

HS2 signs landmark R&D agreement with the UK Rail Research and Innovation Network

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As part of its innovation programme, HS2 Ltd has signed a ground-breaking agreement with leading railway research centres in UK universities that will enable it to access world-leading research capabilities, knowledge and facilities.

The agreement with the UK Rail Research and Innovation Network (UKRRIN) will enable HS2 Ltd to be at the forefront of innovation in the rail sector, and help accelerate new technologies and products from research into market applications globally.

Alongside the “3’Cs” – increasing capacity on the rail network, offering greater connectivity around Britain, and creating a low carbon transport alternative – building HS2 will also show off the very best of British skills, innovation and engineering, and this partnership is a shining example of that.

The University of Birmingham will coordinate UKRRIN activities in support of HS2 Ltd under the agreement, and support R&D from across the three UKRRIN academic centres of excellence, including:

- Digital Systems (led by the University of Birmingham)
- Infrastructure (led by the University of Southampton)
- Rolling Stock (led by the University of Huddersfield)

Signing the agreement with UKRRIN on behalf of HS2 Ltd, the project's head of innovation, Howard Mitchell said: "HS2 is a major opportunity for British academia and UK plc to come together and meet the challenge of delivering what is a huge investment in the country's future. The programme's scale and longevity creates the right conditions to develop solutions for High Speed 2 and also the wider rail industry – both of which are crucial in helping Britain to decarbonise."

The first project under the new agreement will be led by the University of Birmingham and will use simulation models to improve understanding of the performance of expansion joints used on high-speed rails.

Professor Clive Roberts, Director of the Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education (BCRRE), says: "BCRRE works very closely with our industry partners to develop and deploy world-leading technologies onto the railway. High speed rail is a vital part of the future of rail innovation in the UK and we're delighted to be joining forces with HS2 to play our part in that future."

Professor Stephen Jarvis, Head of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences at the University of Birmingham, says: "By supporting HS2's research programme we can help accelerate advances that will improve the UK's railways through increasing capacity and decreasing the system's carbon footprint. Through initiatives like this we can put the UK at the forefront of rail innovation and play our part in restoring the UK's economy."

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd

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