

[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.

[Press release: Nationwide competition brings 5G one step closer](#)

The “5G Testbeds and Trials” competition is part of the UK Government’s £740m National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) to support the next generation of digital infrastructure, including 5G and full fibre broadband.

New test locations are being sought all across the UK to support the future rollout of 5G – ‘fifth generation’ – technology. Government is now encouraging interested parties from all around the UK to come forward with project proposals for match funded grants of up to £5 million.

This 5G innovation boost also comes on the back of the announcement that by the end of this year a government investment of £1.7 billion will have supported the rollout of superfast broadband to 95% of the UK.

5G will enable internet speeds to keep up with the increasing numbers of devices that require a connection, in particular the explosion of smart devices in the home and the ‘internet of things’. With potential speeds of up to 10 gigabits per second, it will also make it easier for people to rapidly download and upload ultra HD and 3D video.

Minister for Digital Matt Hancock said:

To stay competitive we must be at the cutting edge of new technology and we are determined to be one of the first countries in the world to use 5G. In these very early stages we want all ideas, from all parts of the country, that will help us get the technology and the roll-out right to have a nationwide network of 5G innovators.

It’s all part of our determination to make Britain the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business, and deliver for all citizens now and in the years to come.

In the 2016 Autumn Statement, the Government announced its intention to invest in a nationally coordinated programme of 5G testbed facilities and application trials, as part of a £1bn package of announcements made to boost the UK’s digital infrastructure. The Future Connectivity Challenge Group report suggests that UK leadership in 5G could result in the opportunity to

create £173 billion of incremental UK GDP growth over a ten year period from 2020 to 2030

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Andrew Jones, MP said:

Improving productivity requires targeted and sustained investment, which is why we are backing the UK's digital infrastructure with over a billion pounds of government funding. Whether we are doing business online or the weekly grocery shop online, strong and reliable connections are crucial to this.

Today's announcement is a big step forward in bringing 5G to the UK and ensuring our digital infrastructure is fit for the future.

Projects are expected to be industry-led or have a strong industry component and funding will only be available to UK registered organisations, carrying out projects in the UK and working in collaboration with others.

Details on how to apply are available [online](#)

Notes to Editors

1. IHS Economics / IHS Technology estimated by modelling industry investment and impacts on total factor productivity from expected use cases that 5G will enable USD\$12.3 trillion of global economic output in 2035.
2. This first funding competition is for Phase 1 of initial testbeds and trials projects that will help to develop the UK's "5G ecosystem" whether by exploring the potential for 5G to deliver benefits for businesses; developing new 5G applications and services; developing and exploring new business models around key 5G technologies; or reducing the commercial risks associated with investment in 5G.
3. Details of future funding opportunities for additional testbeds and trials will be available as the programme develops. It is likely that future funding will also include large multi-year projects that could be focused in areas that align with the Government's strategic priorities or which help to address deployment or technical challenges that help to deliver the objectives of the Government's 5G strategy.

[News story: All aboard the new Intercity Express trains that will](#)

transform journeys across Britain

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling hailed the start of a new era in rail passenger services when he travelled on the first of the new fleet of £5.7 billion Intercity Express trains from Bristol Temple Meads to London Paddington today (16 October 2017), joined by Great Western Railway (GWR) bosses and commuters.

The fleet, which is being built at Hitachi Rail Europe's manufacturing facility at Newton Aycliffe in County Durham, will be rolled out across the Great Western and East Coast lines over the next 3 years. The manufacturing facility at Newton Aycliffe has created more than 700 new direct jobs and more at depots across the routes, as well as supporting the UK supply chain. And more than 70% of the parts sourced for building the trains at the facility come from UK suppliers.

Tim Bowles, West of England Mayor, Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport and Alun Cairns, Secretary of State for Wales at Paddington.

Today's launch is the beginning of a huge change for passengers that will deliver more than 4,000 extra seats into London Paddington in the morning peak from 2018, and more than 12,000 extra seats into London Kings Cross by the end of 2020.

Jobs and skills

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

This government is investing record amounts to modernise Britain's rail network and give passengers the faster, more comfortable trains and the better journeys that they expect.

These new state-of-the-art trains show our commitment to put passengers at the heart of everything that we do and will carry people across Britain, from Swansea to Aberdeen and London to Inverness.

Our railways are a huge success but passengers rightly expect improved services and better trains – and only last week I announced another [£48 billion for the network from 2019](#) that will focus on better maintenance to dramatically improve reliability.

I'm pleased to be on the very first of these brand new trains to welcome them into action.

