



PRESS RELEASE

8th March 2011

Hitachi go-ahead 'a massive boost for the North East'

Following the UK Government's announcement to proceed with the Intercity Express Project and Agility Trains' proposal, Hitachi Rail Europe has confirmed, subject to finalising commercial agreements, it is to locate its UK train manufacturing facility at Amazon Park, Newton Aycliffe, a major success for Newcastle upon Tyne-based Merchant Place Developments who own the site in partnership with Durham County Council.

A massive 450,000 sq ft train assembly building will be provided for Hitachi as a turn-key project on a 31.5 acres site. MPD director, Geoff Hunton, says it is a major success for Amazon Park adding that other deals for a further 350,000 sq ft are well advanced.

"The Hitachi deal underlines the importance of site availability in the region together with a quality infrastructure with immediate connectivity to the region's motorway, rail and port infrastructure," says Mr. Hunton.

Design for the facility is well advanced to provide a state-of-the-art building allowing for best practice workflow during the assembly and manufacturing process. "This will be a world-class building, developed by MPD and delivered to Hitachi for immediate use on a turn-key basis for a 25 year initial period of occupation. It will be developed to the best standards of sustainability," adds Mr. Hunton.

"I believe we were successful against intense competition from other UK locations because we are able to supply Hitachi with a purpose-built building on a greenfield site that was tailored to meet their exact requirements which includes rail access and the provision of a test track."

MPD and its professional team has worked very hard over the last two years against other UK sites to secure Hitachi. "It has been a challenge but we have been diligent in our approach, very much aware of the economic impact on this part of Co. Durham and the region as a whole," says Mr. Hunton.

Amazon Park site is adjacent to the Aycliffe Business Park and one mile from Junction 59 of the A1M. The business park is a major regional employment area with over 200 companies and around 8,000 employees and the overall location is seen as a prime distribution hub for the region.



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The Hitachi investment offers hundreds of high quality job opportunities for skilled employees from across the region, but particularly in Durham and the neighbouring Tees Valley.

Alistair Dormer, managing director of Hitachi Rail Europe says: "We are absolutely delighted that the Department for Transport has decided to go ahead with the Intercity Express Programme (IEP), which means that our plans to build a rail manufacturing and assembly facility in Newton Aycliffe will become more concrete now.

"The support we have received from the local community, from Phil Wilson, the local MP, and many others, has been fantastic and has surely helped to sway the decision in favour of IEP. We are looking forward to becoming part of the community in the area."

Ends 459 words

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