

## Ken Skates and automotive industry meet to discuss Welsh future

With Honda's decision to close its Swindon facility affecting some 2,000 supply jobs in Wales, and other manufacturers such as Nissan and Ford expressing a desire to look again at how they choose to operate in future, the Economy Minister was keen to ensure Welsh Government continues to do everything possible to ensure the automotive industry in Wales remains prosperous.

Speaking after the meeting, Ken Skates said:

"Today's round table meeting was part of a week of intense activity concerning Brexit and the automotive industry, which included a visit to Geneva and in-depth discussions with Aston Martin Lagonda.

It provided a welcome opportunity to discuss with the Welsh Automotive Forum and others, their concerns and hopes for the future of the automotive industry in Wales.

"There's no question that the automotive industry is experiencing a period of rapid change at present, with major technological advancement and stronger environmental standards bringing with it both challenges and opportunities.

"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 it's clear that this is a time of uncertainty and adjustment for the sector.

"The Welsh Government and I have been relentless supporters of the automotive industry over recent years, and today's meeting reinforces that we stand ready to support the sector as it manages the challenges ahead. Wales has the skills, the supply chain, the expertise and the appetite for innovation that can help the industry flourish here.

"What we need to see now is some direction and clarity from UK Government on the most fundamental of these issues – Brexit, and ensuring it takes a form which does not adversely affect an industry which has long been a vital part of the Welsh economy. In the meantime, however, we cannot stand still as we look to ensure Wales plays a full and active part in the automotive industry of tomorrow."

The industry in Wales comprises of around 150 companies employing nearly 19,000 people – 13% of the Welsh manufacturing workforce, generating over £3 billion worth of revenue and manufacturing around 30% of the 2.7 million engines produced in the UK.