

West Midlands Trains

Business Update

November 2018

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Welcome...

Welcome to the first edition of West Midlands Trains Business Update.

There will be a new issue every eight weeks, which will keep you informed in a real and honest way about developments to local rail services across our network.

We will be making £1bn worth of improvements to services over the course of our franchise. This will mean new trains, more capacity and better connectivity for passengers.

In recent months, we have made significant steps towards bringing the Class 230 units into service between Bedford and Bletchley. This is an exciting development, that will increase capacity on the Marston Vale Line.

The roll-out of the new West Midlands Railway (WMR) and London Northwestern Railway (LNR) liveries has also been gathering pace in recent weeks. A WMR purple and orange livery is being put onto stock we are keeping beyond 2021. A 'light' version is then being used on units that we intend to replace.

As we approach the end of the first year of our franchise we can look back at some great achievements already. We have a new station opened at Kenilworth, electric trains to Bromsgrove, and have been able to bring together our hard working team of station adopters for a fantastic day on the Severn Valley Railway.

Thank you for all your input and support so far. There is so much more to come.

Francis Thomas

Head of Corporate Affairs

Class 230s for the Marston Vale Line

Work is ongoing to introduce Class 230 units on the line between Bedford and Bletchley, however, the units are now not expected to start operating until early next year.

We have been working tirelessly with Vivarail to bring the overhauled units into service for the December timetable change. However, we have been informed by Vivarail, that due to technical issues with the first train, the knock-on effect means the three will not be ready in time.

Vivarail remains confident that the full fleet will be ready for service in the New Year. They have assured all users of the Marston Vale line that they take full responsibility for the delay and have thanked all those involved in the project for their invaluable support during the testing and implementation process.

This was disappointing news, but we want to reassure passengers that we will continue to run the Bedford – Bletchley service with existing trains until the Vivarail units are available.

The Class 230 programme is an innovative scheme that will deliver many benefits to local rail users and

Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde and Adrian Shooter, CEO of Vivarail at Long Marston depot.



we will continue to support Vivarail in bringing this new concept to the Marston Vale Line.

Adrian Shooter, CEO of Vivarail, said, "My experience in the rail industry means I am fully aware of the problems that can occur when introducing new trains and that one unforeseen event can easily overturn months or even years of planning. That is the case here and at Vivarail we hold our hands up to that fact.

"However, I am confident that my team will deliver the finished trains with a minimal delay and allow London Northwestern Railway to bring them into service soon.

"I know that there is a great deal of anticipation to see the Class 230s in service and I am confident that the short wait will be worth it."

Winter timetable postponed

We are disappointed to be unable to implement the major improvements planned for our December 2018 timetable change.

When the decision was taken in July this year, we had already put a lot of work and preparation into the timetable improvements, and were on schedule to deliver this December as planned.

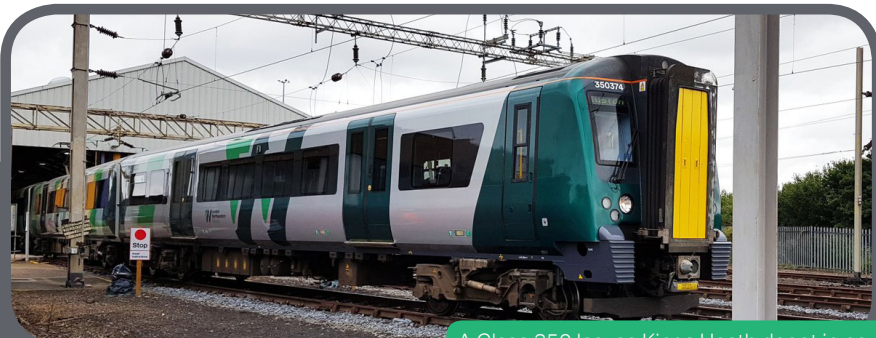
We are disappointed that we will not be able to go forward with these plans until May next year, but understand that the decision was made to reflect the network wide situation.

The new West Midlands Trains timetable, when it does come into effect, will benefit thousands of

passengers, with extra trains and new journey opportunities. It is also designed to support the progress and prosperity of the regions we serve.

