

[Press release: All aboard the new Intercity Express trains that will transform journeys across South Wales](#)

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns was platform-side at London Paddington this morning (16 October) to welcome the first of the brand new £5.7 billion Intercity Express fleet of trains on the Great Western Railway network.

Providing more seats, more frequent trains, and faster, more comfortable journeys the Hitachi built Class 800 Intercity Express Train came into service this morning with trains 800005 and 800006 forming the 10-carriage service operating the 0600 from Bristol Temple Meads to London Paddington.

The new trains have over 24% more seating capacity than the High Speed Train they replace; increased legroom and luggage space, and more tables. A new timetable will be introduced once Network Rail's electrification programme has been completed in early 2019, adding 40% more seats than today and providing quicker, more frequent journeys.

The new Class 800, 10-carriage train built in Britain by Hitachi is expected to cover 803 miles on its first day, with two further five carriage trains (800008 and 800009) running as a second ten carriage service. In total the two trains will cover over 1,550 miles on their first day in service, with the potential to carry over 6,500 passengers.

The trains will benefit from Network Rail's route modernisation programme with electrification already delivered to Maidenhead; congestion-busting upgrades to the railway such as a dive under at Acton to take freight traffic off the mainline; improved stations with longer platforms and transformation of signalling, and track to help improve journeys for passengers.wa

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I'm delighted to see the first passenger service of the Hitachi trains roll out on to the Great Western Railway network. From today, passengers across south and West Wales will experience the benefits of travelling on faster, modern trains with increased capacity, greater comfort and better connectivity.

The UK Government is investing heavily to build a bigger, better railway for Wales, delivering improved journeys for passengers on the most advanced new trains.

Passengers expect and deserve high quality rail services. We are committed to using the best available technology for each part of the network, delivering significant benefits for those who use our railways.

GWR Managing Director Mark Hopwood said:

Today, we at GWR are once again making history, as we launch the first new Intercity Express Train in a generation – and continue to transform rail services across the region.

After much hard work across the rail industry, I am delighted our first IET has successfully completed its first journey in passenger service. Over the next year we will continue to expand the operation of these new trains across the South West and Wales as far as Swansea, including the introduction of another IET fleet specific to Devon and Cornwall next year.

The new trains, alongside our new Electrostar fleet for London and the Thames Valley, will bring about a step change in passenger transport – delivering more seats, and enabling us to operate more frequent and faster services.

Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling, said:

I am delighted to see the first of the new fleet of Intercity Express trains come into service to give Great Western passengers faster, more comfortable trains and better journeys.

The roll-out of these new trains on the Great Western Main Line and the East Coast line shows our commitment to putting passengers at the heart of everything that we do.

This state-of-the-art £5.7bn train fleet will go on to serve passengers from Aberdeen to Swansea, York to London. This is part of a record £40bn investment to transform our railway and deliver better journeys for passengers.

Hitachi Rail Europe Managing Director Karen Boswell said:

We are really proud to have built trains in the UK, designed using Japanese bullet train technology, that are improving passengers' journeys on the Great Western route.

Nine years of hard work has gone into making today happen, from creating a brand new factory and workforce, to establishing modern maintenance facilities from Swansea to London. We've delivered pioneering 21st century trains for passengers to enjoy and sparked a manufacturing renaissance in the North East.

Network Rail's Route Managing Director Western, Mark Langman said:

I am delighted to welcome GWR's fantastic new trains. This is another major step forward in the biggest ever transformation on the Great Western Mainline as we deliver more trains, more seats and better journeys for communities across the route.

It has been a real team effort as Network Rail and GWR staff worked tirelessly to get to this stage. It is an example of track and train working together for the benefit of the passenger and really does herald an exciting time for the railway.

The hard work does not stop here as there is still much more to do all across the route. However, that means there are more exciting days to come with more services in Devon and Cornwall, electrification to Cardiff and Chippenham and the introduction of new Electrostar services between Didcot and London Paddington.

The train departed from Bristol Temple Meads this morning to fireworks, and GWR green spotlights lighting the sky. It was driven by Colin Franklin, a GWR train driver of 19 years.

The new trains will operate initially between South Wales and London Paddington, and between Bristol Temple Meads and London Paddington. As more of the trains are introduced, the new trains will extend to Taunton, and Hereford via Oxford by December, and to Cheltenham by next summer.

The trains are being built at Hitachi's purpose-built £82 million factory in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, by a newly recruited workforce that is over 1,000 strong.

Next year GWR will extend the fleet to serve Devon & Cornwall. A further 36 Intercity Express Trains – (known as Class 802s) has also been ordered from Hitachi to improve services between London Paddington and Exeter, Plymouth and Penzance. These trains are being built to cope with the more demanding geography of Devon and Cornwall and are due in passenger service next summer.

In total Hitachi will deliver 36 x 5 carriage and 21 x 9 carriage Class 800 trains, and 22 x 5 carriage and 14 x 9 carriage Class 802 trains, with the full fleet due in service by December 2018. A significant timetable change in January 2019 will realise the full capacity and frequency benefits the new trains will bring with journey times from Bristol slashed by up to 17 minutes, and by up to 14 minutes from Swansea.

The IETs operate using bi-mode technology, allowing trains to use both diesel and electric power, which is allowing passengers to benefit from the new trains from today.

The Government-led Intercity Express Programme, funded by Agility Trains,

brought together Hitachi Rail, GWR, VTEC and Network Rail to design, develop and build the new class of state-of-the-art, modern trains and supporting depot infrastructure for the Great Western and East Coast routes.