

Scotland's Railway Stakeholder Panel appoints sustainability expert

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Scotland's Railway has appointed sustainability expert, Michelle Francis, to its Stakeholder Panel which scrutinises the performance of the rail network, as world leaders prepare to attend global climate change conference COP26 in Glasgow at the beginning of November.

It comes as the rail industry in Scotland is working towards cutting carbon emissions to net zero by 2035, as part of the Scottish Government's commitment.

Michelle Francis brings impeccable credentials to her new role.

She has worked as an environmental and sustainability professional, largely in the transport sector, for 28 years and is a Fellow of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and a Chartered Environmentalist.

She was Head of Environment at Network Rail for six years and prior to that, Environment Manager for Railtrack in Scotland.

Michelle is also Director and owner of Sustainability Catalyst and Director and co-owner of Eracura Consulting. Both are sustainability consultancy practices operating largely in the transport sector.

Michelle is also Deputy Chair of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) having been a Board member since 2014 and served as a Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) Board Member for six years.

Her interests include sustainability leadership and the delivery of the ambitious and necessary shift to a circular, zero carbon, regenerative economy which delivers nature recovery and wellbeing.

The Stakeholder Panel was created in 2015 and in a relaunch last October, CBI Scotland Director Tracy Black was appointed as chair. In keeping with Scotland's Railway's commitment to equality, women make up 55 per cent of the Panel's membership.

It meets three times a year, focusing on a number of themes, including the decarbonisation of the railway, the contribution Scotland's Railway can make to the economic recovery, and how the railway grows again following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alex Hynes, Scotland's Railway Managing Director, said: "We are delighted to welcome Michelle to the Panel.

"Her huge experience inside our industry and also as a consultant to some of the largest transport organisations in the country will be incredibly valuable as the rail network moves towards a zero-carbon future.

"The Stakeholder Panel represents a broad range of the economy and society in Scotland and Michelle will make a huge contribution to our efforts to improve Scotland's Railway and make it fit for the future."

Michelle Francis, Director, Eracura Consulting, said: "I am pleased to join the panel to support and challenge Scotland's Railway to deliver the ambitious sustainability agenda it is committed to, in particular the decarbonisation of its operations.

"I look forward to working with panel members and the Scotland's Railway team."

Photo credit: ScotRail