

[News story: Alun Cairns joins Aston Martin to promote careers in STEM to St Athan pupils](#)

Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns joined engineering apprentices from Aston Martin to promote the value of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subject careers to pupils from St Athan Primary School on Monday 25 September.

This came as the luxury car manufacturer announced last year that its first Welsh-made cars will roll out of the St Athan factory in 2019, creating around 750 new jobs in the Vale of Glamorgan site, with a likely further 1,000 across the supply chain and local businesses.

Pupils were excited to come face to face with the brand new DB11 model and a Rapide S, as they learnt more about the work of the apprentices and history of the firm. Apprentices Luca Freemantle, Varun Mudan and Neath-born Adam Hill spoke to pupils about the company's four-year scheme, and how they were looking forward to moving into the Welsh site over the next couple of years.

The new St Athan site will manufacture two four door models exclusive to Wales; the Rapide E electric model and the DBX, Aston Martin's first 'crossover' sports utility vehicle.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Aston Martin's move to Wales is hugely significant in making St Athan an important centre of employment, bringing with it valuable skills and a lasting legacy for the entire region.

I hope that pupils like these will take an interest in STEM subjects to become the apprentices, manufacturers and business leaders of the future, contributing to the UK's rich automotive export history, and making Wales a great place to invest and do business.

Aston Martin's decision to invest in Wales shows that we are creating and supporting the right conditions for industry investment. The UK Government's comprehensive industrial strategy will build on that success, ensuring that we have the right infrastructure, skills and support in place for our world-leading industries as well as support for new emerging sectors to flourish.

[Press release: PM meeting with Donald Tusk: 26 September 2017](#)

The Prime Minister began by re-stating her wish for a bold and unique new economic partnership with the EU, based on a joint commitment to free trade and high standards.

Returning to the theme of her speech in Florence last week, the PM said the UK and the EU should be imaginative and creative about the way this new relationship is established. The PM said she was optimistic about a joint future which benefits both the EU and the UK.

President Tusk welcomed the PM's speech, which he described as constructive in progressing talks between the UK and the 27 member states.

The PM and President Tusk welcomed the good progress that had been made on citizens' rights in the talks so far, and restated their commitment to finding a positive solution to the issue of the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

The PM also stressed the importance of agreeing a period of implementation once Britain leaves the EU in March 2019. She said this would build a bridge to that new relationship that ensures the process is smooth and orderly and creates as much certainty as possible for everyone.

At the end of the meeting, the PM said her Florence speech had been intended to create momentum in the ongoing talks. She said it was important for EU negotiators to now respond in the same spirit.

[News story: Decommissioning milestone at Oldbury nuclear site in Gloucestershire](#)

Decommissioning of the former used fuel cooling ponds at Oldbury site has reached a major milestone.

A total of 109 low level waste skips, the containers which were used to hold fuel elements once they had been removed from the reactor, have now been safely taken out of the ponds; processed and packaged for storage.

It marks a significant step along the journey to fully decommissioning the

cooling ponds.

Work at the site will now focus on removing the pond furniture and remaining skips, which are currently storing other components, before the end of the year.

This will be followed by draining of the pond water and stabilisation of the surfaces, due to take place in 2018.

Rob Taylor, Magnox Ltd Ponds Campaign Manager at Oldbury, said:

The work was completed in challenging conditions but was delivered ahead of schedule.

The achievement is a significant one for the site as we work towards decommissioning the facilities that once allowed it to operate, in a safe and efficient manner.

[Ponds decommissioning milestone delivered at Oldbury site](#)

[Find out more about Oldbury nuclear site in South Gloucestershire](#)

[Find out more about radioactive waste in the UK](#)

[News story: RAF Valley's future secure for next 25 years as restoration work is completed](#)

The station is primarily used for advanced fast jet training for pilots and, whilst the previous infrastructure was strong enough for the Hawk aircraft, it has been restored to support pilots training in the likes of Tornados and Typhoons.

A £20 million contract was awarded to refurbish the ageing runway and its link taxiways. The work undertaken will also provide a new section of airside perimeter road, new visual aids, aeronautical lighting and signage for the air station.

The restoration work will extend the life of the runway by a further 25 years, demonstrating the UK's commitment to Defence in Wales.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

This famous runway has been an integral part of the careers of generations of fast-jet pilots who have seen action across the world and are currently leading RAF strikes against Daesh.

I'm delighted that this investment will see the runway play that vital role for at least another 25 years, training new pilots in the skills they need to help keep us safe when flying the next generation of aircraft.

The fighter pilots who graduate go on to fly Typhoon and F35 Lightning II aircraft which secure the skies of the UK and overseas.

The station is also home to helicopter flying training where aircrew learn the skills required for mountains and maritime flying with the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. The Mountain Rescue Service which saves lives across the UK is also based at RAF Valley.

The Defence Secretary met with personnel from RAF Valley this afternoon in North Wales.

