

Laing O'Rourke replaces diesel with hydrotreated vegetable oil

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Laing O'Rourke says it will replace red diesel with hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in all its plant equipment before the end of March.

The decision follows the successful completion of tests over the last six months by its specialist plant businesses Select Plant Hire and Explore Plant and Equipment.

The move will reduce GHG emissions from the operation of the plant, including excavators, cranes, piling rigs, dumper trucks and generators, by up to 90%. Currently, the use of red diesel in plant equipment is the largest single source of the company's direct emissions, comprising 39% of the total.

Laing O'Rourke has decided to switch to HVO to support the delivery of its sustainability strategy, and specifically its commitment to reach operational net zero by 2030.

Alex Warrington, Managing Director of Select Plant Hire UK, said: "This is a positive step forward and will result in a substantial reduction in the largest single source of our direct emissions. While it would be more straightforward to switch to white diesel, we believe it's important we take the necessary actions to meet our 2030 operational net zero deadline."

Laing O'Rourke says it regards HVO as a 'transition fuel' as it works towards a plant fleet that is entirely

made up of electric and hydrogen powered equipment.

Alex added: “Our vision is to have all our plant powered by electricity or hydrogen by 2030. This is not possible right now, but from 2025 we expect to see a marked increase in the availability of electric and hydrogen plant equipment from manufacturers, and from then we will start to replace the HVO powered plant in our fleet.”

Laing O’Rourke says it will also ensure that any third-party plant equipment used on its project sites uses HVO rather than diesel.

The HVO move is the latest action by the company to deliver the targets it set out in its sustainability strategy last April. It is in the process of transitioning to an all-electric company car fleet, with three quarters of company cars now PHEVs or EVs. Last year, Select Plant Hire took delivery of the UK’s first electric crawler crane from Liebherr, and entered a partnership with PUNCH flybrid to improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions from the generators on its construction sites.

Laing O’Rourke has also commenced a project to decarbonise manufactured concrete components used in construction, after securing a grant to co-fund the work from the UK’s Industrial Energy Transformation Fund (IETF). The ‘Decarbonising manufactured concrete’ project involves a comprehensive study into carbon reduction at Laing O’Rourke’s Centre of Excellence for Modern Construction in Steetley, Nottinghamshire.

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