



Operated by West Midlands Trains

West Midlands Trains starts £1 billion investment into the UK rail network

Today marks the start of the £1 billion investment into the West Midlands franchise network by West Midlands Trains (WMT), a joint venture between Abellio, JR East and Mitsui.

WMT won the right to operate the franchise in August and will replace existing London Midland services with two new brands – West Midlands Railway (WMR) and London Northwestern Railway (LNR). WMR will operate in and around Birmingham and LNR will operate on the Euston, Northampton, Birmingham and Liverpool corridor.

As part of the £1bn investment, £680m will go on new trains manufactured by Bombardier and CAF. All of the Bombardier trains will be made at their factory in Derby, helping stimulate the local supply chain. By the end of the franchise there will be 25 per cent more carriages on the network than at the beginning.

There'll also be £70m towards new and existing depots as well as £60m on station improvements. All this will help provide far more capacity for those heading into London and Birmingham during rush hour, with space for an extra 85,000 passengers at this time.

To deliver all this WMT will be putting £18m towards staff training and development at all levels. It is also committed to training 900 apprentices over the next eight and a half years, bringing forward the next generation of leaders on the railway.

Two launch events were held for the franchise in Northampton and Birmingham to recognise the two different brands. Attendees included the Rail Minister, Paul Maynard, along with the Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, and Iain Stewart MP from the Transport Select Committee.

Rail Minister Paul Maynard, said:

"I am delighted to welcome the beginning of a new era in the West Midlands for rail passengers.

"This government is delivering the biggest rail modernisation programme for over a century and we are committed to giving passengers the services they want across the country.

"The new West Midlands franchise will transform travel for tens of thousands of passengers thanks to over £1bn of investment - which will mean longer, more frequent trains, faster journeys and a more reliable service for passengers."

Councillor Roger Lawrence, chair of WMR and leader of City of Wolverhampton Council, said:

"We believe this new franchise has the ability to bring significant improvements for passengers especially in terms of increased frequencies and more on-board capacity.

“But it has also been drawn up in such a way that it will be more effective in supporting wider economic growth and jobs across our region and we look forward to working with West Midlands Trains in making that happen.”

Managing Director of West Midlands Trains, Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde, said:

“It’s great to get started on delivering everything we’ve promised to our customers across the network. The £1bn of investment will allow West Midlands Trains to be one of the core drivers of faster economic growth throughout the regions in which it operates.

“We’re delighted to see so many of our new trains produced in the Midlands, stimulating the local economy. Along with the 900 apprenticeships put in place over the coming years, we’ll be building a legacy that will benefit the industry for decades to come.”

-Ends-

Notes to editors

For further information please contact George Robinson at george.robinson@abellio.com or on 07769 880205.

Pictures (in order of attachment)

1. Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands; Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde, MD of West Midlands Trains; Cllr Roger Lawrence, Chair of West Midlands Rail – Platform 2, Snow Hill station;
2. New West Midlands Railway Train, long-shot – Platform 2, Snow Hill Station;
3. Pete Redding, Fleet Operations Director – North for Siemens Rail Solutions UK; Iain Stewart MP; Julian Edwards, Deputy MD of Abellio; Masahiko Nakai, Executive Vice President of JR East; Nobuyuki Kobayashi, SVP & DOO, Integrated Transport Systems, for Mitsui Europe – Siemens Traincare Facility, Northampton.

About the new West Midlands franchise

Abellio UK, JR East and Mitsui will be running the next West Midlands rail franchise from 10 December 2017 until 2025/6. Abellio has a 70.1% share of the company and JR East and Mitsui own the remaining 29.9% in a 50:50 split.

The new plans for the franchise include:

- Nearly £1bn invested into the overall network over the course of the franchise;
- £700m investment into new and refurbished trains with 413 new carriages manufactured by Bombardier and CAF, creating space for an extra 85,000 passengers on rush hour services in Birmingham and London;
- £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 an £18m investment in staff training and development; and
- An investment of £1.25m into community rail initiatives.

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 1.3m customers across the UK and Germany. In the UK we operate buses through Abellio London, as well as ScotRail, Greater Anglia (in a joint venture with Mitsui) and Merseyrail (in a joint venture with Serco). In Germany we operate Abellio Deutschland, serving communities in North Rhine Westphalia, 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 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.

About Mitsui

Mitsui & Co., Ltd (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.