

News Release

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Leading the way in 5G and Connected and Automated Logistics

The North East automotive sector is a beacon of automotive productivity boasting high levels of automation and one of the most dynamic workforces. The continual drive for operational efficiency is key to maintaining the region's competitiveness. It is widely recognised that Connected and Automated Logistics (CAL) has the potential to provide significant cost benefits to UK manufacturing.

The North East Automotive Alliance (NEAA), Sunderland City Council, Newcastle University, Coventry University, Connected Places Catapult, Vantec Europe, StreetDrone and Perform Green have secured funding for a 5G Enabled CAL pilot and proof of concept. This £4.9m project will receive £2.4m from the £30m 5G Create competition and deliver a huge stride forward in CAL, proving last mile delivery for an autonomous HGV up to 40 tonnes on a private road. 5G is essential as it will uniquely enable the removal of the safety driver from the process, allowing remote teleoperations to overcome abnormal situations.

Paul Butler, CEO of the NEAA stated "Automated last mile logistics is one of the major innovation challenges, especially in the automotive sector with its synchronous and highly complexed supply chains. This project will take 5G enabled solutions out of the testbed into an operational manufacturing environment.

Through our industrial base and the unique assets of our road transport sector the North East offers an ideal location to support the design, development, and manufacture of CAL solutions. Our vision is that this will be the catalyst for establishing a globally unique centre of excellence and operational test facility for CAL here in Sunderland.

This will provide a stimulus for solution providers and industry to design and develop CAL solutions which meet specific industry challenges related to the factory of the future and intelligent supply chain – driving operational efficiencies and improving productivity".

Patrick Melia, Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council said “Now is the time for a regionally focused investment to automate logistics for manufacturing, unlocking efficiency, improving competitiveness, attracting investment and boosting exports. This project represents a major opportunity to support and accelerate economic growth, creating an exemplar that will encourage further private and public sector investment”.

〈Pictures at the event〉



Image: Nissan Sunderland car plant

Toward New Dimensions
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