

Siemens Mobility and University of Birmingham announce research and innovation partnership

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Siemens Mobility and the University of Birmingham have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a centre of excellence for rail research and innovation in Goole, East Riding of Yorkshire. As founding partners in UKRRIN (the UK Rail Research and Innovation Network) this latest development is a natural progression for the two partner organisations.

The facility, with an investment of up to £50m and creating up to 250 direct and supplier jobs, will be built as part of the second phase of an innovation hub known as the Rail Accelerator and Innovations Solutions Hub for Enterprise (RaisE). It is aimed at accelerating the adoption of technology within the rail industry and will provide practical and virtual training, prototyping labs and focus on industry innovation – including future and advanced technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence.

RaisE will also spotlight decarbonisation and alternative traction technologies (such as battery and hydrogen) to drive forward the UK's net-zero agenda, as well as increasing the reliability and availability of

the railway using the latest digital solutions. It incorporates the opportunity for increased skills development by creating a digital systems skills academy, building on Siemens Mobility's industry-leading expertise and Birmingham's status as Centre of Excellence in Digital Systems within UKRRIN.

William Wilson, CEO of Siemens Mobility Limited, said: "We are delighted to be working with the University of Birmingham on these exciting plans to take rail innovation in the UK – and beyond – to the next level.

"This is a development of international significance. It not only delivers on the levelling up agenda but gives clear signals to the wider industry that the UK is at the forefront of railway innovation, research and development and is open for global collaboration."

Professor Tim Jones, Provost and Vice-Principal at the University of Birmingham said: "Signing this MoU further strengthens our partnership with Siemens Mobility and builds upon our world leading railway expertise based out of our new, state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence in Digital Systems and School of Engineering.

"We are looking forward to further developing our joint plans for this exciting centre in the coming weeks."

Sambit Banerjee, Managing Director Rolling Stock and Customer Services for Siemens Mobility Limited, concluded: "This is real and demonstrable progress of plans to turn Goole into the railway hub of the future and make the most of the talent there is in the local area.

"For us, Goole is about much more than railway manufacturing. It's about creating an internationally recognised hub of railway excellence and I'm delighted that the University of Birmingham shares this vision."

In total RaisE will occupy a five-acre site. Construction of the first phase, comprising offices for East Riding Council, Siemens Mobility and The Rail Alliance part of the Birmingham Centre for Rail Research and Education at the University, with additional space for SME occupants and collaborative working areas, is due to open in 2022. This latest development – Phase Two – is planned to open a year later.

In addition to the opportunities created by RaisE, Siemens Mobility's Goole rail manufacturing plant will create up to 700 direct jobs and an additional 1,700 indirect supply chain opportunities. It is scheduled to open in 2023 with the first trains being manufactured onsite destined for London Underground's Piccadilly line. The new centre complements the manufacturing site with plans to implement live test bed / living lab concepts to trial innovative new technologies and increase their adoption as quickly as possible.

Photo credit: Siemens Mobility