

City firm shares in £354m rail contract

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A HI-TECH Plymouth manufacturing plant is to share in a £354million contract to provide new signalling for the London Underground network.

Bombardier Transportation's factory in Estover is one of the international company's sites which will supply products and engineering works for the upgrade of the network's automatic train signalling.

Bombardier will provide train control technology similar to that currently running on Spain's Metro de Madrid.

It will involve renewal signalling and providing an automatic train control system for the Metropolitan, District, Circle, and Hammersmith and City tube lines, which carry 1.3 million passengers a day, a quarter of the total tube passengers, and comprise 40 per cent of the network.

Bombardier will equip the 310 km of track, including 40 km inside tunnels, 113 stations, 191 trains, 49 engineering trains and six heritage trains by 2018, followed by a two-year warranty period.

The main project office will be in London, but the Plymouth site will be involved alongside other Bombardier sites in Bangkok, Helsinki, Madrid, Pittsburgh, Derby and Reading.

Allan Morgan, Bombardier Transportation's Plymouth-based business director UK, said: "As well as being an important contract for Bombardier in the UK signalling market, this is further testimony to the strength of our innovative CITYFLO 650 system and our reputation for system delivery.

"We have supplied CITYFLO solutions around the world and are very proud to now be introducing our pioneering technology in the UK."

Bombardier Transportation employs about 90 people at its Rail Control Solutions (RCS) site in Estover, where it makes the railway signalling technology.

The business was actually founded as ML Engineering (Plymouth) Ltd in 1959 and has been operating under various names and at different city sites since.

It was named Bombardier Transportation in May 2001 when the city plant became part of the signalling division of the huge multi-national Montreal-based Bombardier company.

Andre Navarri, president and chief operating officer at Bombardier Transportation, said Bombardier's communication-based train control technology was installed globally on 13 lines.

He said: "We are very pleased to be awarded this new contract by London Underground and look forward to working together on this exciting project to improve the transport network for hundreds of thousands of passengers."

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