Ford’s engine production facility at Bridgend has a chance of becoming the base for building the Ineos all wheel drive vehicle…

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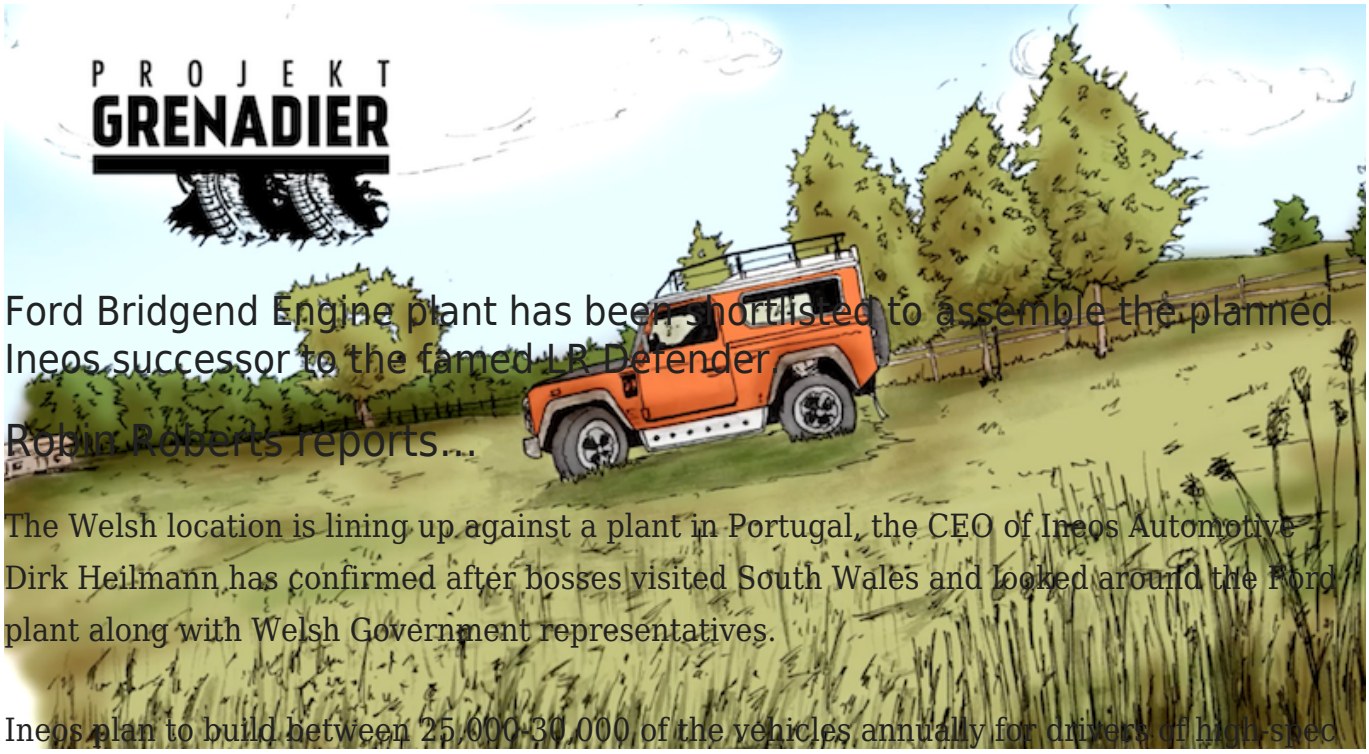

Ford Bridgend Engine plant has been shortlisted to assemble the planned Ineos successor to the famed LR Defender

Robin Roberts reports...

The Welsh location is lining up against a plant in Portugal, the CEO of Ineos Automotive Dirk Heilmann has confirmed after bosses visited South Wales and looked around the Ford plant along with Welsh Government representatives.

Ineos plan to build between 25,000-30,000 of the vehicles annually for drivers of high-spec double-cab pickups and the models will be priced similarly. But it has also said it will use BMW sourced engines for its new model which has the working name of Projekt Grenadier.

If Ineos choose Bridgend it will help offset the expected 400 jobs losses when the Ford site loses the Jaguar V6 and V8 lines in nine months time.
There is a large area of the plant which has been cleared already and from early next year only Ford's engines will be made there.

A large tract of Welsh Government owned land adjacent to Brocastle Brook, separating that from the current engine plant, has also been cleared ready for redevelopment and it has industrial planning consent.

The still unnamed Ineos car would mostly be bought by those who need its off-road and towing ability, rather than leisure users, Heilmann said. It will feature a steel ladder chassis with aluminium five-door body and straight sides, reminiscent of early Jeep and Land Rover models.

Ineos said the decision on the assembly site will be announced “quite soon,” but declined further elaboration.
Unused space within Ford’s engine factory in Bridgend, south Wales, is one of the UK possibilities, the company said. Portugal has also been reported as a potential production location.

“I don’t think it matters that it’s in UK, but it is the heart of the story. We are a UK manufacturing company,” Heilmann said.
The company plans to build the SUV itself rather than out-sourcing it.

The car will be launched in Europe, Australia and Africa first, while U.S. sales will follow.