

A first look at the Stadler plant where the new Metro fleet is being made

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A team from Nexus has taken a first look at the Stadler factory in Switzerland where the Tyne and Wear Metro's new fleet of trains are being made.

The 8,500 square metre plant in St Margrethen, built only two years ago, is one of the most state-of-the-art train manufacturing facilities in Europe.

Stadler has already started work on the new Metro fleet, with full assembly of the first new train just 12 weeks away.

Nexus, the public body which owns and manages Metro, got the first chance this week to look around the Stadler factory and see the advanced facilities up close.

Metro Development Director, Neil Blagburn, said: "It was brilliant to get a first look at Stadler's latest manufacturing facility, and its separate testing and commissioning facilities over in Switzerland, where the new Metro trains will be getting built and commissioned."

"We got the chance to see all of the assembly stages in action within the plant, with aluminium body shells entering at one side and high quality fully assembled trains of all shapes and sizes leaving at the other for customers around the world. We also visited the testing and commissioning sites and saw first-hand the rigorous processes which ensure the trains leave the factory as a fully finished article.

"Being there in person made it easy to visualise the new Metro trains moving through those same production lines less than three months from now.

"I'm delighted to say that that we remain on course to get the first train in the region at the end of next year and we still expect that the first one to be in passenger service in July 2023. Thanks to the efforts of the teams in Nexus and Stadler, no days have been lost due to the pandemic.

"The visit to the Stadler factory brought home just how close we are now to the start of the most tangible stage of the fleet replacement programme. The new Metro trains will transform the Tyne and Wear Metro for customers and secure the network's long-term future."

The Nexus delegates were shown around the plant by its Chief Operating Officer Martin Bernhardsgruetter.

The tour took in the vast assembly lines where Stadler builds its trains and the testing and commissioning facility where trains are put through their paces before being delivered to the various customers.

Those facilities will soon have the first of Metro's new trains passing through them before heading off to a test track and then being delivered to the North East by rail.

The first train is set arrive in North East England next November for testing, and enter passenger service in early 2023.

There was also a chance to see the workshops where component parts for the new Metros are being out together.

Stadler is building 46 new Metro trains for Nexus, which will be delivered up to 2024. They will be responsible for servicing and maintaining these trains for 35 years, underscoring their commitment to the regional economy.

The new trains, which will be 15 times more reliable and will cut energy consumption by 30%, will have modern features including improved internet connectivity, charging points, air conditioning and a step-change in accessibility.

Among new features will be an automatic sliding step at every door of the new trains, making travel easier for Metro's 50,000 wheelchair passengers as well as people with children's buggies, luggage or bicycles.

Stadler is also in the process of building a new £70m Metro depot at Gosforth as part of the new fleet project.

Find out more at www.nexus.org.uk/newmetrotrains

Photo credit: Nexus