

How sustainable construction is being delivered at the AESC Gigafactory

The UK is on the brink of a six-fold increase in electric vehicle (EV) battery production, and Sunbelt Rentals is at the heart of making it happen. Through innovative rental solutions, smart energy management, and a commitment to sustainability, we are supporting the construction of the AESC Gigafactory in Sunderland, one of the most ambitious EV infrastructure projects in the country.



£110K energy savings with smart management



Employability workshop for 25 year 12 students

£54k

total cost reduction in 15 months

125yrs

Wates' largest-ever single-value project in 125 years

How greener solutions are driving sustainable construction at the AESC Gigafactory



We were appointed by Wates Group as a Tier One supplier across a huge range of rental equipment and services throughout the duration of construction of a new gigafactory in Sunderland for AESC, a leading Japanese electric vehicle battery technology company.

Wates and AESC were keen to utilise greener solutions and smarter technology throughout the project ready for when it becomes operational.

The facility will produce AESC's latest generation batteries which improve the range of electric vehicles by 30%, manufacturing enough batteries to power 100,000 electric vehicles annually.

Challenges

Given the scale of this project, our team engaged with Wates Group 12 months in advance to map work areas, assess risks, and develop smart rental solutions.

Throughout the construction, we navigated mid-build design changes and upgrades, ensuring high productivity levels. With over 800 workers on-site, the project required rapid deployment of innovative equipment to maintain efficiency.

With a footprint equivalent to 23 football pitches, the new gigafactory demanded:

- A vast and diverse range of equipment to maintain efficiency and safety.
- Smart technology solutions to align with AESC and Wates Group's sustainability goals.
- Fast-response support to accommodate mid-build design changes and upgrades.

Solution

We delivered a comprehensive solution, including telehandlers, forklifts, powered access machines, and hybrid tower lighting. A network of six local depots near the site allowed for swift support and service delivery. An on-site engineering base was established, where product demonstrations and regular Toolbox Talks, such as Working at Height sessions, were conducted to ensure equipment familiarisation and safety.

To support Wates Group and AESC in achieving their sustainability objectives, Sunbelt Rentals installed EcoLync in the 220-bay temporary accommodation complex. This cloud-based energy management system automatically turns off appliances and equipment when they're not in active use, significantly reducing carbon emissions and fuel costs.

Our equipment at a glance:

- EcoLync power supply to support temporary accommodation units
- Over 200 powered access machines
- Hybrid tower lighting
- Telehandlers and forklifts
- Tools
- Lifting equipment
- Hoists
- Climate control systems
- Power equipment
- Non-mechanical equipment
- Secure storage containers
- Survey equipment and services
- Traffic management solutions

Result

The AESC Gigafactory is on track for completion in 2025, with Sunbelt Rentals playing a key role in its sustainable construction.

Our EcoLync system has delivered £110K in energy savings and £54K in overall cost reductions over 15 months.

Beyond construction, we created a lasting community impact through our Beacon Schools programme:

- Engaged 25 Year 12 students from Southmoor Academy in an Employability Workshop.
- Provided hands-on work experience for 8 students.
- Delivered an interactive skills workshop on apprenticeship applications and career development.

By combining innovation, sustainability, and community engagement, Sunbelt Rentals continues to support the future of EV battery production.

How greener solutions are driving sustainable construction at the AESC Gigafactory



“ We required a large number of reliable and high-quality access equipment, and Sunbelt Rentals delivered exactly that. Their team went above and beyond to ensure we had the right equipment for our needs, providing expert guidance and seamless service. Their flexibility, professionalism, and premium equipment made them the perfect partner for this landmark project. ”

James Edgar

Major Project Site Manager,
Wates Group

“ As a Tier One supplier delivering a vast range of innovative rental equipment and services, we have been able to bring huge efficiencies to this project. Through the use of smart building control with our EcoLync system, we have enabled Wates and AESC to make significant savings and reduce overall project costs. ”

Claire Webb

National Business Development Manager,
Sunbelt Rentals

