

West Midlands Trains Ltd announced as winning bidder for the West Midlands franchise

We welcome the decision by the Department for Transport to select West Midlands Trains Ltd (WMT) as the winning bidder to run the next West Midlands rail franchise from 10 December 2017. WMT is a joint venture, owned by Abellio and its partners for the bid, Mitsui and East Japan Railway Company (JR East).

Over the next nine years, WMT will deliver nearly £1bn into the region with £700m of this going into new and refurbished trains. This is another example of Abellio bringing investment to the places it operates in. When we start operations in the West Midlands, we will oversee over £3bn of investment into new trains across all of our franchises.

This announcement is also notable for being the first time that any Japanese company has been successful in a bid for a rail franchise. Mitsui is a global conglomerate with interests across many different sectors, including rail. JR East runs rail services in Japan, transporting 17 million people a day and runs the busiest rail station in the world in Tokyo.

This investment will bring significant improvements to the network. By the end of the franchise, we will have created space for 85,000 more passengers to travel to London and Birmingham during rush hour, with hugely improved stations and the widespread introduction of smart ticketing.

Dominic Booth, Managing Director of Abellio UK, said:

“We are delighted to have been announced as the winning bidder for the West Midlands franchise, driving growth in one of the most exciting regions in the country. We will be investing nearly £1bn into the network, delivering new trains, better stations and a whole host of other benefits for passengers.”

Key improvements to be delivered by the new franchise include:

- Nearly £1bn invested in services on the network over the course of the franchise with £700m of this going into investment in new and refurbished trains. 400 new carriages will be rolled out by 2021, creating space for an extra 85,000 passengers on rush hour services in Birmingham and London;
- 20,000 extra rush hour seats for people in Birmingham and 10,000 for people in London. On top of this, standing room for 50,000 extra people in Birmingham, in metro style carriages for shorter cross-city journeys;
- £70m invested in new and existing depots to improve train reliability;
- Over £60m invested in station improvements, delivering over 1,000 new car parking spaces and over 2,500 cycle parking spaces. This is alongside new and refurbished waiting rooms, more seats at stations, and feasibility studies into developing new stations in the West Midlands;
- A greater choice of travel options for passengers thanks to the introduction of new Sunday services by 2021. This includes services from Birmingham to Shrewsbury and between Bedford and Bletchley;
- Greater provision of passenger information, with audio visual displays on all trains by the end of 2019, as well as 800 new digital screens across the network;
- Free Wi-Fi on all trains by the end of December 2019;
- The creation of over 900 new apprenticeships over the course of the franchise, with existing staff benefitting from a £13m investment in staff training and development; and
- An investment of £1.25m into community rail initiatives.

Ends

Notes

For further information please contact westmidlandsmedia@abellio.com or call our corporate press office on (+44)121 655 0075.

About West Midlands Trains

West Midlands Trains Ltd. will be running the West Midlands rail franchise from 10 December 2017 until 2025/6. Abellio has a 70.1% share of the company, East Japan Railway Company (JRE) and Mitsui & Co., Ltd. (Mitsui) own the remaining 29.9% in a 50:50 split.

About Abellio

Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. Every day our people provide rail, bus and tram services to 1.7m customers across the UK, Germany and in the Netherlands. In the UK we operate buses through Abellio London, as well as ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, and Merseyrail in a joint venture with Serco. In Germany we operate Abellio Deutschland, serving communities in North Rhine Westfalia, Saxony, Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Hesse and Thuringia. Our role in transport extends beyond the journey from a-to-b. With our international heritage and our policy of sharing best practice, not just amongst ourselves, but across the wider transport industry, we provide thought leadership and truly innovative ideas which make a positive contribution to the communities we serve. For more information on Abellio visit www.abellio.com.

About Mitsui

Mitsui is one of the most diversified and comprehensive trading, investment and service enterprises in the world with 139 offices in 66 countries as of March, 2017. Utilising our global operating locations, network and information resources, we are multilaterally pursuing business that ranges from product sales, worldwide logistics and financing, through to the development of major international infrastructure and other projects in the following fields: Iron & Steel Products, Mineral & Metal Resources, Infrastructure Projects, Integrated Transportation Systems, Chemicals, Energy, Food Resources, Food Products & Services, Consumer Services, IT & Communication, and Corporate Development Business. Mitsui is actively taking on challenges for global business innovation around the world. For more information, visit www.mitsui.com.

About JR East

East Japan Railway Company (JR East) was established in 1987, when Japanese National Railways was divided as part of a package of railway reforms. JR East's railway business covers a 7,500 km (approx. 4,660 miles) network in the eastern part of the Japanese main island, including Tokyo Metropolitan area, and provides transportation services, comprising urban, suburban and high speed operations, for 17 million passengers on a daily basis. JR East also undertakes non-transport commercial activities, which account for more than 30% of the total revenue of JR East Group. JR East contributes to passengers and communities it serves by delivering high degrees of punctuality, reliability and comfort and also continues to pursue higher levels of safety and service quality through technical innovation. For more information, visit www.jreast.co.jp/e.