

Employee-owned firm opens new Birmingham premises thanks to HS2 contract awards

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Thomson Environmental Consultants has boosted its workforce and opened brand new offices in the Midlands thanks to the work it has won supporting the delivery of Britain's new railway, HS2.

The independent employee-owned business, which was co-founded 17 years ago by Nancy Thomson, specialises in all aspects of environmental compliance. The team at the helm share a passion for excellence and innovation in ecology and are proud to celebrate the role that they are playing in the delivery of HS2 on World Environment Day (Saturday, 5 June 2021).

Thomson's vast experience in supporting transport and infrastructure projects across the UK, whilst ensuring a minimal impact on the natural world, led to the company securing its first HS2 contract in 2015. And its continued success over the past six years has enabled the business to expand and its local workforce to grow.

The team's work to date on HS2 includes the creation of 42 new wildlife ponds, 18 hectares of wildflower meadow and the planting of over 100,000 trees. It has also ensured that effective mitigation measures are put in place to protect local wildlife, including badgers, bats, otters, barn owls, reptiles, amphibians,

dormice, and water voles along the Birmingham – London section of the new railway.

The company, which initially had a workforce of 150, has delivered over 50 bespoke environmental and ecology projects on behalf of HS2. The sheer scale of the environmental preservation, enhancement and mitigation works completed has driven growth to such an extent that the company doubled the size of its workforce. At peak, over 300 staff were working on HS2, supporting jobs, and creating new employment opportunities at its offices in Guildford, Cardiff, Leeds and Manchester.

The volume of work undertaken in the West Midlands led to the company opening brand new office premises in the second city. And it hopes that HS2's journey North, following the green light to extend the railway to Crewe, will lead to further contract awards and create even more new jobs in the region.

Andrew Cubitt, HS2's Procurement and Supply Chain Director said: "The team at Thomson Environmental are playing a vital role in our commitment to protect, preserve and enhance Britain's precious natural environment.

"The scale of opportunity that HS2 is creating for this employee owned firm is hugely rewarding, and I'm delighted to see that their business growth is driving investment in local jobs and graduate talent."

Over the last nine months, Thomson Environmental has recruited 17 ecology graduates and provided them all with the unrivalled opportunity to begin their career working on one of Europe's most technical and complex infrastructure projects. New jobs have also been created in its contract management, project management, administration and site supervisor teams as a result of its continued work on HS2.

Sarah, a Graduate Terrestrial Ecologist at Thomson Environmental Consultants said: "The day the country went into its first lockdown back in March last year was my first day working as an assistant ecologist with Thomson. Despite the uncertainty of the pandemic, and with many friends and family being furloughed, I was lucky that I had secured consistent work supporting HS2 projects.

"I have gained a wealth of skills and experience over the past nine months and have gone on to gain protected species licences and professional memberships that will really benefit my career progression as an ecologist."

HS2 Ltd has already awarded around £18bn worth of contracts, with a significant proportion of this value expected to flow out to the wider supply chain. By the end of 2022, it's estimated this figure will reach around £25bn.

Over 2,000 businesses have won work on the project to date, with UK-based businesses making up 97% of contracts. HS2 aims to leave a lasting skills legacy and is currently supporting over 16,000 jobs, including 500 new apprentice starts. At peak construction, it expects to support over 30,000 jobs right across the country, which is crucial to Britain's economic recovery as it strives to recover from the effects of the pandemic.

For more information about joining HS2's supply chain visit hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/supply-chain/

For details of career opportunities with HS2 and its construction partners visit hs2.org.uk/careers

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd