

North East companies urged to seize HS2 contract opportunities

March 9, 2021



Businesses in the North East of England are being encouraged to bid for millions of pounds worth of upcoming contracts supporting the delivery of Britain's new railway, HS2.

The number of North East-based businesses who have registered an interest in becoming a potential HS2 supplier is significantly lower than in other parts of the country, which could mean that local companies risk missing out.

Potential contracts with HS2 are not just about track and trains. HS2's construction partners are seeking to engage businesses across a broad range of sectors from catering services, designers and ecologists to logistics and electronic components.

Robin Lapish, HS2 Ltd's Supply Chain Manager said: "The North East has a huge talent pool and leads the way in sectors such as advanced manufacturing and engineering to digital expertise in building information modelling and smart data.

"There are countless opportunities for local businesses to be winning work into the next decade and

beyond. A contract with HS2 could turbocharge growth and help sustain and create new jobs as businesses strive to bounce back from the pandemic.”

With construction of the first phase of HS2 between Birmingham and London progressing at pace and the railway’s journey further North now confirmed, following the green light from government to extend to Crewe, HS2’s construction partners are reaching out to tier two and three providers to bid for upcoming subcontract opportunities.

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 already won work on the project, with UK-based businesses making up 98% of contracts.

As Britain strives to build back better, businesses of all sizes are encouraged to get ‘HS2 ready’ and seize the opportunity to play a part in revolutionising our railways.

Jonathan Walker, Director of Policy, North East England Chamber of Commerce said: “The opportunities to win contracts on the HS2 project are some of the most significant pieces of public sector work we have seen, and are likely to see, for a long while.

“We wholeheartedly encourage North East businesses to put themselves forward for the wide range of contracts currently out to tender and to get on the site for future opportunities as well. Our region’s reputation for exceptional service delivery will be a great match for this multi-million-pound programme. We urge businesses to look at what is available.”

Getting ‘HS2 ready’ couldn’t be easier. HS2 Ltd and its construction partners use the CompeteFor model to help match demand with supply. All subcontract opportunities are advertised on the portal, and businesses who set up a company profile can receive tailored alerts to opportunities that match their trade.

Robin added: “It takes minutes to set up a company profile on the CompeteFor platform and that simple step could be vital to a business securing its future. Just 24 companies in the North East have won work on HS2 so far and we really want to see that figure grow.”

Alan Whittaker, Programme Manager of Supply Chain North East is also urging local business to take advantage of the contract opportunities. He said: “We want to ensure that North East businesses don’t miss out on opportunities to win business servicing the needs of HS2. This supports the localisation of supply chains within the UK, business resilience and sector diversification. HS2 Ltd is promoting off-site construction techniques meaning that businesses do not need to be based near to the route to be part of the supply chain.

“We are a region which prides itself on the great technical skills and capabilities which we possess and I’m sure there are numerous opportunities which our businesses could support.”

In a further move to support local business, Supply Chain North East will be hosting a showcase event on the 19th May to illustrate the opportunities available to the region’s businesses.

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

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd