

# Aurora order means sky's the limit for one Telford business

March 29, 2022



The creation of the Aurora fleet of trains for East Midlands Railway has seen one Midland business go from strength to strength.

Baker Bellfield has created a range of new specialist manufacturing jobs as well as secured investment.

The project to create **East Midlands Railway's** (EMR) new Aurora fleet has helped a family-owned Midland business create new specialist manufacturing jobs and secure investment.

The Telford company won the contract to supply EMR's new Aurora fleet with a wide range of bespoke tables – helping to create six new roles in the process and support the firm throughout the pandemic. Baker Bellfield is part of Hitachi Rail's UK supply chain.

The contract to the company accounts for a significant part of its revenue for the next two years, helping to provide it some certainty and enabling it to secure investment in new state-of-the-art machinery – worth a half a million pounds.

All the table designs are engineered and validated in-house, and parts and components bonded, welded, injection moulded and painted, at Baker Bellfield's manufacturing sites in Telford. The tables are then shipped up to Hitachi's factory in Newton Aycliffe in County Durham to be installed into the new Aurora units.

When they enter service in 2023, the **Aurora trains** will offer significant advances on EMR's existing fleet, with passengers benefiting from more seats and modern interiors. The new Aurora fleet is currently being manufactured at Hitachi Rail's UK factory.

The trains, which will have the ability to run on overhead electric lines, will also include features that passengers have said they want to see, including air conditioning, free WiFi throughout, plug sockets and better passenger information screens.

Robert Wilkin, of Baker Bellfield, said: "Contracts such as the Aurora one are vital for companies like us and we are very proud to be working on it and helping to bring these exciting new trains to the UK.

"The tables in the new Aurora fleet are amongst the safest in the world and have been made to meet the new higher rail safety standards. All accessible folding tables will have our new generation "soft close" hinge system that allows the table to return to its down position in a controlled fashion, while first-class passengers will get the wow factor when they see the Italian made real wood laminates we use on our tables – which are manufactured by our partners Puricelli – who make some of the greenest tables on the market."

Lisa Angus, transitions and projects director at East Midlands Railway, said: "The Aurora contract is helping to support and grow UK manufacturing jobs across the Midlands and the UK and Baker Bellfield is a great example.

"Our team, along with Hitachi Rail, has worked closely with the company to make sure the tables are exactly what our customers require and we are looking forward to seeing them being used when our new fleet begins service in 2023."

Amy Webb, head of programme at Hitachi Rail, said: "It's fantastic the manufacturing of Hitachi Rail trains is supporting jobs and growth in the Midlands. "Supporting SME jobs neatly epitomises the benefits of Hitachi Rail's decision to prioritise UK suppliers. Having invested over £1.8billion in the UK supply chain ensures Hitachi Rail has a positive impact right across the country."