

Mechan designing lifting and handling products for Tyne & Wear depot upgrade

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Rail depot equipment produced by Sheffield-based **Mechan** will be key to improving the efficiency and safety of maintenance teams working on the Tyne and Wear Metro.

The specialist manufacturer is designing lifting and handling products for the South Gosforth Traction Maintenance Depot in Newcastle, as part of a £70 million upgrade.

International rail company, Stadler, is manufacturing 46 new state-of-the-art trains for the Tyne and Wear Metro, as well as building this facility, which will accommodate them.

Mechan, in partnership with Stadler, is building a set of 21 multi-purpose lifting jacks not only to cater for the new fleet, but also for a further five different vehicle types maintained at Gosforth. The 15-tonne jacks will work in various configurations, from sets of four, to a completely synchronised set of 20 and can be moved around the facility by pallet truck.

Mechan is also creating a bespoke rail removal system, which will be installed in a pit under one of the new roads added at Gosforth as part of the development work. The self-contained unit enables undercar

modules to be exchanged easily, without lifting a train, saving valuable servicing time. A remotely operated scissor table is positioned in the pit to help staff remove and refit the heavy modules, whilst rails lock into place at ground level so the road can be used for general maintenance when the rail removal system is not active.

Lindsey Mills, Mechan's sales director, said: "The team at Gosforth is familiar with the quality of our equipment, as we have existing jacks there, and Stadler has been involved in other bespoke projects with us, so they were aware of our design capabilities. Catering for several different vehicle types is a challenge for our engineers, but one they have relished. We have worked hard to meet the client's expectations and now look forward to installing the various components later this year."

Michael Steiner, programme director Newcastle, Stadler, added: "We have pledged to support the regional economy and involve as many UK-based companies in the project as we can, so it's fantastic to be appointing Mechan to supply lifting and handling products for us.

"Our aim is to use local suppliers for a wide range of goods and services associated with the Tyne and Wear Metro project, including materials and services for the depot re-build, the manufacturing of the new trains and the ongoing service and maintenance of the current trains. More than 90 per cent of the suppliers contracted for the depot build project are based in the UK, and we're very keen to work with other UK suppliers throughout our 35-year contract to maintain the new trains at Gosforth."

Head of fleet and depot replacement programme at Nexus, Michael Richardson, said: "It's fantastic to see another UK firm supplying essential components for our new £362 million train fleet, which is going to transform Metro services for customers.

"This shows that there is work for firms in the Stadler supply chain. Stadler is committed to using local suppliers where possible and this helps to secure jobs and drive inward investment into our region as well as other parts of the UK."

For more information about Mechan's bespoke design capabilities, or its wide range of rail depot equipment, telephone (0114) 257 0563, visit www.mechan.co.uk or follow the firm on Twitter, @mechanuk.