Aston Martin’s new model to be built in Wales

Published: February 24, 2016

Author: Robin Roberts

Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/aston-martins-new-model-to-be-built-in-wales/



Aston Martin DBX Concept being unveiled at the 2015 Geneva Motor Show…

Wales has won the bid to build the futuristic Aston Martin DBX crossover.

Robin Roberts (Wheels Within Wales) reports…

Executives from the company and Welsh Government leaders will hold a press conference in Cardiff this morning to formally announce the project and give more details as well as unveil the car.

About 750 jobs will be created when the revolutionary car is put into production in a new factory created on the St Athan Enterprise Zone. Prime Minister David Cameron said a few months ago that it was the best site for the new car.

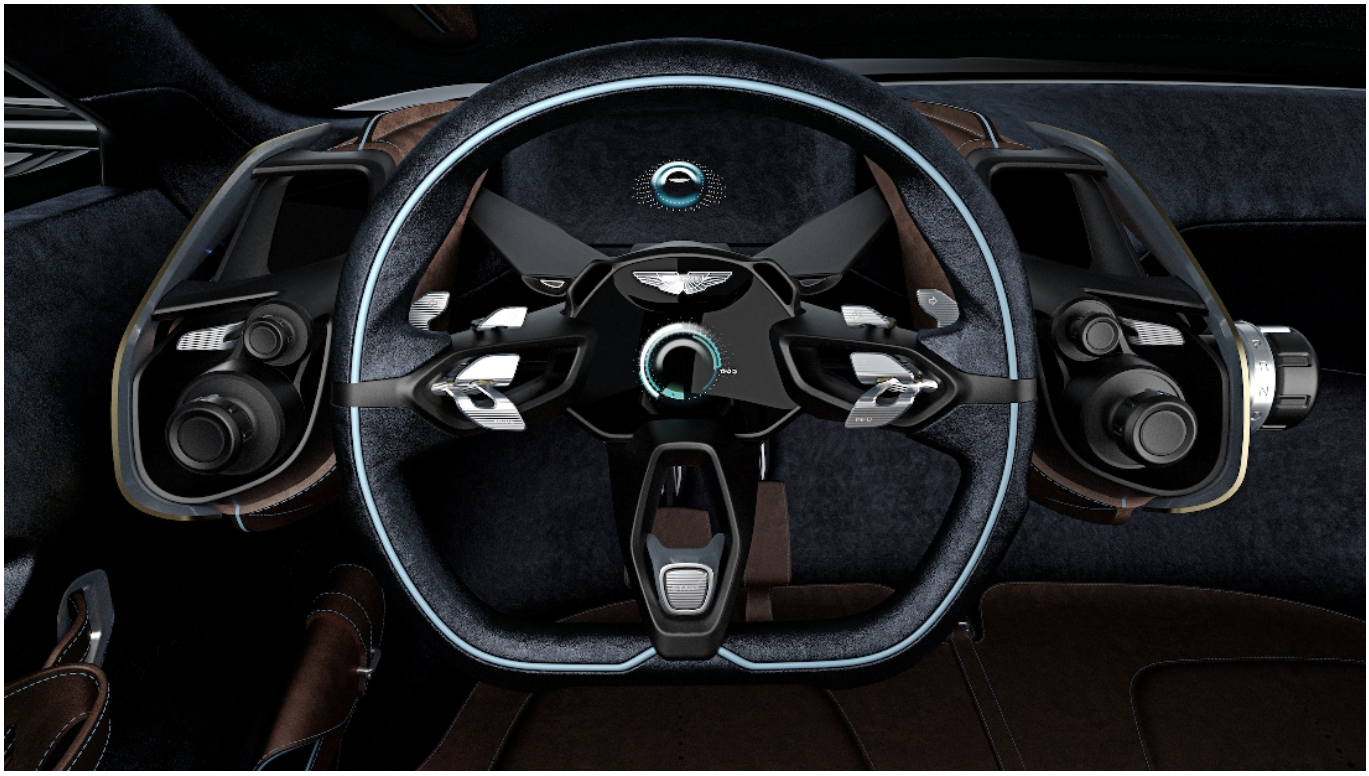
The company secured about £200 Million for the project from share sales to Investindustrial and Tejara Capital in May 2015.

