

West Midlands Franchise Award

Headlines and Benefits

10/08/2017

1. Executive summary

Today the Department for Transport (DfT) has announced the winner of the competition to become the next West Midlands Franchisee, heralding nearly £1 billion of investment in services on the West Midlands route. This will mean more space on trains, more frequent services and better facilities for passengers.

West Midlands Trains Ltd (a joint venture between Abellio, East Japan Railway Company and Mitsui & Co Ltd) will deliver substantially more space for passengers and a fleet of brand new and refurbished trains serving the region. Improved passenger information and accessibility standards, more services at weekends and evenings, flexible ticketing for part-time workers, better compensation, free Wi-Fi, station upgrades and an innovative staff gainshare scheme will all contribute to a significantly enhanced passenger experience across the entire network.

The franchise will operate from 10 December 2017 through to March 2026.

Passengers in the West Midlands will benefit from 180 new train carriages creating more space for people, especially during rush hour. This includes an investment in 100 new carriages on the Cross City line in Birmingham, and a further 80 for the Snow Hill line. The new Cross City line carriages will offer metro-style passenger facilities, with increased space to carry more passengers and wider doors.

There will be more than 300 extra Sunday services across the franchise, with most routes operating at Saturday frequencies. There will be more evening and later Saturday services from Birmingham and a new hourly service from Birmingham and Wolverhampton to Crewe via Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent.

The plans for the new franchise have been built around demands expressed by passengers during the public consultation, and have been developed in conjunction with West Midlands Rail Limited (WMR), a partnership of 16 authorities in the region. This local collaboration will continue throughout the period of the Franchise, with WMR exercising leadership over the implementation of the Franchise in the West Midlands region.

A more detailed list of benefits for the region is shown in section 2. A line by line summary can be found in section 3.

2. Key benefits

The new franchise will deliver the following benefits across the West Midlands network:

- Rail passengers will get new trains with more seats and more space as nearly £1 billion is invested in services on the West Midlands network.
- Passengers in the West Midlands will benefit from 180 new train carriages creating more space for people, especially during rush hour. This includes an investment in 100 new carriages on the Cross City line in Birmingham, and a further 80 for the Snow Hill line. The new Cross City Line carriages will offer metro-style passenger facilities, just like on the London Overground, with increased space to carry more passengers and wider doors.
- There will be 20,000 extra seats for rush hour passengers in Birmingham, and 10,000 for people in London. On top of this, there will be standing room for 50,000 passengers in Birmingham in the metro-style carriages referred to above.

- By the end of the first year West Midlands Trains will create two separable business units; one for the West Midlands and the other for services on the West Coast Main Line. West Midlands Rail will have lead the contract management of the services in the West Midlands business unit. This is to ensure the new franchise will be responsive to regional needs.
- The West Midlands separable business unit will receive a unique brand, known as *West Midlands Railway*. The intention is that this brand will become a uniting symbol for the region, physically and psychologically connecting disparate districts and counties together, subliminally creating a positive sense of belonging that will enable the region to prosper.
- West Midlands Trains will work with West Midlands Rail, West Midlands Combined Authority, Local Authorities and other third parties on development infrastructure schemes to improve the railway.
- More than £70m invested in depots to improve train reliability, including an entirely new maintenance and stabling facility at Duddeston.
- A railway fit to meet the demands of modern life with greater choice of travel options for passengers thanks to the introduction of new services, including:
 - More trains between Birmingham and Shrewsbury with two services per hour from December 2018. A regular two trains per hour service between Birmingham and Rugeley via the Chase Line from December 2018.
 - A new direct hourly service between Birmingham and Stoke-on-Trent from December 2018 providing much needed additional capacity on this busy route.
 - An extension of Cross-City line services from Longbridge to Bromsgrove.
 - A new hourly shuttle between Leamington Spa and Coventry serving the new station at Kenilworth
 - Two morning and two evening rush hour direct services between Walsall and London from December 2018, helping to unlock economic growth in the region.
 - More Sunday services on the Cross-City line with the number of trains per hour between Longbridge and Birmingham doubling from two per hour to four in December 2018, and then increasing to six in May 2021.
 - Increased Sunday services on the Snow Hill line with the number of trains per hour between Snow Hill and Stourbridge Junction increasing from two to six.
 - A new Sunday service between Birmingham and Shrewsbury from December 2018, and a second train per hour introduced in May 2021.
 - Improved Sunday services on the Walsall and Wolverhampton lines from May 2021.
- Passengers will also be entitled to 25 per cent compensation if their train is delayed by 15 minutes. They will continue to receive 50 per cent of their money back for delays of half an hour and full compensation if it is more than an hour.
- An extension of smart ticketing in the West Midlands making this available at more stations, and a new smart card season ticket for people using the Northampton to Euston line.
- All 150 stations across the West Midlands network will have at least one ticket vending machine.
- Better provision of information to passengers throughout their journey with audio and visual passenger displays on all trains by the end of 2019 and new mobile phone content which will provide real time train crowding information to help customers plan their journey. The new franchise will introduce over 800 digital customer screens that will provide real time journey information and 60 multi-modal customer information screens providing real time onward travel information to passengers at key interchange stations.
- Free Wi-Fi will also be available on all main line trains by the end of December 2019.

