

McLaren's Ken Smart Announced as new Chair of Composites Leadership Forum

The Composites Leadership Forum (CLF) has today announced that Ken Smart (Executive Director of Business Strategy for McLaren Automotive) will take over the role of Chair.

He takes over from Alex Aucken, the ex- Global Automotive Director, Solvay, following the completion of his term of office.

Ken led the project team responsible for establishing the £50m McLaren Composites Technology Centre (MCTC) in the Sheffield region and has now been promoted to McLaren's executive team with responsibility for Business Strategy.

Composite and advanced materials such as carbon fibre have long been part of McLaren's DNA, the company having first introduced the material into Formula 1 in the early 1980s. All McLaren's sportscars and supercars will be hybrid by 2024.

Ken has considerable experience and knowledge in the management and delivery of technology, skills and commercial strategy, as well as building relationships with local government.

This experience will be invaluable to CLF moving forward in the delivery of the UK Composites Strategy.

Prior to joining McLaren, he was Managing Director of three aerospace and defence companies, turning two of these around under his tenure with the third being successfully divested.

Ken is a Chartered Engineer and Member of the Institution of Engineering and Technology.

Ken will now work with the CLF, Composites UK (secretariat to the CLF), stakeholders, CLF working groups and industry to build on the work that Alex started in supporting the UK composites sector and helping it to achieve its predicted growth targets.

Ken Smart said: "It's a great honour to be appointed as the new Chair of the Composites Leadership Forum at such an important moment for the sector. The UK automotive industry recognises the importance of work to reduce overall vehicle weight which, when combined with future powertrains, will be vital to delivering the future mobility solutions needed. This is an area where the UK can develop world-leading, truly innovative solutions applicable for automotive, aerospace and defence applications."

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Notes to Editor:

Composites Leadership Forum: The CLF was formed in 2012 to provide leadership and direction to the UK Composites Industry in response to a requirement highlighted in the 2009 UK Composites Strategy.

Meeting quarterly, it brings together key national bodies from the composites sector, end-sector groups, academia and UK government.

Composites UK is the official trade association for the UK composites industry. The association acts to encourage continuous growth and development of the industry, promoting the best-practice use of composites materials. Its role is to bring companies throughout the supply chain together creating partnerships, as-well-as creating a unified voice to drive the industry forward, benefiting all of those involved.