All new UK fighter pilots pass through RAF Valley before they reach their frontline Squadron. In the last 3 months, 4 graduates have gone on to fly the world's most sophisticated fighter, the F-35 Lightning II, out in the United States.

The UK currently has 11 F-35B jets being flown in the US and 120 UK personnel being trained there. By the end of the year the UK will have 14 of the jets, with initial flight trials from the brand new Queen Elizabeth Aircraft Carrier's deck planned for next year.

As the US' only Tier 1 partner, UK industry will provide around 15% of every F-35 jet which is built, and later today, the Defence Secretary will also visit the Defence Electronics & Components Agency (DECA), based at MOD Sealand, in North East Wales.

The facility was chosen as the global repair hub providing maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade services for F-35 avionics and aircraft components. Over the lifetime of the programme, components for hundreds of European-based F-35 aircraft will be serviced and maintained at the site.

The work will generate hundreds of millions of pounds of revenue for the UK defence industry, with the potential to unlock more than £2bn of future F-35 support revenue over the lifetime of the programme, sustaining thousands of high tech jobs and skills.

A newly-refurbished hangar at RAF Valley will also house three brand-new Jupiter helicopters which will be used to train pilots from all three Services, delivered as part of the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS).

These state-of-the-art Airbus helicopters, which closely recreate the cockpits and controls of front-line aircraft, are due to begin flying from

RAF Valley later this year. The refurbishment of the hangar is part of an infrastructure improvement programme being delivered through the UKMFTS at both RAF Valley and RAF Shawbury worth a total of around £80 million.

Station Commander Royal Air Force Valley, Group Captain Nick Tucker-Lowe, said:

The visit of the Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon today has highlighted RAF Valley's vital contribution to UK defence as the home of fighter pilot training.

Our team of military personnel, Civil Servants and industry partners take great pride in their role of training the next generation of fighter pilots for the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. With our refurbished main runway, we are well prepared for the future.

UK Government Minister for Wales Guto Bebb said:

This investment in the runway is a huge boost to RAF Valley. It further demonstrates the UK Government's commitment to defence in Wales and the North Wales economy.

It is great to see Wales playing such an important role in the advancement of our defence services and with an extra 25 years now on the lifespan of this site, the future of RAF Valley and the local economy remains strong.

[Press release: Major upgrades for eastern A27 announced](#)

Four junctions along a nine mile section of the A27 between Lewes and Polegate will be improved, a section of the Polegate bypass will be upgraded to a dual carriageway and walking and cycling facilities along the whole stretch will be enhanced.

The plans were put to the public last year, with 78 per cent of respondents backing the need for improvements. Today, (Tuesday 26 September) Highways England has announced the results of the consultation and the preferred options being taken forward at each location.

Highways England Project Manager Tom Beasley said:

I would like to thank everyone who took part in our consultation. It's great to see that there is such strong backing for improvements to this section of the A27, and there were some really good ideas put forward. People's input has helped to shape our plans and we've made some key changes to our proposals to make sure they deliver the biggest benefit. In particular we've prioritised improvements at Polegate including the Gainsborough Lane junction, over the Selmeston bypass option and introduced a new enhanced option for upgrading the Wilmington junction – all as a result of people's input. There will be an opportunity for people to see more detailed plans when we present the final designs at public exhibition events next year.

The plans include:

- widening Drusillas Roundabout to improve journeys along the A27 and for north-south traffic at the junction
- a new option for upgrading Wilmington junction, making it easier for drivers to join or leave the A27 and including a horse rider and cycle friendly Pegasus crossing
- widening a half a mile section of the A27 between the Polegate interchange and the Cophall roundabout to a dual carriageway, and an upgraded, signalised junction at Polegate
- near to the Polegate interchange, as a result of the consultation, introducing new proposals for upgrading the Gainsborough Lane junction by providing a right turn facility
- significant enhancements to the walking and cycle routes along this nine mile stretch of the A27, including a new pedestrian and cycle path between Firle and Polegate

Proposals to upgrade Selmeston junction have been withdrawn after no options could be found that would deliver a worthwhile benefit without having an unacceptable impact on the South Downs national park.

The proposed plans will help to make journeys more reliable, ease congestion and improve safety along this section of the A27, especially at the key pinch points in Polegate and Wilmington. They are part of the Government's record £15bn investment in roads between 2015 and 2020, which is improving people's journeys, making roads safer and boosting the economy.

A public consultation on the options was held from 27 October to 8 December 2016. A total of 1,140 responses were received during this consultation. Ten events were held at venues near the A27 east of Lewes scheme corridor for the public and stakeholders including local authorities, landowners and businesses, with over 1,000 people attending the events.

78% of people who responded to the consultation questionnaire said they are very concerned about road safety, with 70% very concerned about congestion or delays at junctions.

A copy of the consultation report and announcement flyer can be found on the

Highways England website.

Anyone interested in the scheme can sign up to receive updates via the (project page)[<http://www.highways.gov.uk/A27EastofLewes>] on the Highways England website where they can also see visualisations outlining the preferred options.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.