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West Midlands Railway: New trains enter service on Birmingham's iconic Cross City Line

Passengers on Birmingham's iconic Cross City Line have been travelling on a brand new train fleet for the first time today (Monday 15 April).

Train operator West Midlands Railway (WMR) said the introduction of the Class 730 fleet represents the start of a new era for rail travel on the line, which is used by millions of passengers every year and connects Birmingham with destinations including Lichfield, Redditch and Bromsgrove.

The new fleet, part of WMR's £1billion investment in new trains and infrastructure, can carry a third more passengers than the 30-year-old fleet they are replacing. The fleet is made up of 48 three-carriage trains in total – making a total of 144 new carriages - and are part of a £1billion investment in new trains and infrastructure by WMR. Features include spacious interior with walk-through carriages, accessible toilets, WiFi and power points at every seat.

Ian McConnell, West Midlands Railway managing director, said: “The introduction of this modern new train fleet marks the start of a new era for our customers on the Cross City Line.

“With extra space and modern features such as digital information screens and power points, the fleet will make a huge difference to millions of journeys across the West Midlands every year.

“The rollout of the Class 730s onto this key Birmingham commuter route is a vital part of our £1billion investment in new trains and infrastructure as we continue modernising our rail network.”

Rail Minister Huw Merriman said: “I’m delighted that passengers travelling on the Cross City Line will now do so on a brand-new fleet of trains, enhancing the passenger experience for the millions who rely on the line each year whilst boosting capacity for one of the country’s busiest commuter routes.

“Replacing ageing rolling stock is crucial to the sustainability, reliability and growth of our network by encouraging more people to travel by rail and I’m pleased passengers in the West Midlands will benefit from this investment for years to come.”

The Cross City Line is one of the busiest commuter routes in the country outside London, with millions of passenger journeys made every year. The line connects major conurbations across the West Midlands including Lichfield, Sutton Coldfield, Longbridge, Bromsgrove and Redditch. As well as serving Birmingham New Street, the line is also home to the recently redeveloped University station, which is used by millions of passengers annually.

The Class 730 fleet will be phased into service on the Cross City Line over the

spring and summer months as the existing Class 323 trains are withdrawn from service. This means the line will be served by a mixture of Class 730s and Class 323s trains for the next few months, with the transition expected to be fully complete by the autumn.

The first Class 730 train in passenger service on the Cross City Line was today's 6.06am departure from Birmingham New Street to Lichfield Trent Valley. All Class 730s on the Cross City Line will run in pairs, meaning every train will have six carriages and capacity for more than 1,000 passengers.

For more information on the fleet, built by Midlands-based manufacturers Alstom, visit our website at www.wmr.uk/newtrains

Ends

Notes to Editors

Comparison: Class 730 fleet capacity

Cross City Line (in service from Monday 15 April 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

Wolverhampton-Walsall (entered service in 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

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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