

Scotland's Transport Secretary visits progress on East Kilbride electrification

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Scotland's Transport Secretary Michael Matheson visited the ground investigation works for the East Kilbride rail corridor project.

The Cabinet Secretary welcomed this early opportunity to see first-hand the preparatory works taking place to help inform robust costs, options and decision making for this scheme. It forms a key part of the Scottish Government's plans to decarbonise Scotland's rail passenger services by 2035.

Transport Scotland's 'Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan' was launched in July with electrification of key routes at its core, which will support wider transport policy by encouraging modal shift from road to rail. This particular scheme also builds upon the patronage growth along the East Kilbride line.

Mr Matheson said: "I recently published our plans for decarbonising Scotland's railways as it sets out ambitious but achievable plans to decarbonise our rail passenger services by 2035, five years ahead of the UK target.

"These plans will help to deliver a variety of benefits to the economy, the environment, and to passengers

and freight users. Electric trains improve performance and reliability, are faster and quieter and produce less emissions than other forms of transport such as the private car.

“Providing more seats, frequent services and better active travel options to stations will help encourage a greater number of car users to switch to rail driving down transport emissions.

“It is great to see that we are already moving ahead with the preparatory works here on the East Kilbride route, showing real commitment from all involved to work in partnership on bringing the action plan to fruition. I was also pleased to meet with the engineers and graduates working on this project which outlines our commitment to supporting jobs in the industry. I look forward to returning here in the future to see further signs of progress.”

Alex Hynes, managing director of Scotland’s Railway, said: “We’re working hard alongside the Scottish Government to bring the benefits of electrification to communities across Scotland.

“The government has set an ambitious target to decarbonise our network by 2035 and projects such as this on the East Kilbride line will be key to delivering on that commitment.

“We are also examining how new technologies – hybrid, battery-powered and hydrogen trains – could be used to decarbonise lines where electrification may not be a practical option.

“And we’re looking at how we reduce the carbon footprint of our offices and our worksites, too, including trialling solar-powered generators for our track maintenance works.”

Nissar Mohammed, rail operations director BAM, said: “BAM is excited to have this opportunity to contribute further to the development of Scotland’s railway network.

“For BAM, decarbonisation is about more than simply electrifying the railway – it’s about thoughtful design, environmentally sound construction techniques and use of local labour and resources to reduce the impact of project delivery.

“We look forward to delivering attractive rail infrastructure that enhances the communities it serves and contributes positively towards a reliable, environmentally sustainable train service.”

Photo credit: Peter Devlin