

International research leader to manage Wales' first Advanced Manufacturing Research Facility

The Welsh Government is investing £20m to develop the first phase of the facility, on Broughton in order to increase productivity, commercialisation, innovation and skills development across a range of sectors including Aerospace and Automotive.

The aim is to take business support to the next level in order to encourage and increase productive collaboration between industry, academic partners and entrepreneurs. It is predicted that the first phase of the new research facility could drive up Welsh GVA (gross value added) by as much as £4bn over 20 years.

Construction of the building located just off Chester Road is being led by Galliford Try and is now well underway. And with the AMRC now confirmed as the organisation that will operate the facility, and Airbus confirmed as the first tenant, it is set to get off to a strong start when doors officially open in 2019.

Economy Secretary Ken Sates said:

“The news that the AMRC will be managing Wales’ first Advanced Manufacturing Research Facility on Deeside really is cause for celebration.

“The AMRC has a 15 year record of delivery and has long demonstrated that it has leading industry capability in the delivery of research, manufacturing support and partnership services.

“It has built up incredibly strong relationships with a range of partnerships, from global corporates through to local SMEs and supply chains, and it will play a vital role in developing sustainable, long term leading innovation and skills. This can only be good news for the future of advanced manufacturing here in Wales and for the regional and wider Welsh economy.”

The Economy Secretary also thanked the Deeside Enterprise Zone for their work in driving through the new facility which is key to the Board’s strategic plan for the area.

Professor Keith Ridgway, Executive Dean of the AMRC, said:

“We share the Welsh Government’s bold ambition to enhance North

Wales' reputation for manufacturing excellence, creating secure, high-value jobs and wealth for the whole of Wales by acting as a magnet for inward investment.

"The new facility will bring the research and innovation talents and experience of the University of Sheffield AMRC to a new venture in a region rich in manufacturing history and opportunity.

"Our goal is to make the facility an open access research hub that will drive significant improvements in productivity, performance and quality not just in the aerospace sector but across the broader advanced manufacturing sector in North Wales, including nuclear, automotive, energy and food and drink.

"Airbus is a longstanding partner of the AMRC in a key sector of the economy. By building on the research relationships we have with we will ensure the company remains at the forefront of aerospace development, supporting skills in the area and upskilling its manufacturing supply chain partners.

"We will also be working closely with other universities in Wales to maximise our impact, drawing on their research expertise to develop new projects that benefit the Welsh economy and the reputation not just of the University of Sheffield but of universities in Wales, showing how partnerships with industry and government can accelerate big improvements in economic and social wellbeing."

Paul McKinlay, Airbus Senior Vice President and head of Broughton Plant, said:

"Airbus has a longstanding relationship with the AMRC. We have worked in partnership on many ventures and we're delighted our relationship will continue to grow in this latest initiative.

"With their strong skills and expertise in fields such as innovation, advanced manufacturing and digitalisation, they are the perfect organisation to manage Wales' most exciting new facility."

The Welsh Government is working to develop the second phase of the facility on a separate site in North Wales. In July the Welsh Government declared its intention to work with the Deeside Enterprise Zone Board and the Ministry of Defence, led by the Defence Electronics and Components Agency (DECA), on a proposal that would see a second site situated on MOD land adjacent to the Deeside Industrial Park Interchange.