



Department
for Transport

Lilian Greenwood MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: chris.grayling@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Dear Lilian,

10 August 2017

Award of West Midlands Rail Franchise

This morning I announced our intention to award the West Midlands rail franchise to West Midlands Trains Ltd (a joint venture between Abellio, East Japan Railway Company and Mitsui & Co Ltd).

This award will inject nearly £1bn of investment in rail services across the West Midlands network meaning passengers can look forward to new longer trains with more seats and more space. There will also be improved passenger information and accessibility standards, more services at weekends and evenings, flexible ticketing for part-time workers, better compensation, free WiFi, station upgrades and an innovative staff gainshare scheme will all contribute to a significantly enhanced passenger experience across the entire network.

The Midlands is responsible for over a fifth of the UK's total manufacturing capability, with the service sector accounting for over four million jobs and worth around £158 billion a year. It is a dynamic region where there are now 327,200 more people in employment than there were in 2010, increasing the Midlands economy by £32.9 billion. This has shaped the plans for the new West Midlands franchise and will also inform our investments in the next East Midlands franchise, the consultation for which was launched last month. Please do encourage your constituents to participate.

The plans for the new franchise have been built around demands expressed by passengers during the public consultation, and have been developed jointly with West Midlands Rail Limited (WMR), a consortium of 16 local councils. This local collaboration will continue throughout the period of the franchise.

In line with my vision for the future of rail in the UK, the franchise also includes plans for West Midlands Trains to work collaboratively with Network Rail. Integrated teams will drive higher performance, achieve greater productivity in operations, improve maintenance delivery and infrastructure renewals, and support infrastructure improvement delivery, all for the benefit of passengers.

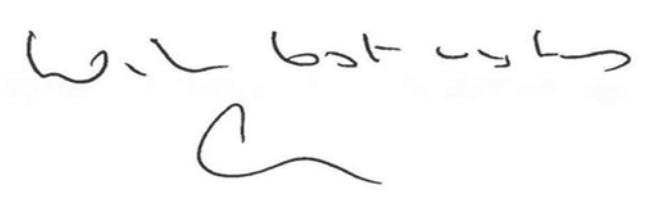
Full details of the investment plans are available in my Department's press release, but the highlights include:

- £700m of investment in new and refurbished trains to improve services;
- There will be 400 new carriages rolled out by 2021 and space for an extra 85,000 additional passengers on rush hour services in Birmingham and London, with the longer trains providing extra seats and space for passengers;
- The phased introduction of new and additional services at weekends and evenings on key routes;
- A reduction in the period of prior notice for passenger assistance from 24 to 12 hours by Jan 2020, and to 4 hours by Jan 2021;
- Expansion of smart ticketing, a new smart card product and flexible fares for part-time workers;
- Free Wi-Fi on all main line services by the end of 2019;
- Enhanced passenger compensation delays of more than 15 minutes;
- 1,000 new car park spaces, more seats, new waiting shelters and rooms, and more than 2,500 new cycle storage spaces;
- £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; and
- Funding to support more Community Rail Partnerships and the regeneration of available station space.

Passenger numbers have doubled since privatisation, and this Government is funding the biggest investment in rail since Victorian times. The award of this new franchise is the latest step in making journeys better: simpler, faster and more reliable.

The award of the new West Midlands franchise is terrific news for the region, and it underpins the Government's determination to continue investing for the benefit of passengers, communities and the local economies that rely so heavily on their rail serves.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the libraries of both Houses.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Grayling", with a large, stylized flourish underneath. The signature is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT