

Welsh Government support for Airbus unwavering – Minister for North Wales

That was the message from Minister for Economy and Minister for North Wales, Ken Skates following a visit to the company in Broughton yesterday.

Airbus is the largest employer in Wales with 6,000 employees and Welsh Government support over the last twenty years has helped develop the Broughton site in Deeside into one of the most advanced wing and aerospace manufacturing facilities in the world.

The company has also been confirmed as the first tenant of Wales' new flagship Advanced Manufacturing Research Facility which will be managed by The University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC). The Welsh Government is investing £20m to develop the first phase of the facility and Airbus has a longstanding working relationship with the AMRC.

The Advanced Manufacturing Research Facility, which is being constructed just off Chester Road in Broughton, will be vital in helping increase productivity, commercialisation, innovation and skills development across a range of sectors including Aerospace.

Brexit was a key topic of discussion during the visit and Ken Skates stated the Welsh Government's continued commitment to give the company a sustainable future and keep good quality jobs in the region.

The Minister also complimented Airbus' Apprenticeship programme during his visit which has provided opportunities to hundreds of individuals in a range of roles.

Ken Skates said:

"Airbus is a vitally important company in North Wales and makes a huge contribution to the Welsh economy financially, through significant employment, skills development, fantastic apprenticeships and supply chain opportunities. The difference the company makes to the region and the country as a whole cannot be underestimated.

"We are continuing to work collaboratively and constructively with Airbus and I am pleased they will be the first company through the door of the new Advanced Manufacturing Research Facility. The aim of the facility is to provide a real step change in business support to encourage and increase collaboration between industry, academic partners and entrepreneurs and it is predicted that the first phase of the facility alone could drive up Welsh GVA (gross value added) by as much as £4bn over 20 years.

"Brexit was of course a topic that was high up on our agenda and

while the UK Government's approach to leaving the EU means businesses are still left with uncertainty and unanswered questions, I reiterated the Welsh Government's absolute commitment to continuing our longstanding partnership with Airbus and doing all we can to support them. This was demonstrated in September when we allocated the company £3 million from our EU Transition Fund to help with its preparations for Brexit.

"Let me be clear that the Welsh Government is not standing still because of the Brexit dilemma. We will continue to nurture our close relationship with Airbus and will do all in our power to maximise employment opportunities, create new jobs and support the company in growing its base in Broughton."