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UK skills boost as rail training academy gets the go-ahead

- Multi-million state-of-the-art academy to bridge the skills gap in traction and rolling stock for UK rail industry
- 'Hub' and 'spoke' concept will maximise national reach of next generation training

The UK rail industry is set to receive an extensive skills boost – thanks to a new rail training academy developed collaboratively by Siemens and NSARE (National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering). An innovative agreement between NSARE and the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) with support from the Department for Transport (DFT) will provide half the funds required, with Siemens contributing the other 50 per cent.

Go-ahead for the new training academy, which will specialise in traction and rolling stock skills, was announced today at the NSARE annual conference in London. It will be located in a state-of-the-art facility at the site of Siemens existing flagship train depot and UK service headquarters in Kings Heath, Northampton, creating around 100 jobs in its construction and subsequent operation. It is expected to open its doors to the first students in Spring 2015.

Currently some 13,500 people work in specialist traction and rolling stock roles across the UK. The new academy will focus on addressing the future skills shortage in this part of the UK rail sector – forecast to be around 4,500 people over the next five years - caused by a combination of factors, including: an ageing workforce; the technological advancement of rolling stock; and, investment and growth in the industry.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said: "This training academy will help increase skill levels across the rail industry and keep the wheels turning on a vital piece of our national infra-

structure. It will see thousands of trainees pass through its doors and is a great example of Government working in partnership with business to tackle barriers to growth.

“National Skills Academies give business the chance to lead on developing the right skills and expertise, rather than industry training needs being decided by Government. The repayable grant we are providing to NSARE will kick start the building of the new training academy with Siemens and benefit the sector as a whole.”

Rail Minister Simon Burns said: “More and more passengers and freight are travelling by rail and Government investment to improve and expand our railways is at record levels. The construction of HS2 will see the addition of more than 350 miles of track to the network.

“Investing in our railways also means investing in the people who build and maintain the network now and in the future. The National Rolling Stock Academy will play a vital role in delivering skilled workers who can build a safe, modern network that delivers benefits for passengers and the economy.”

Steve Scrimshaw, Managing Director of Siemens Rail Systems, added: “This is fantastic news for the UK rail industry and will provide a significant and much needed skills boost.”

“We are proud that Siemens, in collaboration with NSARE, will play such an integral part in ensuring rail industry employees have the skills and competencies required to maintain the next generation of trains in which UK Government is investing. – keeping our nation at the forefront of railway engineering excellence.”

Gil Howarth, Chief Executive NSARE (National Academy for Railway Engineering), commented: “Skills are the foundation of a thriving, hi-tech industry. The new national training academy is vital to ensure ongoing success in this sector which continues to benefit from significant development as more and more people choose to travel by rail and trains become increasingly technologically advanced.”

The Northampton training centre, which will offer 20,000 man days of training per year, will act as a national ‘hub’ with regional ‘spokes’ located at other train care facilities around the country. The 50/50 funding agreement will release 50% of the academy’s training capacity to the wider UK industry, with the remainder used by Siemens own rail sector employees.

In addition to encouraging more entry-level talent (both apprentices and graduates), existing rail industry employees will also benefit from an opportunity to ‘upskill’ in response to advancements in the industry and new train developments such as ‘fly-by-wire’ (a system that replaces the traditional manual controls of a train with a precision electronic interface) and ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management Systems – replacing traditional signal controls with a computerised, in-cab display).

Ends

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Notes to Editors:

About Siemens

Siemens was established in the United Kingdom 170 years ago and now employs around 13,520 people in the UK. Last year’s revenues were £3.2 billion*. As a leading global engineering and technology services company, Siemens provides innovative solutions to help tackle the world’s major challenges, across the key sectors of energy, industry, infrastructure & cities and healthcare. Siemens has offices and factories throughout the UK, with its headquarters in Frimley, Surrey. The company’s global headquarters is in Munich, Germany. For more information, visit www.siemens.co.uk * *Data includes intercompany revenue. Data may not be comparable with revenue reported in annual or interim reports.*

As part of the Siemens Infrastructure & Cities Sector, **Siemens Rail Systems Division** provides expertise and technology in the full range of rail vehicles – from heavy rail to metros to trams and light-rail vehicles. In the UK, the Division employs around 700 people and maintains over 350 Siemens passenger trains for First TransPennine Express, South West Trains, Heathrow Express, Greater Anglia Franchise (Abellio), Northern Rail, London Midland and ScotRail.

About NSARE

NSARE Limited is a ‘not for profit’ company limited by guarantee, wholly owned by its Members. NSARE ‘opened for business’ from its National Office in central London in February 2011. Its pan-industry Board of 15 Directors is chaired by Terry Morgan, Chairman of Crossrail. It launched its corporate Membership scheme at its first national conference in June 2011 which today numbers 270 Member organisations and is still growing. Membership includes railway companies, private sector training companies, Further Education Colleges, Universities, Qualification Development and Awarding Organisations.

NSARE’s current activities include industry promotion to schools colleges and universities, skills forecasting, accreditation of training organisations and individual trainers and assessors and managing the industry’s National competency database; Skill-sID. For more information visit www.nsare.org