

Ineos Bridgend confirmed

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This is what the Ineos Bridgend factory is expected to look like.

A £600M new car investment has been confirmed for Wales, *writes Robin Roberts.*

The anticipated Grenadier 4×4 vehicle will be assembled in a new factory at Brocastle, backing onto the current Ford Bridgend Engine plant which is due to close in 12 months with the loss of 1,700 jobs.

Grenadier will initially create about 200 jobs in Bridgend and 300 more over time but there are likely to be still more jobs safeguarded or created in the component supply sector in Wales and the UK.

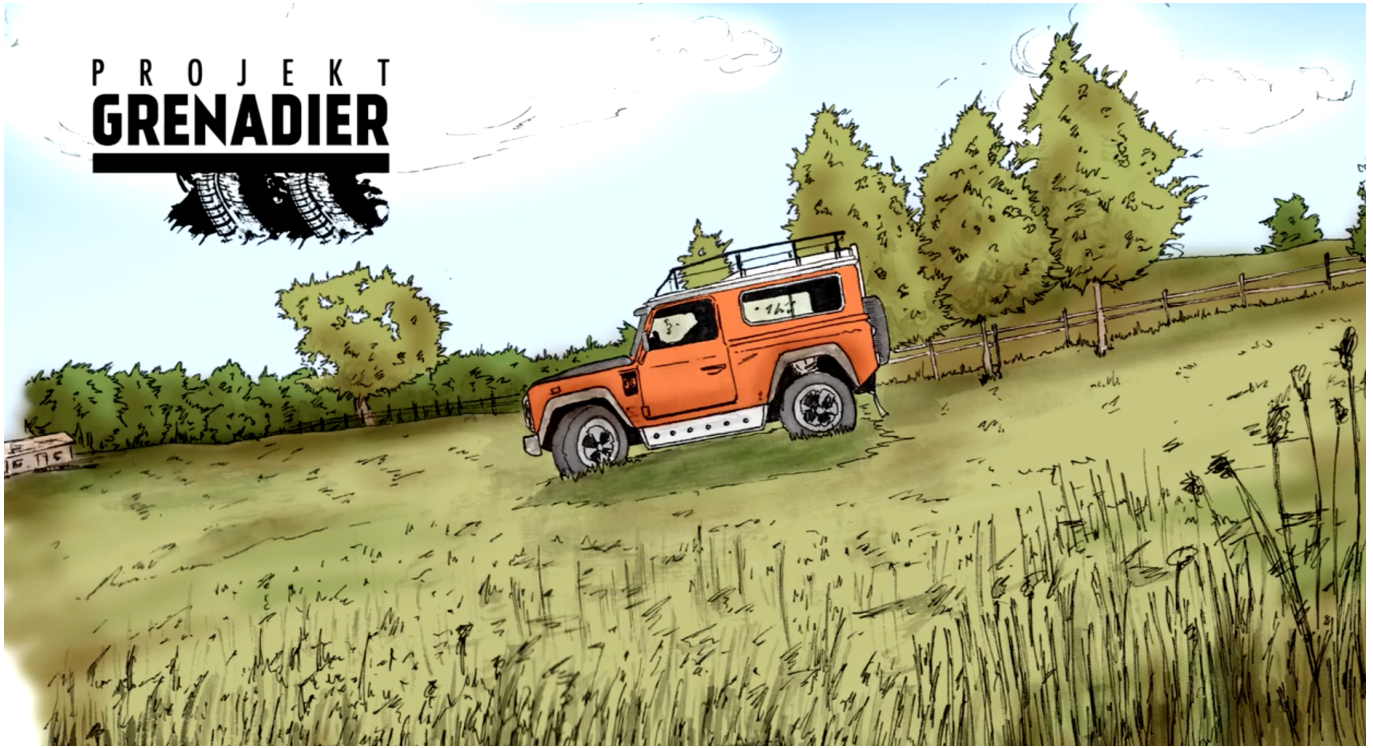
The go-ahead today follows months of speculation that the so-called Projekt Grenadier's backer and one of the UK's richest men, Sir Jim Radcliffe, wanted to build his serious 4x4 model in Britain under his Ineos Automotive brand.



Sir Jim Radcliffe, founder of Ineos, with a Land Rover Defender which his Grenadier model will replace.

That was created four years ago after Land Rover announced it was ending production of its famous Defender, but it has been relaunched this month at the German motor show and is reportedly already attracting a lot of interest from future buyers.

New challenger Ineos has decided to go with BMW, who sold Land Rover to Tata Motors, for the diesel and petrol engines and will use automatic transmissions in a variety of body styles to meet global demand from its Bridgend plant.



Projekt Grenadier...

Brocastle estate was earmarked for industrial use over a decade ago but an initial plan fell through so it has remained in Welsh Government ownership, and in May the go-ahead was given for the 116 acres development with completion mid-2020 at a cost of £16M.

That timescale will suit Ineos to fit out the factory and begin manufacturing their 4x4, helped by training and investment grants.

Working with BMW will give Grenadier proven and quality power units and allow Ineos to cut development time while meeting tough emissions regulations and open the door to future hybridisation of the Grenadier.

The Grenadier investment comes after Welsh Government secured Aston Martin Lagonda luxury cars at St Athan and the TVR sports cars' investments at Rassau, Ebbw Vale, which is just undergoing fitting out for production. Further automotive projects are being discussed for future investments in Wales as well.



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The first phase at Brocastle due to be completed covers 250,000 sq ft but there is a further 500,000 sq ft of space for future expansion and INEOS Automotive is in talks with two Wales-based component supply companies to support their work which could provide a further boost to the Welsh economy.



The Brocastle site to be home to Ineos production, with the Ford Bridgend plant in the distance...

Economy Minister Ken Skates said, "This is a huge vote of confidence in the workforce and economy of Wales at an incredibly challenging time."



“Not only is this good news for Bridgend – and I am sure the first of many exciting announcements for the area – but it also proves that Wales remains an attractive place to invest despite ongoing Brexit uncertainty.

“Our work to support Bridgend in the wake of Ford’s proposals will not stop here and we will continue to do all we can to attract new business opportunities, to support Ford workers and to ensure an exciting future for the town.

“I am delighted to welcome INEOS Automotive to Wales and delighted that they are the latest in a line of prestigious companies to sign up to our Economic Contract, designed to drive growth and responsible business behaviours in companies. The health and wellbeing of workers is already an important part of INEOS’ ethos and this is evidenced in the Economic Contract.”

Jeff Beck, GMB Wales and South West Regional Organiser, added, “It’s extremely welcome news that Ineos has chosen Bridgend as the site for the production of its new 4X4.

“As a Union we’ve long argued that the government needs to intervene to protect and promote manufacturing in the UK, and the results are clear for everyone to see.

“Car making is in the DNA of Bridgend, and with the highly skilled workforce in Bridgend we’re certain that Ineos will be more than pleased with the quality manufacturing once they get going.”



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Ineos Bridgend factory; aerial view of proposed buildings and layout.