clear that funding will be made available and confirmed that it will put £3 billion into the UK steel industry. Tata has already confirmed that it wants to see the detail of Labour’s plans and that it is open to building a new DRI facility – which means they will need these highly skilled workers.

“Tata must now take up Labour’s offer and begin conversations prior to the forthcoming general election. Failure to do so could make Britain the only G20 nation completely reliant on importing high grade steel. This would be a threat to our national security.

“If Tata believes it will be a tick box exercise on a done deal, it is very much mistaken. Unite will be meeting with members to discuss potential action to oppose the proposed job cuts.”

Unite regional secretary for Wales Peter Hughes said: “The proposed redundancies would be devastating for the workforce, Port Talbot and south Wales – and would leave the UK unable to make virgin steel.

“Unite will be entering into consultation with *Tata* over these plans and will be crystal clear that they should not be happening. We cannot have rushed talks and the statutory consultation period of 45 days is entirely inadequate given the sheer scale of the proposed job losses and the knock-on effects they would have.”

Charlotte Brumpton-Childs, GMB national officer, said: “The company has today triggered the minimum 45-day consultation

period and has shared the details of those affected.

“GMB’s position remains that we do not accept the need for any non-compulsory job losses. We are engaging with our experts to analyse Tata’s latest proposal.”

A UK Government spokesperson said: “We recognise that this is a concerning time for Tata’s employees at Port Talbot and we will continue to support staff affected by the transition.

“The UK government has put in place one of the biggest support packages in history, with a £500 million grant as part of the £1.25 billion commitment by Tata to secure the future of the Welsh steel industry.

“Additionally, £100 million has been put towards the creation of a Transition Board – £80 million from the UK government and £20 million from Tata Steel. The Board is chaired by the Secretary of State for Wales, to directly support those affected.

“This record level of support shows just how much the UK Government values the Welsh steel industry and the people and communities whose livelihoods depend on it.”