

North East battery maker plots significant job creation amid growth plan

A battery maker has set out plans to invest in its North East factory including recruiting more than 250 workers over the next five years.

Alexander Battery Technologies (ABT), which specialises in customised rechargeable batteries for a range of industries from medical devices to robotics, says it has seen recent growth and is targeting £100m annual sales in the next four years. The £18m turnover firm employs around 110 people and manufactures lithium-ion batteries from its Peterlee base.

It now has ambitions to grow its customer base in the EU and UK as half of its existing sales are to the US and 47% going to Europe. Accounts show the firm, which led the Fastest 50 list of growing North East firms in 2021, grew turnover last year from £14m in 2022 as it secured a number of big contracts last year, including in the e-mobility sector for an e-motorbike maker.

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ABT also won a project in the military sector for an unmanned support vehicle which works alongside military personnel and carries heavy equipment. The vehicle required a large battery pack of 70kg with a voltage of around 120V.

Most of the firm's staff are based at its high voltage testing and validation laboratory at its Battery Technology Centre in

Peterlee, which is set to receive new equipment this year including a test-rig for its products. Last year the firm bought battery laser welding machinery which is currently being installed at the factory and will represent a £500,000 investment once in production – a move bosses say will enable ABT to upgrade its production to meet automotive standards.

As well as its County Durham operation, ABIT is also growing a sales and service operation out of a site in Frankfurt, Germany, which opened last summer and caters for customers in the region. And later this year bosses hope to announce a new manufacturing location in Europe.

Alex Stapleton, chief commercial officer at ABT, said: “The business invested heavily during 2023, to set us up for growth in the coming years. We concluded the complete design and build of our Battery Technology Centre, providing 12 dedicated laboratories for new battery development projects. These support the business with significant bandwidth for up to 12 different projects in parallel and are capable of supporting designs up to 800v and over 100kWh. The Battery Technology Centre also added much needed office space, as well as extra production floorspace to further future-proof the flexibility of our UK site.”