

ARQ Rail aims to renew focus on decarbonisation of UK rail infrastructure

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An exciting new collaborative partnership has launched, which will play its part in meeting the challenges set to industry by Network Rail in response to the UK decarbonisation agenda within the UK rail infrastructure. ARQ Rail, which comprises AmcoGiffen, REL (Rail Electrification Limited) and QTS, will provide a **truly integrated self-delivery model for the UK rail network** as it moves closer to electrification and decarbonisation.

Individually, each business has been enabling electrification programmes across the UK throughout Control Periods 5 and 6. All three companies, including REL, the latest acquisition, are subsidiaries of Renew Holdings, a unique family of businesses providing multi-disciplinary engineering services through independent brands supporting essential UK infrastructure.

Andries Liebenberg, Executive Director responsible for Renew Holdings' rail activities, commented: "The Department for Transport (DfT), Transport Scotland (TS) and Transport for Wales (TfW), via Network Rail, have set very demanding targets for the industry via the recently launched Decarbonisation Strategy. One of the key challenges is that of affordability. It is clear that the rate of cost increase on typical electrification projects is no longer sustainable. In addition, development life cycles are getting longer

while not always delivering the desired outcomes.

“ARQ has the ambition to be an integral part of the solution and the future of decarbonisation of the UK rail network. I am confident that this partnership is ideally structured to meet the targets which have been set for the industry by Network Rail. ARQ’s significant differentiator is that it will work in partnership as a unified family of companies, each bringing their unique skills and self-delivering the broad scope of what makes up any rail system.

“We offer a complete delivery model with a flat structure and reporting lines. Our directly employed specialist teams, supported by our extensive plant fleet, aim to reduce or remove the often complex contracting models, adding unnecessary layers of cost and risk to any programme.

“Alongside this, we have already embraced Project SPEED, applying it to schemes currently in development and delivery. Our distinct, agile structure and direct delivery model has been well received and the early signs are very positive.”

This new partnership will be led by Vinny O’Holloran, who joins from Costain Group where he was project director within its rail division for six years. Working on projects including Queen Street Station and Stirling-Dunblane-Alloa, he brings considerable experience to this newly created role as director, responsible for implementing strategy at ARQ.

Vinny commented: “Joining ARQ is a real highlight for me and I was immediately struck by the investment that has already been made. It demonstrates the commitment that all three businesses, and Renew Holdings, have to making this venture stand out from the crowd.

“It is obvious that they have listened to what the customer has said and carefully crafted a strategy which I very much look forward to executing. The role will allow me to have independent control over the activity of ARQ, ensuring consistency throughout. It also gives the customer the confidence that they have an accountable individual who is instantly able to influence a programme with direct access to those who are delivering the works.

“At ARQ we understand that electrification is a significant contributor towards meeting Network Rail’s decarbonisation commitments, and that things have to change to drive efficiency. We want to be part of this change; to help drive it forward. We already have the skills within each business to do this and the ability to supplement the skills and knowledge gap in the industry. I am excited by our existing large in-house training facility and plans to expand which will enable us to further invest in training and develop sustainable skills for the future.

“By working together, we bring every element required for what is a rail system under one accountable, collaborative partnership.”

ARQ is also committed to continuing innovation both on and off track. Vinny added: “We are very conscious of the fact that possession time on the railway is at a premium, so we will ensure that we maximise access by continued investment into bespoke rail plant, but also by exploring further innovation in the design and build process. We must be able to accurately design in a virtual world, build (where we

can) off the railway and then use the access time efficiently, ensuring minimal disruption for the travelling public while maximising productivity.”

ARQ Rail is currently in talks with key stakeholders to look at ways in which it can help to support upcoming electrification projects across the UK rail infrastructure.

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