Press Release

The Proving Factory announces new sites and first components

The summer will be an exciting time for the innovative Proving Factory as it reaches two major milestones in its journey, with the manufacture of the first components and the announcement of two new sites for assembly and manufacturing operations.

A £22 million manufacturing initiative in the UK’s South Yorkshire and Midlands regions, The Proving Factory will take low-carbon vehicle technologies designed by small high-tech British companies and university research departments and produce them at ‘proving volumes’ of 10,000-20,000 units a year. It will then support them in moving to higher volumes through the traditional first-tier supply chain.

The Proving Factory is drawing on the skills and expertise of its two main partners, Productiv and Tata Steel, in the development of its two facilities. Productiv has invested £3m in a 6,000m² factory in Coventry where the assembly operation will be located, while Tata Steel has signed a contract to lease a 1,000m² engineering facility in South Yorkshire, to house state-of-the-art machine tools due to be installed and commissioned by the end of July for The Proving Factory’s component manufacturing operation. In-house pre-production trials are expected to commence in August 2014, with production of the first advanced technologies to begin in January 2015.

Richard Bruges of The Proving Factory consortium and Chief Executive of Productiv said: “These new facilities give The Proving Factory a home, with ample space for growth. We are well on our way to the project vision becoming reality.

“There is a lot of work to be done over the next year or so, but we have a brilliant team of dedicated automotive and production engineers already on board, and we are continuing to recruit outstanding people to help build the future of sustainable British automotive manufacturing.”
The Proving Factory's component manufacturing team will initially operate from its leased site in South Yorkshire, during which time it will benefit from a range of existing expertise and systems, from IT software and health & safety practices, to specialist resources such as heat-treatment for steel.

As well as securing sites for both the assembly and component manufacturing parts of The Proving Factory, the first pre-production components for one of the technologies have now been produced.

Mark Broxholme, Managing Director of Tata Steel’s Speciality Steels business said: “We have worked hard to plan our development and growth as The Proving Factory’s component manufacturing volumes increase towards our target of four million components over the next decade. This new interim site allows us to get started with component development and manufacturing as quickly as possible, while achieving the most efficient combination of required space and cost.

“We have moved significantly closer to manufacturing readiness over the last couple of months, having now machined the first components to go into one of The Proving Factory’s technologies. We are very much looking forward to moving into our new home this month, and are positive our new site will give us the facilities we need to support the delivery of the initial pre-production components and assemblies by the end of this year.”

The Proving Factory’s assembly team has already moved in to the refurbished offices in Coventry, while the factory is being renovated and equipment installed. As well as hosting the assembly line, The Proving Factory in Coventry will be a showcase for technologies and products that The Proving Factory is industrialising. With exhibition space, meeting rooms and conference facilities available to partners and other organisations, The Proving Factory in Coventry will serve as an anchor for innovation in the low-carbon vehicle sector.

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About The Proving Factory

The Proving Factory is a business that specialises in the industrialisation and low-volume production of advanced propulsion systems to automotive standards. It was initiated as a collaborative project to industrialise innovation and supply advanced components into the automotive supply chain. It is led by Productiv and Tata Steel and its partners include MIRA, the HVM Catapult, Jaguar Land Rover, Schaeffler and the Midlands Assembly Network. It involves technology developers Bladon Jets, Flybrid, Torotrak, Drive Systems Design, Libralato and Magnomatics. The Proving Factory has been co-funded by the partners and the UK Government’s Advanced Manufacturing Supply Chain Initiative. Productiv also received support from Coventry City Council and many of the technologies have received funding from the Technology Strategy Board and other funds.

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