Wales beat off bids from 19 locations the USA, Europe and other parts of Britain, including Aston Martin's home base in Gaydon, Warwickshire.

Detailed plans to install the new production lines are being worked out and it is anticipated that job 1 for the DBX will roll off the new lines in 2020.

Welsh Government officials have been courting Aston Martin for over two decades and narrowly lost an earlier attempt to lure the luxury car maker to a new site on the eastern side of Cardiff.

The new car will be built in comparatively low volume and does not need a conventional production site, and the St Athan location will resemble an earlier site it used at Bloxham in the 1980s before it moved to Gaydon.



The new car and others in the pipeline which will shown at next week's Geneva motor show are important elements to raise Aston Martin sales from 4,000 last year to 15,000.

The move to St Athan and development as a high technology centre will make it easier to convince other car makers and suppliers to consider the location for future investment.

The Aston Martin DBX Concept was unveiled 12 months ago at the Swiss motor show and will be an all-electric and all-wheel-drive model with a high performance powertrain and batteries to rival the US-made Tesla sports coupe.

There is no conventional engine compartment but it uses in-wheel electric motors powered by lithium sulphur cells with advanced lights and brakes, and cameras instead of rear mirrors.

Aston Martin DBX will showcase advanced manufacturing and interior styling which retains

the company's exquisite British heritage.

Aston Martin was founded in London 103 years ago and has been independently owned before it became part of the Ford Motor Company from 1994 to 2007 when Welshman David Richards led a consortium to acquire it.

In late 2012 an Italian private equity fund bought over a third of the business, with Middle Eastern based investors holding shares as well as Daimler AG, who have supplied engineering expertise to the company since 2013.

Last year, according to SMMT figures, Aston Martin sold fewer than 1,000 cars in the UK, but that was more than the 864 they sold in 2014. The DBX is seen as an important model for their future growth and survival along with new hybrid models it is planning.

First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones said in a statement before this morning's conference, "I am delighted to officially welcome Aston Martin to Wales.

"We have been working closely with the company for almost two years in the face of fierce competition from other potential sites across the world. Our success today is testament to the reputation, dedication and skills of the Welsh workforce, all qualities that are synonymous with such a luxury, hand-crafted brand as Aston Martin."

"Today is the start of a long-term relationship between Wales and Aston Martin. We will work together in building on the strong foundations of our partnership to nurture a prosperous and rewarding future for this iconic company and its skilled workforce in Wales."

Minister for Economy Edwina Hart added, "Aston Martin's decision to invest in its new manufacturing plant at St Athan marks a significant moment in the history of the automotive sector in Wales.

"We already have more than 150 companies involved in the automotive supply chain,

employing around 18,000 people and generating over £3billion to the Welsh economy, but this will be the first time in almost 50 years that we will be seeing vehicles roll off a production line in Wales."

For Aston Martin, Chief Executive Officer Andrew Palmer added, "During our 103-year history, Aston Martin has become famous for making beautiful hand-crafted cars in England.

"Through a detailed evaluation of over 20 potential global locations for this new manufacturing facility, we were consistently impressed with the focus on quality, cost and speed from the Welsh Government team.

"As a great British company, we look forward to St Athan joining Gaydon as our second centre of hand-crafted manufacturing excellence."

Chairman of the Enterprise Zone and Welsh Automotive Forum, Prof Garel Rhys, said, "This is a very major development for the UK but Wales in particular.

"It's the first time in our history that we have been able to attract a car maker which builds models in series production.

"Although we have a major presence in the automotive industry with businesses in Wales supplying car makers with components they are not household names in the way that Aston Martin is and it will bring attention to Wales as a possible site for future investment."

He added that discussions are in an advanced stage with another car maker and said the development of Circuit of Wales would provide an opportunity to not only test cars during development but also to offer the facility as a customer hand-over when they collect their new car.

"The potential for Wales is tremendous and we can build on this announcement for years to come," he added.

Tim Williams, Chief Executive of the Welsh Automotive Forum said, “This is great news for Wales. There are obvious implications and opportunities for young engineers and assembly workers in future and the knock on benefits to the supply chain and Welsh economy are immense.”

