

# Crewe MP backs progress on HS2 works and calls for more local businesses to get involved

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Dr Kieran Mullan, MP for Crewe and Nantwich, has been given a tour of the preparatory works underway in readiness for the extension of the **HS2** network between the West Midlands and Crewe.

Dr Mullan was joined by South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce CEO, Paul Colman, and Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership CEO, Philip Cox, for the route progress tour. The visit, led by HS2, included an update on works to divert major utilities and the measures being put in place to protect and preserve the natural environment, ahead of advanced and main civils works commencing.

During the tour, Dr Mullan met with staff from Cheshire-based CLD Systems who supply materials to HS2 contractors working on the first phase of the railway, between London and Birmingham. As HS2's programme of works expands into Cheshire, the team has secured further contracts to supply physical security around the sites where preparatory works are now taking place.

Dr Kieran Mullan MP said: "HS2 is an amazing opportunity for our area, bringing jobs and investment both during construction and once the lines are built and operating.

“There are good opportunities for local businesses to win contracts with some, like CLD, already benefitting.”

CLD joined HS2’s supply chain in 2017 and the quality and craftsmanship of its work has led to repeat contract awards over the five-year period.

Kevin Wells, strategic projects director at CLD Systems credits the regular drumbeat of HS2 contracts for supporting business growth, particularly during the pandemic, and helping the company to adapt to an ever-changing consumer market.

He said: “We provide a unique approach to physical security and the opportunity to support HS2’s construction has challenged us to be innovative, which in turn supports growth in other areas of the market. When you say you’re working on HS2, that really stands out to other companies looking at our products and services.”

CLD employs over 100 people from the local area and its workforce continues to grow. The company has dedicated resource in place to deliver its work on HS2 and has also recruited two apprentices who are developing new skills in the sales, estimating and marketing teams.

Alongside its commitment to upskilling the next generation, and investing in the ongoing development of its staff, CLD’s approach to sustainability and carbon reduction scores highly amongst HS2’s construction partners. Its HoardSafe system, which is widely used on HS2 sites, is constructed using 90% recycled steel and plastic, which means it can be redeployed and used again at other sites, unlike traditional hoardings.

Kevin Wells added: “HS2’s focus on carbon reduction means we’re continually challenging the way we work and assessing how we can modify our products to enhance our green credentials. We’re working on several exciting innovations at the minute, which we hope to see on HS2 sites in a few months’ time. This ‘can do’ approach is helping us to succeed, and I believe it’s what makes us stand out to HS2”

Over 170 companies in the North West have won work on HS2 so far, but Dr Mullan wants to see more companies in his constituency registering their interest in becoming a HS2 supplier.

Dr Mullan’s call was echoed by Paul Colman, CEO at South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, who said: “I’d encourage companies of all sizes in South Cheshire to register their interest in joining HS2’s supply chain. In this challenging economic climate, HS2 contract awards provide the certainty that businesses need, and the opportunities will be plentiful into the next decade and beyond.”

Philip Cox, CEO at Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership said: “Crewe will play a major role in the production and maintenance of HS2’s fleet of British-built bullet-style trains, and as the construction programme expands further North, there’ll be a regular drumbeat of new contract opportunities that I want to see our local businesses benefit from.”

HS2 Ltd and its construction partners use CompeteFor to advertise all subcontract opportunities and businesses who set up a company profile can receive tailored alerts to opportunities that match their trade.

HS2 has also produced a supplier guide to help companies understand how to get 'HS2 ready', so that they can benefit from the pipeline of contract opportunities set to be released as HS2's journey North extends.