
Downsizing deals - MP still see hope for Corus workers

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Sunday Sun reported that thousands of Corus steel workers are currently on tenterhooks. Originally told they would be out of work by the end of January, they have now been given a stay of execution.

If Corus shuts down some of its operations on Teesside, however, it won't just be the 1,600 employees directly employed by the steel maker who lose their jobs. Estimates by Redcar and Cleveland Council suggest the knock on effect to suppliers and other industries in the surrounding area would see a total of 4,000 on the dole. In short, the loss of Corus on a small concentrated area already economically lagging behind other parts of the region and the UK, would be devastating.

It's a prospect which Redcar MP Ms Vera Baird has been battling to avoid. And although she admits there is no certainty of success, the prospects of saving some jobs appear to be growing each day.

Mr Robert Weatherall spoke with MP Ms Vera Baird who is doing her best to save the plant and thousands of associated jobs.

She said that "When the announcement was made by Corus that they wanted to close down the Teesside Cast Products plant I asked the Corus CEO Mr Kirby Adams whether Government financial assistance in the form of wage subsidies would help. The offer was made but he said that it had already gone beyond that stage. It was just before Christmas and it was a very bleak time. Things went a little quiet but Teesside people are resilient and as soon as the New Year came things were different."

During the Christmas break Ms Vera, along with fellow Teesside MPs Mr Ashok Kumar and Mr Dari Taylor, lobbied Mr Gordon Brown.

The trio met with the Prime Minister and explained to him that the plant wasn't in terminal decline it was just suffering problems because of the economic downturn and the loss of the major customer, which bought 80% of steel on site.

(Sourced from www.sundaysun.co.uk)

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