



Vehicle Electrification Opportunity event opens up new horizons

By Horizon Works



Businesses from across the engineering and manufacturing sector gained a deep insight into the electric vehicle landscape, its future and its challenges, at an event in Northumberland last week.

The Vehicle Electrification Opportunity was delivered by B2B marketing company Horizon Works at its Event Space at Northumberland Business Park near Cramlington on January 31, and was run in association with the North East Automotive Alliance (NEAA), the largest automotive cluster in the UK.

By 2030, 80% of new cars and 70% of new vans sold in Great Britain must be zero-emission vehicles, increasing to 100% by 2035, creating a major opportunity for engineering and manufacturing companies to support electric vehicle production and infrastructure.

In addition, with the EU and UK recently signing off extending current battery and electric vehicle rules of origin under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, major investments in battery production can now progress, and partnerships will be enabled between UK companies and EU manufacturers on new battery technologies.

The Vehicle Electrification Opportunity saw experts and delegates from a range of companies come together to discuss the EV sector, the strength of North East England in vehicle electrification, and how companies in the region can be part of the EV supply chain.

Guest speaker Paul Butler, Chief Executive of the NEAA, highlighted the '£24 billion UK electrification opportunity' and the importance of North East England's position as a leading location as a cluster for zero carbon vehicles in Europe.

Nissan is investing up to £3 billion in the building of three electric car models at its Sunderland factory – the electric Qashqai and Juke models will be built alongside the next generation of the electric Leaf.

In addition, Washington is home to the first battery manufacturing gigafactory in the UK – AESC UK – and the region is home to six OEMS, 21 R&D centres, 34 tier-one companies and more than 200 supply chain companies.

North East England is also the only region in the UK with full Power Electronics, Machines and Drives (PEMD) capabilities – and it is one of only three in the world.

Paul Butler highlighted the strength of support available for vehicle electrification in North East England, through organisations such as the NEAA, EV North - which encourages collaborative R, D & I projects to leverage public and private sector investment - and the North East Battery Alliance.

Paul was joined by Christopher Appleby, Innovation Manager at the NEAA, who focused on the likely EV supply chain opportunities for North East-based businesses – including the manufacture of housings and enclosures to protect battery packs and electric drive components, high precision fastening and mounting systems, cooling systems, connectors and cabling. He urged businesses to push their existing specialities to support the EV industry.

Christopher Black, Global Director Automotive Business Development and Sven Brehler, Director of Engineering at industrial fastenings specialist TR Fastenings, also presented at The Vehicle Electrification Opportunity.





Vehicle Electrification Opportunity event opens up new horizons

By Horizon Works



They revealed how TR Fastenings has evolved to support the EV sector, and providing guidance to suppliers on collaboration, building partnerships and product design processes.

The event's Q and A session discussed issues including the impact of geopolitical shocks on the EV supply chain, the need for additional capacity in the National Grid to support EV charging, emerging battery technologies, skills and EV charging infrastructure.

Paul Butler, Chief Executive of the North East Automotive Alliance, said: "Recent investment totalling over £3 billion has cemented the North East's reputation as being the leading region in the UK, if not Europe, for vehicle electrification.

"I'd like to say a big thank you to Horizon Works for providing this platform to bring North East businesses together to discuss the importance of electrification and its associated supply chain opportunities.

"It was great to be able to collectively discuss what we need to do as a sector to facilitate these opportunities and address the challenges and barriers."

Christopher Black, Global Director Automotive Business Development at TR Fastenings, added: "Networking events such as these are vital for the supply chain in the emerging and developing electric vehicle sector, to establish technical support with the design and supply of fastening solutions to OEMs and their tiers 1 and 2."

Samantha Vassallo, Managing Director of Horizon Works, said: "Technology, investment and innovation around EV is shaping the industrial future of both North East England and the UK as a whole.

"We were therefore delighted that the North East Automotive Alliance and TR Fastenings were able to share their experiences and expertise with delegates at The Vehicle Electrification Opportunity.

"Attendees left the event with both practical advice on working with the EV sector, and a picture of what the future looks like, thanks to the speakers' invaluable insights.

"As a member of the North East Automotive Alliance since its inception, we were proud to run this event with the NEAA team, and look forward to many more Opportunities Series events with industry partners in 2024."

The event was the third in Horizon Works' Opportunities Series events programme.

Through the programme, Horizon Works is collaborating with industry partners to highlight opportunities for engineering and manufacturing businesses, provide fresh insight and help companies to build new relationships. Previous events have included speakers from Make UK Defence and Advance Northumberland.

