

St Athan to be “Home of Electrification for Aston Martin”

The luxury car brand has announced today that its new UK manufacturing facility at St Athan will become the brand’s centre for electrification and the home of the Lagonda brand, the world’s first zero-emission luxury marque.

The Rapide E will be the first Aston Martin to be built in Wales when production commences in 2019.

It will be Aston Martin’s first all-electric production model and is set to be a highly-desirable electric vehicle with the levels of performance expected of an Aston Martin.

First Minister, Carwyn Jones said

“I am very proud of Aston Martin’s decision to locate its new manufacturing facility in St Athan. It showed a huge vote of confidence in the Welsh Government’s can do attitude and in the support that we can offer to businesses that want to work with us.

“Today’s announcement that St Athan will also be the “Home of Electrification” for both Aston Martin and Lagonda is another huge win for Wales. It is a genuine testament to the reputation, dedication and skills of our work force. It also further cements Wales’ relationship with Aston Martin and is an excellent and very tangible example of how Welsh Government support can act as the catalyst for further economic growth and job creation.”

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Our Economic Action Plan is clear about the importance of decarbonisation to the future of our economy so I am absolutely delighted that Aston Martin has taken the decision to make St Athan its centre for electric vehicle production.

“I am confident that this decision, both directly and via the supply chain will help to drive genuine economic growth and result in the creation of more highly skilled Welsh jobs.”

Dr Andy Palmer, Aston Martin President and Chief Executive Officer, said:

“Aston Martin sees itself as a future leader in the development of zero emission technologies, and I am delighted that St Athan will be our ‘Home of Electrification’ for both the Aston Martin and

Lagonda brands.

“The Rapide E will spearhead development of Aston Martin’s low- and zero-emission vehicle strategy. With the reintroduction of the Lagonda brand, this is a demonstration of how electrification features prominently in our business plan moving forward.”

[Views sought on A458 improvements in Welshpool town centre](#)

The Welsh Government has today (Monday, 10 September) launched a consultation on proposals following a review last year based on concerns raised by traders and residents.

Revisions to the existing network being consulted on are:

- The possibility of reducing Broad Street to single lane from The Cross to the ‘High Street’ outside the town hall.
- The installation of a ‘Zebra’ controlled crossing on Broad Street near the town hall
- Improvements to make Brook Street two-way between Church Street and Jehu Road which would require alterations to A458 signage at Sarn-y-Bryn Caled roundabout and Flash junction.

The consultation begins today and lasts until Monday, 3 December.

Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Businesses and residents have previously expressed their concerns over pedestrian safety, driver behaviour and parking issues in Welshpool town centre.

“This consultation provides an excellent opportunity for people to share their opinion on the proposed options aimed at improving traffic flow and safety.

“These views will form an important part of the decision process and I would encourage everyone with an interest to contribute to this consultation.”

A one day drop-in session will be held on 14 September and 30 October at Welshpool Town Hall between 10am and 7pm.

The consultation documents and plans will also be available for viewing

during opening hours at Welshpool Town Council offices and the Tourist Information Centre for the full 12 weeks.

Further details of the proposals and how to share your views can be found on the [A458 Welshpool town centre one way system consultation](#) webpage.

[Work begins on step change in emotional and mental health support in schools](#)

As part of a multi-agency approach, schools have an important role to help deliver the ambitious goal of building a population of emotionally-resilient and mentally healthy children and young people in Wales.

A 'whole school' approach would ensure that mental health and wellbeing becomes central to the way schools work and will touch on many different aspects of school life. This means that the school ethos will support the broader mental health and wellbeing of learners, which in turn will help to prevent other issues from developing or escalating, including mental health issues.

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams and Health and Social Services Secretary, Vaughan Gething today announced a Joint Ministerial Task and Finish Group is being set up to accelerate work on this approach.

Schools have a clear role in supporting prevention and helping with early intervention. It will look at the new curriculum being developed and consider issues such as staff training.

The new group will see how different activities already taking place can be brought together; highlight any gaps in provision; and ensure energy and resources are targeted so they can have maximum benefit.

The work of the group is in response to and, will be informed by, the report by the National Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee, Mind over Matter, which called for emotional and mental wellbeing and resilience to be a stated national priority and contained recommendations for how this could be taken forward.

The group will be jointly chaired by the two Cabinet Secretaries and will bring together those working in education and health and the wider public and third sectors. Lynne Neagle AM, chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, has agreed to act as an observer to the group and will participate in its work.

A multi-agency and multi-profession workshop will take place today (Friday September 7) to explore what a 'whole school approach' could involve and where gaps in current support exist. Findings from the workshop will further inform the work of the task and finish group.

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams said:

"The emotional and mental health of our young people is paramount and that's why we want to make sure they are fully supported – through each stage of their education – to be emotionally and mentally resilient, confident and, above all, happy.

"Work is already underway to provide dedicated professional support to schools, including our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) pilot, but what we're talking about here is an approach that goes right across the school, connects activities already taking place and identifies where we can go further and faster.

