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New XJ Takes Centre Stage as Business Leaders Debate Future of UK Automotive Manufacturing

On Thursday 30th July, Richard Lambert, Director General of the CBI, was guest speaker at an event at Unipart Group's headquarters at Cowley, Oxford, that brought together some of the region's leading business people to discuss the importance, and future, of automotive manufacturing in the UK.

"As is now obvious to everyone, our economy has become dangerously overbalanced in the last decade and manufacturing has a key part to play in getting things back into a sustainable state," Mr Lambert commented. "There will be serious opportunities for wealth creation in this sector in the coming years if it's properly managed."

"Manufacturing is the powerhouse of productivity growth here in the UK...and the upshot is that we now have some of the most competitive manufacturing plants in the world," he continued. "We have to cherish and preserve this extraordinary heritage of engineering and design excellence, and our manufacturing skills. It would be a crime to let them go."

Over 70 business people attended the event which also featured presentations from Unipart's Group Chief Executive, John Neill; Mike Wright, Director Customer Services, Jaguar Cars; and Ian Callum, Design Director, Jaguar Cars.

The evening culminated in a special presentation of Jaguar's brand new, top of the range executive car, the XJ, which has been praised by the automotive press as "a seductive combination of striking design, breathtaking performance and advanced engineering".

John Neill commented: "Professor Dan Jones – the man who launched Lean to the world – described the automotive industry as "the most complex organisation of human endeavour on the planet". The new Jaguar has been designed, developed, engineered and manufactured in the UK, and is a powerful demonstration of Britain's ability to compete on the global stage.

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"We value all our customer relationships very highly but the relationship with Jaguar is very special. We are the only business partner trusted with the most sensitive information about their brand new cars years before they come to market and then we work together to ensure that where ever those cars need parts anywhere in the world for the rest of their lives, we can deliver genuinely world leading standards of service."

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Notes to editors:

Please note a microsite dedicated to this event, featuring videos of the presentations and still photography, is accessible via a link on www.unipart.co.uk

About Unipart Group

The Unipart Group employs more than 8,000 personnel worldwide and has an annual turnover of more than £1billion. It is one of Europe's leading logistics companies and a widely-recognised pioneer in the field of Lean implementation.

Operating across a range of market sectors, including automotive, leisure, marine, manufacturing, mobile telecoms, rail, retail and technology, Unipart offers a breadth of services from third party logistics to expert consultancy.

All Unipart sites operate according to the Group's proprietary version of Lean known as The Unipart Way. This is a philosophy of working underpinned by tools and techniques that inspires efficiency, flexibility and outstanding customer service in any process.

Unipart also offers expert consultancy in implementing Lean principles and in supply chain management across a variety of industry sectors.

The Group's clients include Homebase, Sainsbury's, ASOS.com, Vodafone, 3, BSkyB, Jaguar Land Rover, Severn Trent Water and HMRC.