

Covid-19: Railway will keep Britain moving

March 23, 2020

The railway will keep vital supplies and key workers moving over the coming months, the leader of Network Rail's "Backbone of Britain" pledged.

"Our role in Britain's Coronavirus response is clear – to keep key workers, including in the NHS and emergency services, as well as food, fuel and medicine moving safely as together we rise to this challenge," said Tim Shoveller, managing director of the North West and Central (NW&C) region.

NW&C is the Backbone of Britain. It runs from London Euston and Marylebone through the Chilterns, West Midlands, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Lancashire and Cumbria to Glasgow. It includes the West Coast main line, Europe's busiest mixed-use (passenger and freight) railway.

Tim spoke out as a new reduced timetable, agreed by the rail industry in response to the escalating Coronavirus pandemic, was brought in offering fewer passenger services and scope for increased volumes of freight.

Freight directly contributes £870m to the nation's economy every year.

"We are planning carefully and supporting our railway colleagues, especially those in critical frontline roles, as we all work together to support Britain in its hour of need," Tim said.

"The West Coast main line is the Backbone of Britain, the artery connecting London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow. We must keep it open to ensure vital supplies and key workers get where they're needed. And that is what we will do."

He added: "I'd like to publicly thank all Network Rail staff and wider rail industry colleagues for the hard work you're each putting in to keep the railway open for passengers and freight at this hugely challenging time."

For more detail on the reduced timetable, visit www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Photo credit: Network Rail