

In the News- 13th March 2020

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Starting with the big topic affecting businesses and passengers, rail operator Go-Ahead says it wants the Government to relax rules around timetable changes to help cope with the coronavirus outbreak.

The Sun reports Go-Ahead boss David Brown said he wants faster changes than the current 70-day notice period to allow more commuters to travel off-peak to avoid crowds.

This follows poor passenger numbers causing Go-Ahead profits to fall to £49million for six months, down from £61million, while shares fell around 35 per cent.

In other news following the industry's response to this week's budget announcement, the i has reported that northern transport leaders have called on Chancellor Rishi Sunak to ensure the Northern Powerhouse's east-west HS3 line is delivered in full.

The Chancellor spoke of his commitment to the 'Manchester-Leeds' leg of the scheme, but leaders say they are 'disappointed' to hear that the project has not been discussed in full.

Northern Powerhouse Rail is seen as 'crucial' for levelling up the UK's economy in a region where it takes longer to travel coast-to-coast by train than it takes to get to Paris on Eurostar from London.

HS2 is preparing to invite tenders in October for a 2.4km automated people mover train route to connect its Solihull interchange station with Birmingham airport and the NEC.

The shuttle will travel on an elevated viaduct for its entire route, 12m above the ground at its highest point and will be able to transport more than 2,000 people per hour.

The contract will include four stops and a maintenance facility for the 20m long trains, with construction expected in 2022.

Transport for Wales has confirmed that more than 170 of its stations have been fitted with new Welsh language information systems.

The new technology, owned by Amazon and IVONA is called "Geraint" and provides clear Welsh language journey announcements and up to the minute changes.

Finally, in an exclusive interview with railbusinessdaily.com, Network Rail's Managing Director, Eastern Region – Rob McIntosh – discussed the new Budget, his region's upcoming focuses and bridging the skills gap in the rail industry.

The interview followed Mr McIntosh meeting with the Chancellor of the Exchequer after the budget announcement, which featured commitments to several projects in the Eastern region.