



New Asphalt and Rail facility in Birmingham



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During 2020 the first freight trains have delivered aggregate to the site of a new state-of-the-art asphalt and aggregates facility under construction by Tarmac in northeast Birmingham. The city centre plant, which will provide essential materials to support the ongoing delivery of infrastructure projects in Birmingham and the wider region, is being entirely supplied by rail, resulting in a significant reduction in HGV traffic on the local road network.

Rail freight services are being provided by DB Cargo which is utilising a newly adapted fleet of wagons to transport aggregates from Tarmac’s Mountsorrel quarry in Leicestershire to the site on previously disused railway sidings. Converted from traditional ‘coal hoppers’ the new wagons are among the most efficient transporting construction materials in the country.

Chris Swan, head of rail at Tarmac, said: “Continually increasing the volume of materials moved on the rail network supports our underlying commitment to sustainability across our whole business. The new Birmingham facility is a great example of the benefits of transporting construction materials into a city centre location by rail freight. We’re able to support the efficient delivery of local infrastructure projects without increasing HGV movements on the local road network, enabling us to lower the whole life carbon footprint

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The new asphalt plant is set to start operation at the beginning of 2021 and will include recycling technology to help local highways authorities recycle and re-use asphalt from existing roads. It will also have the capability to produce low-temperature asphalts which can reduce the carbon footprint of local road projects by 10 per cent compared to traditional technology.

Graeme Murray, DB Cargo UK account manager, said: “We’re delighted to be strengthening our relationship with Tarmac by operating this new service, supporting both the initial construction of the site and the ongoing provision of materials for use in the asphalt plant and aggregates depot. We’re using the most efficient wagons available, repurposed from their previous use to further support the site’s sustainability efforts and look forward to having full services up and running in the new year.”

Tarmac is one of the UK’s largest users of the rail freight network, transporting around 9 million tonnes every year.

