

# GCRE Appoint Rob Forde to 'critical' strategy and skills role

July 18, 2023



GCRE Limited has further strengthened its executive team with the appointment of Rob Forde as the company's new Director of Strategy and Skills.

Announcing his appointment, Chief Executive Simon Jones welcomed the new Director who joins the GCRE team from Network Rail.

Rob will oversee GCRE's skills and long-term strategy working with clients, academics and industry partners to speed up research and development cycles at the new rail innovation facility currently being built in South Wales.

Prior to joining GCRE Rob was Industry Sector Lead for Network Rail on the East Coast Digital Programme and before that part of Network Rail's research and development team, leading the accelerated innovation programme and helping secure a six-fold increase in the budget for CP6.

The Global Centre of Rail Excellence is a new international research, testing and certification facility for rolling stock, infrastructure and innovative new rail technologies being constructed in South Wales.

Chief Executive of GCRE Limited, Simon Jones, said: “We are delighted to have Rob Forde join our team and take on this critical role as Director of Strategy and Skills at the Global Centre of Rail Excellence. Rob has a strong track record in the rail industry over nearly two decades and joins GCRE at a very important moment.

“To be a success, GCRE will need to develop a long-term pipeline of skills, working with schools, universities, colleges and the industry to ensure that both GCRE and its clients have access to the talented people it needs to support the high-quality research and innovation work we will do on site.

“Building that pipeline of skills and, in particular, ensuring that people living near to the site can benefit from the jobs and skills we will be offering is one of the most important things Rob will be working on.

“This is a new role that we have created and reflects the vital importance that we attach to making sure that the infrastructure that supports our new facility is strong.”

Director of Strategy and Skills, Rob Forde, said: “I’m delighted to be joining the Global Centre of Rail Excellence team and to be taking on such an exciting and interesting new role in the team. I’ve spent my career working in innovation and R&D, so it’s great to be able to make a contribution to such a vitally important new facility on the rail landscape.

“The Global Centre of Rail Excellence will become Europe’s premier site for rail innovation, supporting the development of new ideas that will bring new products to market faster; help develop more cost-effective rail infrastructure and support the industry’s path to net zero.

“A clear long-term strategy and a sustainable skills pipeline is critical to those ambitions and I hope to bring my experience to bear in one of the most interesting and important developments anywhere in UK and European rail.”

*Photo credit: GCRE*