



EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY

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PRESS RELEASE – IMMEDIATE

East Lancashire Railway locomotives to work infrastructure trains on Manchester Metrolink

Over the weekend of 6 & 7 February, Manchester Metrolink will be closed between Bury and Whitefield to allow a major track renewal programme to take place between Radcliffe and Whitefield stations. The contractors will be using the East Lancashire Railway's Baron Street Locomotive Works site as a permanent way depot, with ELR based diesel locomotives scheduled to work infrastructure trains onto Metrolink in connection with the works.

The contract for these works has been arranged between Metrolink's operator and maintainer Stagecoach Metrolink, works contractors Babcock Rail and the East Lancashire Railway. In total 750 metres of track is to be replaced from the Manchester bound track up Radcliffe bank as far as Whitefield tunnel.

Being used to haul spoil and ballast trains on Metrolink throughout the weekend will be the East Lancashire Railway based Class 37 locomotives, with 37109 and 37418 *Pectinidae* expected to haul the majority of trains in top and tail formation. 37901 *Mirrlees Pioneer* will be acting as standby locomotive at Bury in case of any problems with the two locomotives chosen to haul the trains. 33109 *Captain Bill Smith RNR* will also be used on the contract, where it will be employed on shunting duties at Baron Street Locomotive Works. All locomotives will be operated by East Lancashire Railway crews.

In preparation for the works, 37418 was sent out onto Metrolink in the early hours of 24 January for a gauging run, which proved successful. Prior to the main contract a great deal of activity will take place on the ELR, with materials being delivered by DB Schenker by rail to Bury. In addition, 37109 and 37418 are to be used on a continuously-welded-rail train onto Metrolink during the night of Sunday 31 January/Monday 1 February.

Due to the high level of activity at the ELR's Baron Street Locomotive Works, for safety reasons the yard will be closed throughout the duration of the works. Metrolink operator, Stagecoach Metrolink have also said that whilst they appreciate there will be interest in the operation of these trains from enthusiasts and photographers they would like to remind people that venturing onto any Metrolink tracks or the lineside will be treated as trespassing and will not be tolerated at any point during the works and any photographers are urged to view the trains from public areas.

East Lancashire Railway General Manager Andy Coward said: “We are delighted to be able to assist with this major engineering contract and the use of our diesel locomotives will give this contract a unique aspect. This is the first time that any of our former main line diesel locomotives have been used on such a contract, which I am sure will create a lot of interest.”

Stagecoach Metrolink’s Managing Director Andy Morris commented: “Having easy access to the resources and expertise that the ELR can offer in situations such as these is of immense benefit to Metrolink and its customers. It means that we can deliver major improvements, such as the track renewals between Radcliffe and Whitefield, in an efficient and speedy fashion. This is another example in the 18 year history of Metrolink where we’ve worked closely with the ELR to deliver mutual benefit to both organisations.”

More information about Metrolink services during the period of the works can be found at www.metrolink.co.uk.

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Word Count 551

For more information on this Press Release, or for any other information on the East Lancashire Railway, please contact our General Manager, Andy Coward, on 07950 476089.

The East Lancashire Railway operates a 12 mile heritage railway between Heywood and Rawtenstall, with steam and diesel hauled services running every weekend throughout the year and from Wednesday to Friday from April to September. Visit our website at www.east-lancs-rly.co.uk for further information about the railway.