- More accessible services with a reduction in the period of prior notice required for passenger assist, down from 24 hours to 12 hours in January 2020 and reduced further to 4 hours in January 2021.
- More than £60m invested on station improvements which will deliver over 1,000 new car park spaces, over 2,500 cycle parking spaces, a cycle hire scheme trial, new and refurbished waiting rooms, and more seats at stations. West Midlands Trains will also improve connections between trains at key interchange stations and improve connections to other forms of transport.
- A commitment to work with WMR, Network Rail and the West Midlands Combined Authority to investigate the potential for opening a number of new stations across the region.
- A Service Quality Regime in the West Midlands region and on branch lines to maintain the quality of stations, trains and customer service for passengers.
- The new franchise will recognise the rail network as a community asset with an investment of at least £1.25m for the development of community rail initiatives.
- West Midlands Trains will also deliver a sustainability strategy to deliver a 49% reduction in carbon emission per vehicle kilometre travelled and support local business. The new franchise will also deliver an innovation strategy with an investment of £2.25 million in partnership projects with West Midlands Combined Authority, Network Rail & the University of Birmingham.
- £13m investment in training for staff in customer facing roles and an employee gainshare scheme
- Over 900 apprenticeships offered with female employees making up at least 20% of those entering into engineering and driving apprenticeships.

3. Benefits by Route

In addition to the general improvements delivered across the whole franchise area, the summary below outlines improvements delivered by railway line/service:

3.1. Birmingham Chase Line (Birmingham – Walsall – Cannock – Rugeley)

- electric rolling stock introduced following the completion of the on-going electrification works
- a half-hourly service between Birmingham, Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley Monday to Saturday by December 2018 and on Sundays by May 2021
- earlier and later services between Birmingham and Walsall, and between Birmingham and Rugeley Trent Valley including on a Sunday
- new direct services between Walsall and London during rush hours (with 2 morning services into London and 2 evening peak services returning from London) from December 2018
- a service quality regime to improve the quality of stations, trains and customer service for passengers

3.2. Birmingham Cross City line (Lichfield – Birmingham – Bromsgrove/Redditch)

- an investment in more than 100 brand new electric carriages introduced from 2020 specially designed and dedicated to the Cross City line in Birmingham

- extension of services to Bromsgrove once the line is electrified in December 2018 delivering 3 electric trains per hour between Birmingham and Bromsgrove
- extension of services from Lichfield City to Lichfield Trent Valley to provide 4 services per hour Monday to Saturday by December 2018 and on Sundays by May 2021
- earlier and later services between Redditch and Birmingham and between Birmingham and Lichfield
- increased Sunday frequency between Birmingham and Four Oaks to provide 6 services per hour by May 2021
- increased Sunday frequency between Birmingham and Longbridge to provide 4 services per hour Monday to Saturday by December 2018 and on Sundays by May 2021 with 3 to Bromsgrove and 3 to Redditch
- a robust strategy to deliver services during the autumn leaf-fall period
- a service quality regime to improve the quality of stations, trains and customer service for passengers

3.3. Birmingham – Worcester – Hereford

- an additional evening service from Birmingham to Worcester, and an earlier first service from Worcester to Birmingham on Monday to Friday by December 2018
- enhanced Saturday evening service to provide a regular hourly service between Birmingham and Worcester by December 2018
- additional evening services between Birmingham and Hereford in both directions on Saturdays by December 2018
- enhanced frequency on Sundays between Hereford and Birmingham with at least 5 additional services in each direction by May 2021
- earlier first services between Birmingham and Hereford in both directions on Saturdays by May 2021
- a service quality regime to improve the quality of stations, trains and customer service for passengers