A range of improvements are planned across our network to provide better connections for customers, which are now due to come into place in May 2019 instead.

These changes include new cross-Birmingham services, with improved connectivity to London Euston and Birmingham International from Liverpool Lime Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Crewe and Rugeley Trent Valley / Walsall.



A Class 350 leaves Kings Heath depot in new London Northwestern Railway livery

We will also be introducing electric services on the Chase Line, and a more frequent service to and from Shrewsbury (including Sundays). A through service is also planned to run between Nuneaton, Coventry and Leamington Spa.



Left to right: Ken Pollock (Worcestershire County Council), Richard Brooks (WMT), Cllr Roger Lawrence (West Midlands Rail Executive) & Richard Dugdale (Network Rail)



Kenilworth station official opening

On 20 July, Kenilworth station was officially opened by the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling MP. After over 50 years without a station following the closure of the original building in 1965, the new Kenilworth station opened in April 2018, with an hourly service between Coventry and Leamington Spa.

New services for Bromsgrove

Commuters at Bromsgrove now have up to three additional trains per hour to Birmingham, following the completion of work to electrify the line.

The additional services launched on 29 July, meaning that there are now up to five trains per hour between Bromsgrove and Birmingham New Street during the peak and between two and four trains per hour in the off-peak.

This equates to 132 trains a day operating to and from Bromsgrove, up from 45 previously.

To compliment the new services, we

approached new customers through a door-to-door travel advice service and pop-up events.

Richard Brooks, customer experience director for West Midlands railway said: "Our customers in Bromsgrove are benefitting immensely from these new services – with far more choice of when and where they can travel.

"Not only are we offering more trains to and from central Birmingham, but also to many other destinations on our network that were previously not served directly from Bromsgrove."



Improved leaf fall timetable for Cross City commuters

This year's autumn timetable for services from Lichfield, through Birmingham New Street to Redditch and Bromsgrove, has been designed to reduce disruption for commuters travelling to and from Birmingham.

The timetable will operate until Friday 7 December 2018, with some trains having an amended stopping pattern on weekdays.

From Mondays to Fridays, trains heading towards Birmingham New Street to arrive before 0930, will call at all stations. Trains heading out of the city after 1530 will also call at all stops. A normal timetable will also operate at weekends.



Partners in the new Wolverhampton interchange project, including WMT commercial director, Andy Camp, meet with West Midlands Mayor Andy Street for the start of the demolition work



Demolition starts at Wolverhampton

On 28 September work began on the demolition of Wolverhampton station.

It's part of a £150 million transport hub being built on the site to provide an attractive new train, bus and tram interchange.

The scheme has been designed in two phases to ensure we can continue to run train services as normal during the works.

The erection of the first section of the new station building will open to customers by autumn 2019. Phase 2 of the programme will involve the demolition of the remainder of the current station and completing the new build.

The new state-of-the-art railway station will fully open in summer 2020.

Across our network

Open days inspire the next generation

Over the past few months, we've been opening our doors to rail enthusiasts and members of the public to see behind-the-scenes at some of our depots.

On Saturday 13 October, we offered behind-the-scenes tours of our Kings Heath maintenance depot in Northampton. Visitors were able to see a Class 350 unit up on jacks, take a walk underneath a train in the maintenance pit and sit in a driver's cab.

At the same time, the National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR) also opened its doors for tours as part of Rail Week 2018 and Government initiative, 'Year of Engineering'.

We were also able to support the Vintage Trains annual open day at their Tyseley facility,

which took place on Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 September. As visitors arrived to tour the heritage railway depot, we were able to greet them with some of our newly liveried units, with staff on hand to answer any questions people might have about our trains and the railway.

Neil Bamford, engineering director said, "We want to give the local community, and particularly our younger visitors, a real insight into the technology, innovation and expertise that's involved in running a fleet of trains. With record levels of investment being made into the rail network, it's really important that we inspire the next generation of railway employees."



Changes to lost property retrieval

In December, we'll begin rolling out a new system for recovering lost property across our network.

