

**20th September 2004**

## **New West Coast Timetable - Biggest Winners are the Customers Passenger and Freight**

The first benefits for passengers of the West Coast Main Line Upgrade, specified and funded by the SRA and delivered by Network Rail, will be realized one week from today.

On Monday 27 September, the new West Coast timetable will be introduced, providing faster journey times, more frequent services and improved punctuality. Best journey times from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool and Manchester to London will all be cut by around 30 minutes, and from Birmingham to London by around 20 minutes. This is the first milestone to be reached in a journey that will transform the West Coast Main Line for passengers and freight customers.

The work to renew the West Coast Main Line - and the collective effort of the industry - will not stop with the introduction of the September timetable. Further line speed improvements through to Preston and Liverpool will be completed by June 2005 and on to Glasgow by December 2005, delivering even faster journey times.

Further benefits will be delivered each year until the project is completed by the end of the decade, including work to enhance capacity at Rugby and the Trent Valley in 2007 and 2008.

SRA Chairman, David Quarmby, said:

"The West Coast Main Line is the spine of the national railway system, and the frequency and speed of both passenger and freight trains now achievable - together with the introduction of 125 mph tilting trains - makes today one of the most important milestones in the development of Britain's railways for a long time. This project was an expensive shambles a few years ago; what has been achieved today is the result of a truly productive partnership by the SRA, Network Rail, Virgin Trains, Alstom and the rail industry behind them - delivering on time and with a much lower bill for taxpayers. There is more to come, which when complete will bring the West Coast Main Line from London through the Midlands, the North West to Scotland truly into the 21st century.",

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The SRA published its West Coast Main Line Strategy in June 2003. The Strategy is designed to improve longer distance, inter-regional, regional and local passenger and freight services on the line.
2. The West Coast Main Line (WCML) is the most important trunk route on Britain's rail network and is the busiest mixed railway in Europe. It

links London and the South East with the largest English conurbations (Birmingham and Manchester), as well as with Liverpool, North Wales, the North West, Cumbria and Scotland. The route is the core national long distance freight route (carrying over 40% of all UK freight traffic), and has significant commuting flows around London, Manchester, Glasgow and Birmingham.

**For further details contact the Department for Transport Rail Press desk:  
020 7944 3108**