"We want to schools to become exemplary in the way they promote mental health and wellbeing and this group is just the beginning of a process that will take us to that point."

Health and Social Services Secretary, Vaughan Gething added:

"In 2016, the Welsh Government made mental health one of its five national priorities, because we recognise good mental health is absolutely vital.

"We fully recognise the importance of supporting the emotional well-being of our children and young people. Schools have a crucial role in identifying problems early, and helping to provide children and young people with the tools to cope with the stresses of growing up.

"And that's what today's announcement is all about. Taken together – the work we are announcing today, and that of our partners across statutory and third sectors, has the potential to deliver the step-change we all seek. It will help ensure our children and young people have the right support, in the right place, at the right time, which will enable them to grow up in healthy and nurturing environments, giving them the best possible opportunity to fulfil their true potential."

Lynne Neagle, Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, said:

“I welcome the establishment of this important group, as a direct response to the work of the Children, Young People and Education Committee and our recent report on the emotional and mental health of children in Wales. As a committee, we are keen to maintain the pace of work necessary in this area and look forward to being involved in shaping the final terms of reference by the end of this month.

“Cross-sector and cross-professional cooperation is key to this, and as an independent participant in the group’s work, I will do all I can to ensure that a whole-school approach is part of a wider whole-system approach to emotional and mental health for Wales’ children and young people.”

Welsh exports up by over 4%

The latest export statistics – published this week – show that the value of Welsh exports stood at £16.6 billion in the year to June 2018, representing an increase of £0.7 billion on the same period in the previous year.

Of those Welsh exports 61.3% went to EU countries. This is more than 11 percentage points higher than the UK share which stands at 50%.

The figures also show that Welsh exports to the EU countries increased by £643m, an increase of 6.8% on the previous 12 months. Meanwhile exports to non-EU countries went up by £20m (0.3%).

Germany continued to be the top export destination for Welsh goods and services with 19.9% of total exports finding their way there, while 52.1% of Welsh exports fell into the category of Machinery and Transport Equipment.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“Huge congratulations to businesses across Wales who have helped to deliver this £663m increase in Welsh exports.

“These figures are testament to their hard work and determination in what are challenging and uncertain economic times.

“Our Economic Action Plan is clear about our commitment to prioritising exports and trade, and to helping businesses retain their existing trading partners while supporting them to branch out into other global markets. We will continue to work closely and proactively with the business community to support their export programmes and ambitions.

“Of course these statistics again magnify the economic importance of our excellent trading relationships with EU countries, which currently account for 61.3% of our total exports.

“We call again on the UK Government to ensure that Wales enjoys full and unfettered access to the Single Market and the ability to participate in a customs union, post Brexit, so that we can maintain and build on the successes businesses across Wales are having in increasing their share of the overseas market.”

[Lesley Griffiths writes open letter to all Welsh farmers on why reform of the Basic Payment Scheme is vital](#)

In July, the Cabinet Secretary launched a consultation, [Brexit and our Land](#), which proposes a new Land Management Programme to replace the BPS in Wales once the UK leaves the European Union. The consultation is open until 30 October.

Loss of tariff-free access to the EU’s market and potential competition from other parts of the world once the UK begins to sign Free Trade Agreements will mean Welsh farmers having to compete in the global marketplace.

The current BPS is insufficiently targeted to respond to these challenges as it is solely an income support scheme. The sustainable way to compete is to improve productivity, reduce costs through greater efficiency and reduced waste and diversify to meet market needs. These are all areas in which the Welsh Government wants to focus support through the new schemes proposed in the consultation.

The proposed Land Management Programme will consist of two large and flexible schemes – the Economic Resilience Scheme and the Public Goods Scheme.

The Cabinet Secretary is writing to all farmers to explain the need for change following a recent FUW campaign to reject the proposals in the consultation and retain BPS.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“The Basic Payment Scheme has provided vital support to Welsh farmers. But it will not protect farmers and communities in the future.

“Brexit means we have to do things differently. Simply maintaining current payments cannot offset the negative impacts from leaving the European Union.

Keeping the system would leave Welsh farmers worse off.

“There is no debate on whether we should support farmers: we will and we will continue to protect the funding. But we need to provide support in a different way to keep farmers on the land.

“I am open to new ideas and this is a genuine consultation. But I am clear that ‘business as usual’ is not an option.

“Our new Land Management Programme will consist of two new large flexible schemes to support Welsh farmers post-Brexit – the Economic Resilience Scheme and the Public Goods Scheme.

“Over the summer, I have taken the opportunity to meet with farmers in agricultural shows and during other visits to discuss the consultation. We need farmers to engage properly with us to help make this work, so the recent misleading FUW campaign is not helpful. That is why I am today writing to all farmers to reiterate the case for change. I have also shared with them a [myth-busting factsheet](#). I urge all farmers to get involved and share their views with us.”