

Becoming the contractor of choice to the UK rail industry – Kelly Rail's Robert Burnside

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*Kelly Rail is part of the **Kelly Group**, which has been at the forefront of the telecommunications industry for more than 35 years. Working across several industries nationwide including telecommunications, rail, civils, utilities, fleet, traffic management & energy, Kelly Group operates with over 40 operational centres, 2500+ vehicles, five national training centres and a workforce of circa 3500 delivering a one-stop solution to meet the needs of their clients. Robert Burnside, Kelly Rail's recently appointed Managing Director, has written an article about the firm's recent restructure, upcoming works and aspirations for 2022 and beyond*

*"The beginning of 2022 saw **Kelly Rail** undergo a significant restructure to help further cement our position as the partner of choice in delivering safe, innovative and efficient customer-focused solutions.*

This ethos has served our company, a specialist in telecommunications, station information, surveillance systems, signalling, mechanical and electrical, lineside civils and electrification very well so far. Since our rail division was set up in the early 2000s, we have been involved in high-profile work for the likes of Network Rail, Transport for London, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, and Balfour Beatty among others.

Now, having weathered the storm of the COVID pandemic, I am very excited about our future in the industry and in building on the platform that has led to our successes so far achieved.

Last year was a challenging one for our business, but we're not alone in that, and our staff have been fantastic in adapting to new working conditions to get the jobs done safely and efficiently.

Alongside our work with longstanding clients, we've also delivered for new clients and entered into some exciting multidisciplinary projects such as partnering on the delivery of a national Wi-Fi scheme at stations throughout the UK.

Despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, we left 2021 with a healthy balance sheet and I firmly believe 2022 is going to be a huge year for our business, with some key appointments being made as we seek to expand our offering to the rail industry and our prestigious clients.

At Kelly Rail, everything we do centres around our passion to be seen as the preferred partner of choice to the UK rail industry by delivering safe, innovative and efficient customer-focused solutions.

As part of our restructure, we're expanding and actively recruiting for a range of engineering and operative roles from the South of England, Northern Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland to meet our ambitious project targets for 2022 and beyond.

As well my appointment, we have promoted a regional operations director for north and a new regional operations director responsible for delivering existing projects in the south while developing a comprehensive business strategy together, targeting new future business.

We've also promoted several project managers into more senior management roles. Between the four internal promotions of myself, the ops director and two project managers, we have around 80 years' combined experience at Kelly Group.

I believe our new structure will make us leaner, resulting in better value for the end-user, while giving us more opportunities to expand. I'm very confident that it's going to provide our clients with a more efficient service whilst being competitive within in the market.

Kelly Rail was awarded a package of multi-disciplinary works on the £290 million Glasgow Subway modernisation project by Hitachi Rail in November 2021, with works commencing in December 2021. The overall project includes plans for driverless train operation and 15 new, updated stations.

Our project support consists of a variety of upgrades, including signalling, telecommunications, security and fire alarm systems and installation of copper, fibre, data, audio and RF cables.

The Glasgow Subway contract was successful largely due to our strength of presence in Scotland, and our extensive experience in projects such as the Highland Enhancement Programme, which involved a full array of civil engineering works, cabling and retail telecoms.

We're supporting Hitachi and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport on this transformational scheme, which

will provide a major economic boost to the city and Scotland, linking other transport improvements, supporting driverless train innovations and unlocking real growth for Glasgow.

Providing job security for locally based labour and management while giving back to the local community is something I'm passionate about. We're also planning to upskill new trainees and apprentices within our Glasgow training facility.

Recently we have also been working on some exciting collaboration projects, one example is a result of being on the Network Rail Telecom framework. In 2020 we successfully delivered a forensic detection project in a bid to solve a major issue with batteries getting stolen within relocatable equipment buildings (REBs) and just general vandalism of the facilities.

We partnered with SmartWater to use a marking liquid that we applied to the batteries. We've just been awarded a similar project to go back and visit these REBs and install new smart locks, which will enable everybody to access these buildings with an application on their phone.

For me, as we continue to deliver on our CP6 Projects and look forward to preparing for CP7, our long-term vision is to continue delivering a safe, value for money service and continue to work collaboratively with our existing and new partners. We're also planning increased investment in apprenticeship schemes and have a vision to work closely with universities and colleges, providing a platform and career opportunities within the rail industry. Sharing of resources and encouraging best practice between our partners is also key, further creating a collaborative, sustainable culture."

Robert Burnside, Kelly Rail's recently appointed Managing Director

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