

## 'Thunderbird' rescue locos are go

August 2, 2022



Two Commonwealth Games-branded rescue locomotives are ready to swing into action and help broken down passenger and freight trains in the West Midlands.

Nicknamed Thunderbirds, after the cult science-fiction TV series, they play a key role in rescuing and removing stranded trains to stop railway traffic jams causing long delays.

The locos, provided by Rail Operations Group, have been moved from their usual base in Derby to Soho railway depot in Birmingham so they can rapidly respond to rescues should they be needed during the Commonwealth Games.

They played a vital role in the recent record-breaking temperatures – helping to move trains which became stranded when overhead power lines suffered heatwave damage in Birmingham.

Denise Wetton, Network Rail's Central route director, said: "We hope they're not needed during the Commonwealth Games but having these locos based in Birmingham means we will be able to remove stranded trains much more quickly and get passengers moving again.

"As an industry, years of planning has gone into being Games ready and we will continue to monitor the

railway 24 hours a day throughout the major event to react and resolve any issues. As always, if you are planning on travelling during the Games please plan your journey, check before you travel and allow extra time.”

Dave Burley, chief operating officer for Rail Operations Group, said: “We are proud to play a part in the preparation and support for the Commonwealth Games. These locos play a key role in the national railway and it’s fitting they are branded and ready to be called into action if needed during one of the biggest sporting events in the world.”

The relocation of the rescue locos is another effort by the rail industry to provide the best possible service to passengers during the Commonwealth Games.

Over the last 18 months extensive work has taken place to get Midlands rail routes in the best possible shape for the global multi-sport event.

This includes major station upgrades in Coventry and Perry Barr, the removal of graffiti and overgrown plants and trees beside tracks, training of hundreds of station volunteers, and upgrading railway lines and equipment so they are reliable for passengers and freight.

A million extra journeys are expected to take place while the Games are on this week.

During that time Network Rail’s three tips to passengers and visitors are:

- **Check before you travel,**
- **Plan your journey,** and
- **Leave more time** than usual to reach your destination.

Across Birmingham and the West Midlands, 15 venues will play host to 20 sports, with trains and stations expected to be much busier than usual.

Birmingham New Street, Birmingham Moor Street, Birmingham International, Coventry, Leamington Spa, Perry Barr, and Warwick are all expected to be among the busiest stations.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*