

£450m North East electric battery gigaplant steps up a gear as contractors are appointed

Contractors have been appointed to create the battery gigafactory at the heart of a £1bn North East electric vehicle revolution – and are already in talks with local firms to get them involved.

The Wates Group and Turner & Townsend have been appointed by Envision AESC to lead the design and project management of the car battery plant at the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) in Sunderland.

The £450m gigafactory will form the focal part of the £1bn partnership with Nissan UK and Sunderland City Council to create an electric vehicle hub at IAMP, while also playing a critical role in decarbonisation in UK manufacturing and transport.

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Plans for the plant, which will generate up to 25GWh, were first unveiled in July and [planning permission granted in October](#), estimating it would create 909 jobs at Nissan, and 750 at Envision, as well as 4,500 new green jobs in the region by 2030.

Wates Group, based in Leatherhead, Surrey, is developing a design to provide the infrastructure to launch battery production by 2024 and will work alongside Turner & Townsend, which will act as the project manager and cost manager.

Nissan has pledged to support continued localisation of

vehicle parts and components in the creation of its new electric vehicle. As part of the design process, Wates is engaging with [local supply chain partners](#), seeking their input on areas ranging from clean utilities to fire protection services.

Leeds-headquartered Turner & Townsend, which has bases across the globe including Newcastle and Stockton in the North East, is experienced in delivering battery gigafactories across Europe, Asia and the Americas, and will work with Wates to ramp up Envision AESC's mission to create a world-class net zero carbon facility.

Chris Caygill, managing director of the Envision AESC battery plant, said: "Envision AESC is pleased to be working with both Wates Group and Turner & Townsend as key partners in this next stage of our UK gigafactory development. Each brings unique strengths to the project that will help deliver a world-class battery manufacturing facility essential to helping the UK automotive industry transition to a fully electrified future.

"We pride ourselves particularly on the safety record of our batteries, which continually achieve zero critical incidents in new product and process designs. Together with smart, digitally integrated clean energy generation, storage and use in our battery plants, we are supporting the global transition towards net zero carbon energy targets."

Paul Dodsworth, regional managing director of Wates Construction in the North, said: "The Envision project is helping to build Sunderland's future by creating a key location for national and international investment that will lay the foundation for sustainable growth in the region.

"We're proud to be part of this story and its role in driving the Government's levelling up agenda, and we are committed to creating new opportunities for the local people that need it most, investing in education, jobs and skills, as well as

local businesses, to put the city and its residents at the heart of the electric car revolution.”

Darren Laybourn, director and North East strategic lead at Turner & Townsend, added: “Electric vehicles play an important role in the UK’s net zero and decarbonisation ambitions and it is great to see the North East powering the drive to a renewable future.

“Led by our team in the North East, we will draw on knowledge and expertise from across the firm to ensure this new facility will provide a state-of-the-art home for the future of UK battery manufacturing and a welcome economic boost for the region.”

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