3.4. Snow Hill lines (Worcester – Kidderminster - Birmingham – Stratford-upon-Avon – Leamington)

- carriages will be fully refurbished and supported by an investment in 80 brand new diesel carriages introduced from 2020 dedicated to operating services in and around Birmingham
- additional rush hour services between Stratford-upon-Avon and Dorridge, creating a regular hourly service in both directions between Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham via Solihull from May 2021
- an additional early morning service between Dorridge and Birmingham via Solihull Monday to Friday from December 2018
- enhanced evening frequencies between Birmingham and Kidderminster, Birmingham and Solihull, and Birmingham and Shirley in each direction Monday to Friday by December 2018
- enhanced frequencies by May 2021 on the Snow Hill lines on a Sunday with services from Birmingham increasing to 2 trains per hour to Stratford-upon-Avon, 3 trains per hour to Shirley, 3 trains per hour to Solihull, 6 trains per hour to Stourbridge Junction with 4 extending to Kidderminster
- earlier first services on the Snow Hill lines by May 2021 on a Sunday
- a service quality regime to improve the quality of stations, trains and customer service for passengers

3.5. Stourbridge Town – Stourbridge Junction

- earlier first services between Stourbridge Town and Stourbridge Junction on a Saturday in both directions
- frequency on a Sunday increases from 4 to 6 services an hour by May 2021

3.6. Birmingham – Birmingham International – Coventry – Northampton

- additional services between Rugby and Birmingham Monday to Friday by December 2018
- earlier first service and later last service between Birmingham and Coventry Monday to Saturday by December 2018
- later last service from Birmingham to Rugby and Northampton Monday to Friday by December 2018
- frequency on a Sunday between Birmingham, Rugby and Northampton increases from 1 to 2 services an hour by May 2021

3.7. Birmingham – Wolverhampton – Shrewsbury

- carriages will be fully refurbished and supported by an investment in 80 brand new diesel carriages introduced from 2020 dedicated to operating services in and around Birmingham
- additional services to create a regular all-day twice-hourly service between Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Monday to Saturday by December 2018 in addition to the current hourly service operated by Arriva Trains Wales
- between Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, the new hourly service shall as a minimum call at Wellington, Telford, Shifnal and Codsall
- earlier first service from Wolverhampton to Birmingham, and a later last service from Wolverhampton to Birmingham by December 2018
- a new hourly Sunday West Midlands Franchise service between Shrewsbury and Birmingham, replacing the less frequent Arriva Trains Wales service between Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, with 2 services per hour provided by May 2021
- increased Sunday frequency for stopping services between Birmingham and Wolverhampton increasing from 1 to 2 services an hour by December 2018 and then to 3 services per hour by May 2021
- a service quality regime to improve the quality of stations, trains and customer service for passengers

3.8. Birmingham – Stoke-on-Trent – Crewe

- longer trains providing additional capacity on this busy route
- a new hourly service between Birmingham and Crewe via Stoke-on-Trent from December 2018 providing a regular all-day service for Stone, Kidsgrove and Alsager
- additional calls during the morning and evening rush hours at Stone, Kidsgrove and Alsager compared to today providing direct services to Birmingham
- additional evening services between Birmingham and Crewe via Stoke-on-Trent during the week and at weekends

3.9. Nuneaton – Coventry – Kenilworth – Leamington

- a new hourly service between Coventry and Leamington following the opening of the new station at Kenilworth

- an additional hourly service in each direction between Coventry and Nuneaton following the construction of a new platform at Coventry delivering 2 trains per hour Monday to Friday and Sunday, and 3 trains per hour on a Saturday
- earlier and later services between Coventry and Nuneaton including on Sundays
- a service quality regime to improve the quality of stations, trains and customer service for passengers

3.10. Liverpool – Crewe – Birmingham

- later last service from Birmingham to Liverpool on a Saturday by December 2018
- at least 4 additional station calls at Acton Bridge Monday to Saturday, and a new Sunday service from December 2018
- enhanced Sunday frequency between Birmingham and Liverpool increasing from 1 to 2 services an hour by May 2021
- earlier first services between Birmingham and Liverpool in both directions on a Sunday and a later last service from Birmingham to Liverpool

3.11. London – Crewe

- journey times between London and Crewe via the Trent Valley are reduced from December 2018 as services run fast between Stafford and Crewe
- later last service from London Euston to Crewe via the Trent Valley Monday to Friday by December 2018
- later last service from London Euston to Crewe via the Trent Valley on Saturdays by December 2018
- earlier first service from Crewe to London Euston on Sundays by May 2021