

# 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.](#)

## **Rail media enquiries**

Media enquiries

020 7944 3021

Out of hours media enquiries

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0300 330 3000

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## **[News story: Trade growth top of the agenda on Teesside tour](#)**

The government is committed to giving Teesside every opportunity to expand its trade with the rest of the world, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Liz Truss, said today (7 July 2018) on a visit to Redcar Bulk Terminal.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Liz Truss said:

Teesside is one of the great success stories of the past few years, with trade on the rise and unemployment down.

There are fantastic opportunities out there for businesses looking to expand their exports and as a government we want to do

everything we can to make it as easy as possible for trade to prosper.

Because we know that when trade goes up, so does employment and wages which means more families have more money in their pocket.

With regional airports such as Newcastle and Durham Tees Valley set to benefit from Heathrow expansion, I hope to see exports continuing to rise in the region.

The Teesside tour comes as latest figures show goods exports from the North East were worth £12.9 billion in 2017, up by £1 billion on the previous year.

Analysis shows that as trade rises, so has average pay which is up by nearly 14% in the North East since 2010, the fastest growth of any English region.

Medicines, machinery and transport continue to be most successful exports from the region.

Latest figures show that:

- export goods from the North East of England to North America were worth £1.2 billion in 2017, up from £1 billion the year before
- exports to Asia were worth £1.7 billion, up from £1.5 billion the year before
- trade to the Middle East and North Africa saw a big leap by nearly 20% to £635 million worth of goods

The government set out its final proposals to back Heathrow expansion this week, with legally binding mechanisms in place to reserve take-off slots for regional airports, with Durham Tees Valley airport identified as a beneficiary of the expansion.

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## **[News story: Alun Cairns: “This is a time when the nation needs to come together to secure the best EU Exit for every part of the UK”](#)**

The UK Government will today outline its commitment to protecting the future of Wales’ farming, fishing and environment industries at the first joint Brexit roundtable meeting with the Welsh Government in Cardiff (7 June).

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns MP and the Welsh Government’s Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM will jointly host a

meeting of fishermen, farmers and business in the capital as part of ongoing Government engagement on EU exit.

The 90-minute session in Cardiff will examine issues including how powers returning from the EU should be exercised in future; how such frameworks could best operate in practice and how stakeholders are preparing for Brexit to ensure our food, farming and fishing industries continue to thrive in Wales beyond EU Exit.

**Speaking ahead of the meeting, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

Farming, fisheries and the environment industries are fundamental components of our rural economy and we want to engage with and listen to the industry's experts as we continue on the journey of exiting the EU.

With negotiations well underway, this is a time when the nation needs to come together to secure the best deal for every part of the UK. Today's important meeting is a steadfast sign that both the UK and Welsh Governments are wholly committed to backing these important sectors in Wales which contribute so much to the prosperity of our communities right across the country.

The Ministers will be joined at the meeting by Emily Miles, EU Exit Domestic and Constitutional Affairs Director at the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

The Secretary of State for Wales has also established an Expert Panel to work with him to deliver a smooth and orderly exit from the EU in Wales.

The meeting today builds on the constructive conversations they have already had with UK Government Ministers including the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster David Lidington, Environment Secretary Michael Gove, International Trade Secretary Liam Fox and Minister at the Department for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker.

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## **[Press release: PM meeting with Norwegian Prime Minister: 6 June 2018](#)**

A Downing Street Spokesperson said:

This afternoon the Prime Minister hosted Prime Minister Erna

Solberg for talks at Downing Street.

The Prime Minister welcomed the strong and warm relationship between the UK and Norway. She noted the close partnership between the UK and Norway on defence issues and looked forward to the Joint Expeditionary Force reaching full capability at the end of this month.

The Prime Minister outlined the UK's vision for an ambitious future partnership between the UK and the EU. She and Prime Minister Solberg agreed that we should seek a similar close partnership between the UK and EEA countries and underlined the importance of securing the rights of Norwegian citizens in the UK and UK citizens in Norway following the UK's departure from the EU.

The leaders discussed their shared disappointment at the introduction of US tariffs on steel and aluminium and support for free and fair trade.

On security, they discussed a number of threats to the international rules-based system, including on nuclear non-proliferation and chemical weapons, and agreed on the importance of standing together in the face of these threats. The Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Solberg for Norway's support following the attack in Salisbury.

Finally, the Prime Ministers discussed work on oceans, including plastics and the sustainable use of marine resources. They looked forward to discussing this further in the context of the G7 meeting in Canada and to continuing close cooperation in this area.

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## [News story: Foreign Secretary meets Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

Today, Wednesday 6 June, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in London to discuss the UK Government's commitment to the Iran nuclear deal and its concerns over the deteriorating situation in Gaza.

The Foreign Secretary condemned incitement and rocket fire against Israel. He reiterated the need for Israel to carry out a transparent, independent inquiry into the loss of more than 120 Palestinian lives during the recent Gaza protests, as well as over 10,000 injuries, with approximately 4,000 of

these as a result of live gun fire.

He stressed the UK's firm commitment to a two-state solution as the best way to bring about stability and peace in the region.

### **Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:**

The UK, alongside France and Germany, firmly believes that the Iran nuclear deal is the best way to ensure a safe, secure future for the region.

We are committed to making sure Iran continues to abide by its obligations under the deal and are in full agreement with Israel that we must prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

We are also very concerned by the deaths of over 120 Palestinians in recent weeks and the deteriorating situation in Gaza. The people of Israel and Gaza have the right to live safely in peace, without constant fear for their security.

We continue to press both Israel and the Palestinian Authority on the need to refrain from actions which make peace more difficult. Settlement construction is a significant barrier to achieving this goal, as are terrorism, incitement to violence, and the refusal by some to acknowledge Israel's right to exist.

The UK has an unwavering commitment to Israel's security and stability and we look forward to continuing to work together to achieve our common goals.

### **Further information**

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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