

Uxbridge scaffolding firm reaches new heights thanks to HS2 contract award

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A family-run scaffolding business in Denham is going from strength to strength after delivering key HS2 contracts around the giant Tunnel Boring Machines that started on the project last month.

PHD Access secured its first contract with HS2's construction partner, Align joint venture, after registering to tender for business opportunities with HS2 through the CompeteFor portal.

HS2 Ltd has already awarded around £18bn worth of contracts directly and a significant proportion of this value is expected to flow out to the wider supply chain. Over the coming years, it's estimated this figure will reach around £25bn.

PHD Access won a highly-specialised programme of work to design and install the bespoke scaffolding structures that provided safe access to HS2's giant 170m long tunnel boring machines (TBMs) – Florence and Cecilia.

The safety-critical structures enabled Align's engineers and welders to assemble Florence and Cecilia ahead of their three-year journey underground, where they will excavate 16km of tunnel beneath the

Chiltern Hills to protect the natural landscape.

Danny Dwyer, Managing Director at PHD Access said: “We really wanted to play our part in this momentous project and it’s fantastic that local businesses are being given the opportunity to get involved.

“We intend to bid for future contracts and hope this is just the start of the role that we get to play in building Britain’s new railway.”

PHD Access prides itself on its excellent site safety record and the team went the extra mile to demonstrate that they were the right company, with the right materials, to play a role in delivering HS2.

The scaffold the team constructed was specially designed to be lightweight, to suit hot weld works and to eradicate trip hazards, ensuring the safety of the 100-strong crew of engineers working on the surface.

The team also played its part in helping HS2 to reduce the carbon impact of construction by 50%, by investing in a new ultra-low emissions vehicle to transport its operatives and equipment to and from the tunnel portal site.

Robin Lapish, HS2 Ltd’s supply chain manager said: “Over 2,000 British-based businesses have played a part in HS2 so far, and we want to see more local companies, like PHD Access, coming forward to register an interest in bidding for the thousands of upcoming contract opportunities.

“The CompeteFor platform is really simple to use. It only takes a few minutes to register your company’s details and then you’ll receive an alert matching you to future business opportunities.”

PHD Access’ commitment to social value was another key attribute that made it stand out during the tender selection process. It is passionate about investing in future talent and runs its own in-house apprenticeship scheme, which is currently supporting eight young people through their Level 2 Scaffolding apprenticeship. It also plays an active role in the local community and seeks to encourage local pupils to develop an interest in careers in construction through its very own education programme.

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd