

John Whitehurst appointed GTR's Chief Operating Officer

April 24, 2024



Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) has announced that John Whitehurst has been appointed as its Chief Operating Officer (COO) and will begin the role on Monday 20 May.

At a time when GTR continues to focus on growing passenger numbers and building a thriving railway, John will be responsible for ensuring GTR's operations are safe, reliable, and sustainable while maintaining a relentless focus on making sure customers receive a high-quality service.

The role will see John lead the planning and delivery of services across GTR's four brands – Gatwick Express, Great Northern, Southern, and Thameslink – which collectively represent approximately 18 per cent of UK rail passenger journeys. He will also hold key relations with the supply chain and industry partners such as Network Rail.

John will bring to GTR significant experience within transport, having managed large teams and multi-million-pound projects across operations, infrastructure and engineering. He has previously worked at Network Rail as Route Infrastructure Maintenance Director on the Kent and Anglia routes, and spent nearly

12 years at Serco, where he was Managing Director of Transport and Community Services.

Andy Coulthurst, who has led GTR's operations successfully on an interim basis since November 2023, will retire this summer after more than 20 years in the rail industry. Andy joined GTR in January 2020, assuming various roles including leading a successful programme of initiatives to give customers an ever better and more reliable train service. Andy will stay with GTR to help ensure a smooth and seamless leadership transition up to his retirement in the summer.

Angie Doll, GTR's Chief Executive Officer, said: "I am delighted to welcome John to GTR. His impressive career both inside and outside rail will be a great addition to my team and the wider organisation. I know that John's extensive knowledge of running operations in the UK and abroad will play a key role in our future success, bringing fresh thinking as well as years of experience to help GTR grow and deliver for our customers and communities. I very much look forward to having John in my team.

"I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to Andy, who has been an excellent interim Chief Operating Officer. Andy joined us during a challenging period in 2020, and throughout his time at GTR has consistently demonstrated strong leadership. He will be missed, and on behalf of everyone at GTR I wish him a happy and well-deserved retirement."

John Whitehurst said: "I've been an admirer and customer of GTR for many years, so I'm very proud to join and be a part of the UK's biggest railway operator at an exciting and important time for the rail industry. I'm looking forward to getting out across the length and breadth of GTR's vast network, meeting my new colleagues who work incredibly hard every day to provide customers with a safe and reliable service. I'm excited to work with all our industry partners and stakeholders to innovate and improve our services for the hundreds of thousands of customers who rely on us."