Kier wins Metrolink upgrade deal

KIER HAS been appointed by Transport for Greater Manchester to lead the design of improvements to Heaton Park Metrolink stop in Prestwich.

The project is part of the Metrolink Stop Improvements Programme which seeks to make tram stops more accessible and customer friendly.

Kier will lead on the design of the project, which includes enhanced step-free access via the installation of ramps and larger lifts. Demolition and construction of new stepped access to platforms will take place, along with installation of new waiting shelters. The urban realm at the stop entrance will be improved, platform furniture removed or relocated, all signage replaced, a new pedestrian track crossing installed and drainage works undertaken.

TfGM says these will create "a more modern, accessible and welcoming facility for local residents."

Heaton Park is the largest park in Greater Manchester, with more than 600 acres of parkland, and is often used for events.

TfGM Network Director for Metrolink Ian Davies said: "Heaton Park is a key stop on Greater Manchester's tram network, serving local residents and visitors to one of the city-region's most popular leisure destinations. These upgrades will help create a more modern, welcoming and accessible facility for the people who use it.

"Accessibility is a key priority for us, and we will be making changes to the stop enabling easier access for passengers with mobility issues, people with pushchairs and those travelling with heavy luggage.

"The work at Heaton Park forms part of a wider programme to improve stops across our network, creating a more comfortable, accessible and convenient experience for people travelling by tram in Greater Manchester."

Actemium joins NR fleet framework

ACTEMIUM UK is now part of Network Rail's new £13 million electric vehicle charging framework which is supporting the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across operational sites in Wales and the West of England. It is one of two suppliers appointed for this area.

The company is the industry brand of VINCI Energies and will work on up to 45 sites which include maintenance depots, offices, and signalling locations. Charging capabilities will range from 22kW AC chargers to 150kW DC rapid charging.

The framework builds on an established relationship with Network Rail and draws on Actemium UK's experience in e-mobility and road fleet electrification.

Senior Manager Rafael Carrilho said: "Network Rail operates a diverse road fleet across a large and operationally complex estate in Wales and the West of England, with each location having distinct power demands and operational constraints. As a trusted UK e-mobility delivery partner, our role is to bring together the electrical, civil and charging infrastructure at each site to create a safe, reliable and future-ready solution. We're delighted to be delivering the EV charging solutions that meet Network Rail's operational needs today, while supporting its transition to an electric fleet."

Network Rail Programme Director Julie Woodward added: "Rail is already the greenest form of mass public transport, and decarbonising our road fleet is an important part of making it even more sustainable. By investing in charging infrastructure across our sites, we're creating the foundations needed for a zero-emission road vehicle fleet, helping reduce carbon emissions while supporting the safe and reliable operation of the railway."

A new home and new leadership for Great British Railways

OCTOBER HAS brought a series of important milestones for Great British Railways (GBR), with confirmation of its headquarters at Becketwell in Derby alongside key leadership appointments.

For Rail Forum, the decision to locate GBR in the city centre ends months of speculation about the two shortlisted locations. Whilst we, like many others across the railway, would have preferred to see the HQ close to the station, we understand why Becketwell has been chosen and we all now need to get behind the decision to make it work. Derby already sits at the heart of the railway, with a significant concentration of rail businesses and expertise, and is home to Rail Forum itself. From here, we represent some 400 organisations across the UK rail supply chain, working with partners across infrastructure, rolling stock and operations to support a customer-focused railway.

The new Becketwell development is expected to accommodate up to 450 GBR staff, while up to 600 foundation apprenticeship places for 16 to 21-year-olds will be available over the next four years. For Derby, this is an opportunity to connect rail reform with regeneration, skills and long-term economic growth, while strengthening links between the station, Pride Park and the city centre.

These developments come at an important time for the industry. The Budget confirmed that Rachel Skinner CBE will lead a review of rail infrastructure costs, reporting in six months. For a supply chain focused on delivering efficiently and providing value, its findings will be important as the industry considers how future infrastructure can be delivered more effectively.

Attention is also turning to the leadership which will shape GBR. Sir John Kingman has been appointed as its first Chair, helping to shape the organisation as preparations for transition continue. His experience across government and major national organisations will be crucial as GBR develops its culture and works to integrate track and train around the needs of customers.

That customer focus is reinforced by the appointment of David Horne as Integrated Chief Customer and Commercial Officer. He will lead the development and delivery of a single customer and commercial strategy for the railway, covering passenger and freight customers.

For Rail Forum members, these developments are significant. The location, leadership and customer focus of GBR, alongside the wider challenge of delivering infrastructure efficiently, will influence the environment in which the supply chain operates. Rail Forum looks forward to working with GBR's leadership, ensuring the expertise and innovation of our 400 members can contribute to a railway that delivers for customers at home and creates opportunities overseas.

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