



## Ineos car plant for Wales – speculation mounts

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Work to prepare a 116-acre site in Bridgend for employment space covering more than 70,000 sq m will begin next month, Economy Minister Ken Skates said today, leading to speculation this is being readied for the £600 Million Ineos Automotive project.

The Economy Minister confirmed that following the granting of outline planning permission for a development at Brocastle in Bridgend, the Welsh Government had awarded a contract for the construction of key roads and services on the strategic site alongside the A48 and backing onto Ford Bridgend Engine Plant.

Hundreds of Ford workers will be offered voluntary redundancy this year and next as the company implements a slim-down plan to improve profitability and they have skills which could be transferred to the Ineos vehicle assembly lines and it would get support from the engineering unions in Wales as well as attract training grants from Welsh Government.

Officials from Ineos have visited BEP with Welsh Government officials to consider a production centre for their Projekt Grenadier, a modern alternative to the discontinued Land Rover Defender, and it was part of a European fact finding mission to decide on a production base for the new model. Ineos Automotive is believed to favour a UK site for the vehicle after comments in the trade press about its search.

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Construction work to prepare the site, which will be undertaken by local civil engineering contractor Walters UK, is being funded by £10m from Welsh Government including £6m of EU funding. Work will start in May and is expected to be completed by mid-2020, the timeframe which Ineos has said it wants to develop and produce their serious workhorse for global sales.

Economy Minister Ken Skates said, “This is one of several significant employment sites which the Welsh Government will be bringing forward to enable the development of modern business space, which is so badly needed to create jobs and support our economy.

“One of the challenges we face in providing good-quality jobs is ensuring the right business space is available at the right location. Sites like this in Brocastle, which is ready for development and well-connected to local infrastructure, are essential in meeting our ambitions.

“I am pleased we’re now in a position to appoint contractors for the Brocastle site. They will undertake the vital work to provide the infrastructure and services necessary for the development of the site, providing valuable jobs in the construction phase and helping to make the site an attractive proposition for businesses.”

A Welsh Government spokesman said they did not comment on individual companies which might be moving onto the Brocastle site and no-one could be reached for comment at Ineos.