

News story: Aerospace Wales Forum hosted by DECA

The Forum is the trade association for companies operating in the aerospace and defence sectors in Wales and exists to provide the best service it can in promoting its members' companies and capabilities, providing access to events, networking opportunities and industry expertise. DECA is a full member of this Forum.

Rachael Blackburn, the newly appointed Operations Director for the Aerospace Wales Forum, opened the meeting agenda that included a question and answer session from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates AM as well as presentations from Dickie Davies, Deputy Director Welsh Government, Rhodri Evans, Price Waterhouse Cooper and Colin Sirett, CEO Advanced Manufacturing and Research Centre

Geraint Spearing, DECA's Chief Executive also gave a presentation and capability overview to the Forum saying,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to DECA. Through events like this we are committed to developing partnerships and engagement with as many companies as possible. This also allows us to increase DECA involvement within the wider community and welcoming you all here today is a great step towards these goals.

Winning the F-35 assignment is tremendous news and has provided a new lease of life for DECA; a lot of our work involves the repair, maintenance, overhaul and upgrade of legacy equipment and F-35 provides us with an exciting next chapter to continue our long history.

Dickie Davies presented details of the current opportunities for Welsh Government funding saying,

We are here for you and to support and sustain business in Wales and the UK going forward and we are working to deliver an outstanding package of support. Three years ago, if I had said that we would have Aston Martin at St Athan employing 700 people you would have laughed and so would I, but we are actually there and we are growing.

Rhodri Evan, Cyber Security Lead at Price Waterhouse Cooper gave an interesting presentation on the importance of cyber security within industry. He detailed the impact of attacks and their effect, to not only business operations, but also how an attack can seriously affect the supply chain. Rhodri also detailed the new levels of cyber security protection that

businesses will have to comply with.

Following on from the speakers, Ken Skates, Assembly Member, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, National Assembly for Wales held a Q&A session taking questions about rail and road infrastructure, apprentice schemes, trade tariffs, the devaluation of the pound, research and development investment and the implications of Brexit. He spoke to the forum saying,

I am pleased to be with you all here today. We are inevitably proud of our aerospace industry and the announcements of job creation in Wales. Wales as a whole is building on a very strong foundation and we are keen to make sure we find common ground to take advantage of and ensure that Welsh strategy dovetails with the UK's industrial strategy and the great news of F-35 assignment for DECA. It gives me great pleasure to work with you and I am looking forward to the future.