



## Ford Bridgend Engine Plant closure confirmed

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Workers at Ford Bridgend Engine Plant were this morning told it's closing after 40 years.

The company called a mass meeting in the plant and it comes after many months of speculation surrounding its operations and future, and manager Wallace Yarwood broke the news to a hushed crowd with only one worker shouting "Poor show".

The GMB union said it would be "hammer blow" to workers and the Welsh economy with far reaching consequences.

Some 400 workers had applied for voluntary redundancy earlier this year after Ford said it was looking to cut the labour force from the 1,700 currently on the site, but it's not now clear if this initial batch will go or if they will be subject to the compulsory redundancy which could mean each receives £100,000 on average.

That would add up to a total redundancy bill of £1,700M for Ford before other related costs of closing the production lines, transferring the Dragon lines elsewhere after they were commissioned in October 2018 after a £100M investment, or scrapping other parts of the machining and assembly lines.

What happens to the massive site after autumn next year still has to be decided and it's not known if Ford will keep land ownership or sell it on for industrial use.

Although it won a new Dragon engine line which was officially commissioned last October, output has been less than half of the expected capacity and is considered unviable.



Madeleine Moon MP, visited Ford Bridgend Engine Plant 29 October 2018 to watch Job 1 come off the new Dragon Production line.

Declining new car sales and intense competition have combined with the market's move away from internal combustion engines towards electric motors and powertrains.

Ford called union leaders to its European headquarters in Essex today where they will be given the news and at the same time workers will be brought together in Bridgend plant.

Unite has said it would oppose any closure and call for industrial action if necessary, but it remains to be seen if this will happen and what UK and Welsh Governments will do to save the skills and experience of the highly trained workforce and seek alternative investment for the area.

A multi-million pound redundancy package will be brought in for the approximately 1,700 workers at the site opened after a £180M investment from September 1977 on the Waterton Industrial Estate and just over two years of construction. It has assembled over 22M engines since the first rolled off the lines on 21 September 1979 and seen over £1.8B invested by the



company.

Over the five decades since, the plant has built millions of engines for Ford, Jaguar Land Rover and Volvo and it has been the company's leading source of petrol units in Europe supplying vehicle assembly plants around the world.

It has attracted billions of pounds of investments and support from UK and Welsh Governments and is a major payer of business rates for both Bridgend and Vale of Glamorgan Councils as it straddles the boundary between both authorities.

Not only will closure hit their budgets but also the incomes of workers, regular contractors and suppliers and service providers as well as the wider economy of South Wales Valleys.

Its work will be transferred to other petrol plants in the short term and it has a sister facility in Mexico, but the growth of electric powertrains is expected to lead to rationalisation in all Ford's power plants and still more redundancies will result over the next decade.