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 almost 40 years – and continue our journey to revalue rail in the hearts and minds of the travelling public.

I am delighted to have this first train in passenger service. Over the next year we will continue to expand the operation of these new trains, including the introduction of another fleet specific to Devon and Cornwall.

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.

The new trains are a renewal of the ageing Intercity 125 fleet, which was first introduced in 1976, and they will go on to replace fleets across the country. The government-led Intercity Express Programme (IEP), funded by Agility Trains, has brought together Hitachi Rail, GWR, Virgin Trains East Coast 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.

Karen Boswell, Managing Director, Hitachi Rail Europe, said:

We, at Hitachi Rail, 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.

[New intercity express trains](#)

The first services of the 57 new Class 800 Hitachi trains are being introduced from now into 2018 and will mark the start of the biggest fleet upgrade in a generation for GWR as the InterCity 125 fleet is replaced. Once completed in 2018, trains will then be introduced on the East Coast Mainline.

Agility Trains is working in partnership with the Department for Transport to develop the IEP. Agility Trains West, which is funding the fleet entering service with GWR, is made up of Hitachi Rail Europe, John Laing Group and John Laing Infrastructure Fund.

Press release: Government outlines plan to become the UK's most inclusive employer by 2020

The Civil Service Diversity & Inclusion Strategy outlines a range of ambitious proposals to achieve this aim, including:

- to build a dedicated ethnic minority programme to improve the representation of ethnic minority staff at the most senior levels across the Civil Service;
- to create a Diverse Leadership Task Force that will report to the Cabinet Secretary;
- to publish a data dashboard tracking progress on diversity and inclusion targets by April 2018;
- to establish a new framework for measuring inclusion;
- to embed diversity and inclusion in Single Departmental Plans.

The Civil Service has already made significant progress towards increasing the diversity of its workforce. Introducing measures such as anonymised recruitment and making Permanent Secretaries accountable to the Head of the Civil Service for improving diversity and inclusion have made a positive difference to the amount of under-represented groups in the Civil Service.

On gender whilst 42% of current Senior Civil Servants are women, in 2017, 49% of all new recruits into the SCS were women. The proportion of women at Senior Civil Service level (42%) is now greater than the representation of female executives and Board Directors in FTSE 100 companies (26%).

The proportion of ethnic minority civil servants has increased rapidly from 9.4% in 2012 to 11.2% today, and representation of disabled people within the Civil Service has increased every year since 2010, from 7.6% to 9.9% in 2017. Only 4.6% of Senior Civil Servants are from ethnic minority communities, however, and only 3.3% report having a disability, so there is more to be done.

Speaking today at the launch of the strategy, Caroline Nokes, Minister for Government Resilience and Efficiency, said:

The Civil Service leads the way on diversity in many ways. The gender pay gap is lower than in the private sector, we have significantly increased our representation of minority groups at every level, and our award winning Fast Stream programme is now broadly representative of the wider population in terms of diversity characteristics and social background. We are committed to driving this further, however, and I am proud that we are putting inclusion at the forefront of our agenda and for the Civil Service to act as a leading light for other organisations across

the UK.

Cabinet Secretary Jeremy Heywood said:

In order to serve the country to the best of its ability, the Civil Service must ensure that it reflects the diversity of the UK. Having a diverse workforce is not enough though, if it is to be truly brilliant, the Civil Service must strive to be inclusive and must create an environment where differences of thought and outlook are not only respected, but expected.

Although progress has been considerable over the past few years, today's strategy highlights how we must go further. Our ambition to become the most inclusive employer by 2020 is testament to our commitment to diversity and inclusion and to making the best use of talent that exists in all parts of society.

John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary, added:

There are many studies and reports that evidence that diverse and inclusive organisations perform better and have happier people. The Civil Service, in order to ensure that it delivers the best quality service to the taxpayer, has a duty to attract and retain the best people from all corners of society. Our commitment to becoming the most inclusive employer in the UK by 2020 should also set an example to other public and private sector organisations.

[News story: PM call with Chancellor Merkel: 15 October 2017](#)

A Downing Street spokesperson said,

The Prime Minister spoke to Chancellor Merkel earlier this morning.

They discussed Iran and President Trump's decision not to recertify the nuclear deal. They agreed the UK and Germany both remained firmly committed to the deal. They also agreed the international community needed to continue to come together to push back against

Iran's destabilising regional activity, and to explore ways of addressing concerns about Iran's ballistic missile programme. They agreed to discuss further at the European Council in Brussels next week.

They looked ahead to next week's Council, agreeing on the importance of continued constructive progress in the UK's exit negotiations.