

Economy Minister in Geneva for Brexit Talks with Automotive Sector

The Minister also took an early look at the all electric Lagonda All Terrain Concept, which is being formally launched at the show, and will be the first production Battery Electric Vehicle to be manufactured at Aston Martin's new facility in St Athan, with production starting in 2022.

Speaking from Geneva, Ken Skates said:

"The Welsh Automotive sector is a vital part of our economy, employing nearly 19,000 people in Wales. It is also vital to the UK supply chain, with more than a hundred supply chain companies and two engine plants producing over 30% of the 2.7m engines produced in the UK.

"We know the automotive industry is experiencing a period of rapid change caused by major technological change and stronger environmental standards. Add to that the potential for new tariff and non-tariff barriers and frictions and costs if the UK leaves the EU without access to the Single European Market and there is no doubt that this an uncertain and challenging time for the sector.

"We have been working with companies in the sector on a daily basis, assisting them in a number of operational and strategic areas including investment plans, training needs, competitiveness issues and export market requirements for example.

"In what looks like being a crucial week for Brexit, this visit has provided another excellent opportunity for me to speak to the sector directly and hear about their current challenges and uncertainties.

"We know that our sector-focused Brexit awareness and workshop sessions, our Business Wales Brexit portal and the Brexit Resilience Fund are all being well received by the sector and are helping companies to prepare as best as they can for a future that is largely unknown. As a business friendly Government, it is vital that we listen and that our support continues to evolve and respond to need.

"We will continue to push the UK Government to agree a deal that gives our automotive manufacturing companies the best possible chance to continue to compete in this global industry that is so vital to the UK and the Welsh economy.

"I was especially pleased to see the fantastic all-electric Lagonda concept, which will be produced at St Athan. Our relationship with Aston Martin is a compelling example of what our business friendly

approach can achieve and we will continue to work constructively and proactively with the sector in the challenging months and years ahead.”