

What is happening to the Ford engine plant at Bridgend?

One of the biggest industrial sites in Wales, the former Ford engine plant in Bridgend, will be formally brought to market in the first quarter of this year with interest already identified.

Ford Motor Company (FMC) said its freehold interest in the 1.6 million sq ft factory site, where production ceased in September 2020, with the loss of more than 1,000 jobs, will be marketed by commercial real estate and investment firm CBRE.

In what was a major blow to the Welsh automotive sector, Ford closed its [Bridgend engine plant](#) after 40 years of production.

This was compounded by Ineos Automotive abandoning its plans that same year for a new factory next to the Ford plant, in an investment that promised to create 500 jobs at the Brocastle site owned by the Welsh Government.

New owners could invest to repurpose the site to attract new tenants in sectors such as industrial and logistics, where there is growing demand in Wales, but a current lack of stock.

A spokesperson for FMC said they were currently preparing the site physically for a sale, with a small number of staff currently overseeing decommissioning.

The spokesperson said: “We are re-using or selling machinery, transforming the site into a cold idle status, which means that utilities are mostly disconnected. A major focus is put on environmental due diligence. A so-called phase two is under preparation. This phase two investigates in detail the soil and groundwater conditions in order to then develop and implement a remediation strategy.”

They added: “The real estate team is currently consolidating all required information for the site in order to prepare for the coming marketing phase.”

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On the future freehold ownership of the site, the car manufacturer said it was looking to sell the decommissioned factory in its entirety.

The spokesman added: “FMC is working with all stakeholders, including local and regional stakeholders on the implementation of this approach. This will allow us to capture a very wide range of interested parties through various channels and also specifically through the Welsh Government.”

Although the site has yet to be formally marketed, it has already attracted strong interest in the marketplace.

Neil Francis, head of logistics and industrial at the Cardiff office of global property advisory firm, Knight Frank, said he was talking to a number of firms interested in taking space at the former car plant.

This follows a year of strong demand for industrial space in Wales which was highlighted in [Knight Frank's recent report](#), which revealed that 1.84 million sq ft of industrial units of 50,000 sq ft and over were transacted in Q4 of 2021.

The strong final quarter saw a take up of industrial property over 50,000 sq ft reach 3.49m sq ft in Wales – up from 2.74m sq ft in 2020 and 2.5 times the amount transacted in 2019.

Following the closure of the car engine plant, the Welsh Government set up a Ford taskforce, chaired by the late Richard Parry-Jones, to attract new investment into the area. Ahead of formal marketing it has received over 30 enquiries for the site from a range of organisations so far.

A Welsh Government spokesperson said: “The Welsh Government continues to put the Ford Bridgend site forward for inward investment opportunities. We’re also helping to connect enquiries from interested parties to the Ford Motor Company subsidiary, Ford Land.”

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