

News story: Faster journeys, more seats and better compensation for passengers in next East Midlands franchise

- biggest upgrade to Midland Main Line in 140 years
- a brand new fleet of bi-mode trains and around 50% more peak-time seats
- a 12-week Cross Country franchise public consultation also launched

Faster intercity journeys, enhanced compensation for delays and more services and seats, are all in the blueprint for the new East Midlands franchise, [Rail Minister Jo Johnson announced today](#) (7 June 2018).

A huge package of benefits for passengers in the region also includes a Stations Improvement Fund and £250,000 of annual funding for community rail partnerships.

The announcement comes at the same time the Department for Transport (DfT) launches a 12-week public [consultation on the next Cross Country franchise](#).

Mr Johnson urged people to contribute to the Cross Country consultation and added that the onus was now on East Midlands franchise bidders to show how they could deliver an ambitious upgrade programme.

Rail Minister Jo Johnson said:

We are investing in the biggest upgrade to the Midland Main Line since it was completed in 1870.

We have listened carefully to what thousands of passengers and stakeholders have said they want to see in the next East Midlands franchise.

We expect the next operator to unlock the unrealised potential while building on its stable foundations.

The new East Midlands operator will also need to:

- increase the frequency of services across the franchise, including an additional train every hour between Corby to London
- provide more trains on a Sunday, with earlier starts and later finishes for many services throughout the week
- provide high quality wi-fi and mobile connectivity on trains
- improve seating and luggage on trains and enhanced facilities at stations
- provide enhanced delay repay compensation for journeys delayed by more

than 15 minutes – compared to 30 minutes now

The public [consultation on the new East Midlands franchise](#) ran from July to October 2017 and generated nearly 2,500 responses.

The next operator is due to take over the franchise in August 2019 and will work closely together with Network Rail to make these transformative changes happen.

The current Cross Country franchise is due to end late next year.

Following the end of the public consultation, details of what bidders for the new franchise will need to provide will be drawn up in the form of an invitation to tender.

Details of the [East Midlands franchise](#) have been published on GOV.UK.

[Have your say on the Cross Country rail franchise consultation.](#)

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