

Rail Minister at WCRR: “We can build on our green credentials and push forward with decarbonising more and more of the rail network”

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The Rail Minister says they will not be daunted by the biggest challenge facing rail and all of transport today; reducing the environmental impacts of travel.

Wendy Morton gave the ministerial welcome at the **13th World Congress on Railway Research (WCRR)** which started in Birmingham on Monday – the first time it’s been held in the UK in nearly 20 years.

She said: “In the UK, transport is our largest carbon emitting sector and in solving that problem we can’t forget that in rail we have a tremendous opportunity.

“Looking out on this audience today we can build on our green credentials and push forward with decarbonizing more and more of the rail network. Electrification will be throughout the entire transport system.

“What happens if we can ship a larger piece of the freight pie from road to rail? Well, we can cut congestion on our roads, carbon in our air and deliver billions of pounds of economic benefits.

“A virtuous circle of net zero net gain is possible and with government, industry and researchers all working shoulder to shoulder I’m certain we can build the green transport economy with rail at its heart and that is our mission.

“That’s why research, development and innovation across the world is so important and why it’s crucial that we work together.”

The theme of this year’s **WCRR**, hosted by the RSSB and the University of Birmingham, is ‘Reshaping our railways post-pandemic: Research with an impact’.

Wendy added: “In the UK we’ll be launching a new rail data marketplace early next year, with our network becoming open by default and with rail data opened up to receptors, developers and innovators.

“We can unlock the full potential of services and customers and of course R&D is helping us make the railway network ever more accessible for all customers. For example, the passengers’ app has made it easier for customers to request and booking systems to train journeys so they can travel with confidence.

“Undeniably, it’s your ideas, your expertise and your innovation that finds the answers to the big questions. That is what takes our railways not only here in the UK, but across the world.

“We know our plans and investment will be more valuable if we keep working with other countries. By working together, we will not only seize the opportunities, but we will make them a reality.”

WCRR, the world’s largest international congress on railway research, was founded by SNCF (France), Deutsche Bahn AG (Germany), Trenitalia (Italy), Railway Technical Research Institute (Japan), RSSB (UK), Association of American Railroads (USA), and International Union of Railways.

Since the first event in France in 1994 it has continued to provide a platform for railway technical development and for discussion into the future direction from the management perspective of the world’s railway research, addressing everyone from railway companies to industry and research institutions.

[You can read an interview with the chair of WCRR Luisa Moisio by clicking here.](#)

Photo credit: WCRR