



Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street and West Midlands Railway managing director Ian McConnell with a Class 730 train at Walsall station

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New era of rail travel to begin as West Midlands Railway unveils electric train fleet

A new era is set to begin for rail passengers in the West Midlands after West Midlands Railway unveiled its brand new fleet of electric trains.

The Class 730 fleet will enter service in the region for the first time next week, carrying passengers between Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Walsall. Later this year, in spring, the fleet will also enter service on the busy Cross City Line, connecting Lichfield, Birmingham, Redditch and Bromsgrove.

A special event to showcase the fleet, which is made up of 48 three-carriage trains – a total of 144 new carriages - was held at Wolverhampton Station this morning (Thu 8 Feb).

The Class 730s, built in the Midlands by Alstom, are part of a £700m investment in new fleets and infrastructure by West Midlands Railway and bring a significant capacity increase on the trains they replace. The trains also feature accessible toilets, digital information screens, air conditioning, underfloor heating and power points at every seat.

Ian McConnell, managing director of West Midlands Railway, said:

“These modern electric trains represent a huge upgrade to the experience of travelling by train in the West Midlands.

“Not only are the Class 730s physically longer than the trains they replace, meaning they can carry more people, the carriage interiors have been designed in a spacious, metro-style to maximise space.

“With modern features such as digital information screens, power points at every seat and accessible toilets, I am certain they will prove popular and our teams are looking forward to welcoming customers on board.”

Dominic Booth, chief executive of Transport UK Group, said:

“Today marks the dawn of a new era in rail travel for passengers on West Midlands Railway.

“As we modernise Britain’s trains, this new state-of-the-art electric fleet offers a better journey experience for commuters and leisure travellers.

“As we work towards a more efficient, accessible, and sustainable rail network across the entire Transport UK group it’s fantastic to see these new Class 730’s being rolled out today.”

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said:

“It’s good news that we’re seeing this £700million investment by West

Midlands Trains continuing as we work together to make our rail network fit for the future.

“These new trains will make a real difference to passengers right across our region - boosting capacity on some of our busiest routes.

“With new stations under construction and the recent announcement that Pay As You Go technology is coming down the track, the future is looking bright for rail travel in the West Midlands.”

Nick Crossfield, managing director of Alstom UK & Ireland, said:

“Today is a proud day for everyone involved as our Derby-designed and built trains enter passenger service across the West Midlands. Part of the Aventra family – the country’s biggest train manufacturing programme in a generation – this state-of-the-art train exemplifies Alstom’s commitment to smart and sustainable mobility.

“Working in partnership with West Midlands Railway we are delighted to provide passengers across the region with a cutting-edge and comfortable travel experience that offers a much greener alternative to the car. We now look forward to seeing the Class 730 enter service on the Cross City Line later this year, where our trains will double capacity for customers.”

In addition to the three-carriage Class 730s, a further 36 five-carriage versions of the fleet are currently going through testing with West Midlands Railway’s sister company London Northwestern Railway. These trains will come into service next winter on longer-distance routes, connecting the West Midlands with Liverpool and London.

Ends

Notes to Editors

The new Class 730 fleet will increase capacity on the following routes:

Wolverhampton-Walsall (in service from February 2024)

Existing fleet (Class 350, per four carriages) – 270 seated, 117 standing, total capacity 387

New fleet (Class 730, per three carriages) – 201 seated, 345 standing, total capacity 546

Cross City Line (in service from Spring 2024)

Existing fleet (Class 323, per three carriages) – 277 seated, 120 standing, total capacity 397

New fleet (Class 730, per three carriages) – 201 seated, 345 standing, total capacity 546

More information about the Class 730 fleet is available on www.wmr.uk/newtrains

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast Main Line to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

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