

Unite 'dismay' on reports of Wabtec's proposed closure

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Unite the union has reacted with dismay at the proposed closure of Wabtec which refurbishes high speed train carriages. The Kilmarnock based firm employs around 100 workers.

Unite says the rail firm announced that it plans to 'consolidate' its operations in Doncaster citing a reduction in orders for its decision. However, the union says Wabtec's order books have been full over recent years including the award of a £7m contract to refurbish Porterbrook Leasing's Class 170 units on lease with Abellio ScotRail and ScotRail's Mk 3s as part of the rail network's efforts to speed up the introduction of the InterCity High Speed Train fleet. In 2017, Wabtec was also awarded a train refurbishment contract worth around £8m funded by the Scottish Government.

Unite has written to Wabtec requesting that the company postpone any decision until all avenues have been explored to keep the rail yard open including intervention from the Scottish Government. The closure of Wabtec would be another major blow to Scotland's rail network manufacturing capacity on the back of the Caley rail works closure last year.

Unite regional industrial officer, Paul Bennett, said: "The Wabtec site in Kilmarnock is steeped in history

since opening as Andrew Barclay & Sons in 1840 as an engineering workshop.

“It was only recently Wabtec was saying that was it fully committed to the long-term success of its Kilmarnock facility and that it planned to ‘invest accordingly’.

“We are dismayed by this decision and believe it to be completely premature. That’s why we are demanding that the company work with us to explore every avenue to bring in more work.

“Unite is also asking the Scottish Government to offer every support it can to keep the yard open in order to ensure that jobs can be supported in Kilmarnock and that some manufacturing footprint for our rail industry is still left in Scotland.”

Wabtec has been contacted for a comment.

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