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South west railway deep alliance goes live

Posted 01/05/12

Stagecoach Group's Tim Shoveller has taken charge of railway operations across the Wessex region with the launch of the first deep alliance merging train operator and Network Rail teams.

In a first for Britain's privatised rail industry, a single senior joint management team now has responsibility for both trains and track on the routes operating out of London Waterloo station. The alliance, which went live on 29 April and has been approved by the Department for Transport and the Office of Rail Regulation, is to run until 4 February 2017, the expiry date of the South West Trains franchise agreement.



Waterloo: Wessex Integrated Control Centre co-ordinates operational response to incidents

The decision to form the alliance follows publication of Sir Roy McNulty's Rail Value for Money report last year which recommended a package of measures to reduce inefficiencies in the UK rail system. Through more collaborative working and better decision making the hope is that the alliance will cut delays for passengers, provide better customer service, deliver more effective management of disruption and improve the efficiency of the railway.

Network Rail says bringing together track and TOC management teams will result in the following benefits:

- More effective station management: a single management team for London Waterloo, the UK's busiest railway station
- Better planning of track maintenance work: smarter train planning and improved access to provide more time for renewals, leading to a more reliable and punctual train service
- Faster decision-making: quicker resolution of issues through joint responsibility for work at stations
- Aligned objectives and incentives: employees from both organisations working towards common goals with consistent incentives to improve performance
- Building skills: development opportunities for employees, enhancing skills and providing wider job experience
- Pooled resources: opportunities to share facilities, helping with winter preparations and providing a more efficient response to train service disruption
- Operational efficiencies: joint training, communications and occupational health processes

The alliance builds on the previous joint working between South West Trains and Network Rail through the Wessex Integrated Control Centre at London Waterloo, which co-ordinates the operational response to incidents on the route, as well as recent moves by Network Rail to devolve operational responsibility to regional units.

Stagecoach's Tim Shoveller heads the South West management team while a governance board, with equal representation from both organisations, will oversee the operation of the alliance and take major business decisions. Arrangements are in place to ensure the interests of other passenger rail companies and freight operators are protected. Both companies retain their own identities and staff and there are no changes to terms and conditions of

SOUTH WEST ALLIANCE TOP TEAM

- Managing director - Tim Shoveller
- Infrastructure director - Jim Morgan
- Operations director - Mark Steward
- Fleet director - Christian Roth
- Safety & assurance director - Brian Cook
- Human resources director - Kelly Barlow
- Commercial director - Sam McCarthy
- Customer service director - Jake Kelly
- Finance director - Andy West

Source: Network Rail
Details accurate at May 2012

employment or collective bargaining agreements with recognised trade unions.

Tim Shoveller said: "The creation of this joint alliance provides a real opportunity to deliver an even better service for our passengers and we have already had a very positive response to this new way of working. Our focus now will be on leading and supporting our 6,000 employees and managers who play a critical role in the delivery of our train services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Together we will develop a collaborative way of working through the alliance and deliver a great train service for our passengers."

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