

HS2 CEO visits team on HS2's newest phase

November 17, 2021



HS2's CEO Mark Thurston has visited a site to see progress on the section between the West Midlands and Crewe.

He was welcomed by environmental, engineering and mining consultancy Wardell Armstrong. They took him around the site and showed him how environmental specialists are working on the early works phase of this stage of HS2's construction

Early works on the new 36-mile stretch of high speed railway began soon after it was approved by MPs in February 2021. At peak construction, it is understood this major section of railway infrastructure will support six and a half thousand jobs. Stretching from Fradley in Staffordshire to just south of Crewe in Cheshire, this newest phase of HS2 includes two tunnels, 17 viaducts, and 65 bridges.

Wardell Armstrong secured the contract with HS2's first environmental works contractor, Balfour Beatty, in September 2020, building on a pipeline of work the company has delivered on the first two phases of HS2 since 2018.

Mark Thurston said: "Work has now begun to prepare the ground between the West Midlands and Crewe to allow the construction of the next phase of HS2. It is fantastic that Wardell Armstrong, a local business

and one of some eighty in Staffordshire, is on board with HS2 to provide its expertise as we begin the early stages of work on the project.

“As momentum builds on our programme for the section between the West Midlands and Crewe, there will be thousands of contract opportunities for local businesses to become part of this exciting national endeavour and get involved in this once-in-a-generation mega project.”

Wardell Armstrong’s work-winning success on HS2 has enabled it to expand its workforce. Including the head office in Stoke-on-Trent, the business now has 13 offices across the UK, and has been able to expand its workforce to surpass 500. It has over 100 people working on HS2, with staff in its ecology, archaeology, heritage, hydrogeology, health and safety, and engineering teams all supporting the delivery of Britain’s new high speed railway. The firm says it is currently recruiting for further specialist roles in the UK.

Wardell Armstrong’s Managing Director, Keith Mitchell, said: “Being involved in HS2 has given us an excellent opportunity to expand and develop our team in Stoke-on-Trent and nationally. We provide specialist environmental and engineering support along the length of the route, working with the HS2 team and their contractors to mitigate environmental impact and enhance biodiversity. The project has helped us to significantly innovate and grow our business and create employment in the Staffordshire region and the wider UK.”

To date, more than 20,000 people are supporting the construction of HS2, and nearly 2,400 UK businesses are delivering the work.

Sara Williams, CEO of the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce said: “HS2 is an amazing opportunity for businesses in Staffordshire – and beyond – to work together to deliver something that will last generations, transform economies and help with the levelling up agenda. We have found HS2 an excellent partner, keen to make a positive difference through their investment and provide a legacy for the future.”