Since the start of our franchise, we have been assessing the policy that we inherited, to come up with more effective ways of reuniting customers with their misplaced items.

The new system will benefit colleagues, with an intuitive app loaded onto their company phones, which allows them to log found property easily, straight onto a central database.

Passengers are then able to search for their lost items online, receive notifications for when an item is found, and to arrange return – without needing to make numerous, time consuming phone calls.

A review has also been ongoing regarding lost property charges as part of the planned changes.

Travelling without boundaries

London Northwestern Railway has featured in a unique exhibition celebrating the freedom of train travel for those facing a range of accessibility challenges. Artist and passenger, Emma Johns, was part of a group of artists who produced pieces for the National Rail 'No Boundaries' display.

The project highlighted the benefits and freedom of using the railway and looked to challenge the concerns people may have about using the network.

Emma travelled on London Northwestern Railway services to and from her home in Long Buckby as part of her journey to and from St Ives in Cornwall, and used her experience as inspiration for a piece of art which featured in the exhibition.



"It's great to know that rail companies are making such an effort for people with physical disabilities and also for those with disabilities that perhaps aren't so obvious. I know there's a long way to go, especially with provision for people who use wheelchairs, but I think the train journey can be all about a sense of freedom when it works."

Emma Johns
Aspiring artist and ADHD sufferer



The 'Ask Annie A Team' meeting at West Midlands Trains head office for a feedback session.

Travel assistance for the over 65s

Volunteers over the age of 65 are being encouraged to sign-up to a trial of a new personalised travel assistant in the West Midlands.

Ask-Annie is a new journey planning service, providing tailored itineraries across all modes of public transport. A dedicated phone line helps customers discuss specific details for any journey, including accessibility requirements, personal preferences and the use of concessionary passes.

West Midlands Trains and Viaqgio are working together on the project, which is continuing to recruit volunteers for its ongoing trial.

Anyone interested should call **0808 169 1701** or visit **www.ask-annie.co.uk**

Goodbye Andrew Conroy

Andrew Conroy, customer experience director for London Northwestern Railway has recently left the business. We wish Andrew every success for the future and are currently in the process of recruiting his replacement.

Inaugural Transport Integration Forum is a great success

Transport providers, businesses, local authorities and community groups came together earlier this summer at our inaugural Transport Integration Forum. The event was a unique opportunity to explore ways to improve connectivity and travel integration issues.

A variety of topics were covered, including station travel planning, improving 'Access for All', investment in car and cycle parking, development planning and incentives for businesses.

There was also a look at how Community Rail can support integrated transport planning, by placing our stations at the heart of local communities.



We have now appointed Jon Harris as **Integrated Transport and Accessibility Manager**.

Jon will be responsible for leading on station travel planning, other integration projects, equality, access for all and sustainable development.

If you have any questions, contact Jon at **jon.harris@wmtrains.co.uk**.

180 years of trains between London and Birmingham



On Monday 17 September, commuters at London Euston and Birmingham New Street were surprised with special giveaways to celebrate 180 years since the first train to operate on the route.

180 years on, and 180 trains now run on the line each day.

Morning commuters at London Euston enjoyed a free breakfast, and evening commuters leaving Birmingham on the 1833 service to London were presented with free tickets for a journey of their choice.



Northampton Male Voice Choir and duty station manager Cheryl Harrison

The railway is alive with the sound of singing

Railway stations across the network were alive with the sound of local choirs for this year's nationwide BBC Music Day celebrations.

On Friday 28 September, we were honoured to be asked to host two concerts at our stations – one at Northampton and another Milton Keynes.

At Northampton, morning travellers were entertained by Northampton Male Voice Choir. The performance was such a success that future events are being planned at the station on the run up to Christmas.

At Milton Keynes, ladies a cappella group, Junction 14, performed for those heading home in the evening.

The group also used the opportunity to raise £580 for Medical Detection Dogs.

There were also events taking place elsewhere on our network at Hereford, Shrewsbury, Stoke-on-Trent, Coventry, Birmingham New Street and in the square outside Birmingham Snow Hill.

Centennial celebrations all round!

100 years of the RAF

On Sunday 9 September, Stone station took part in celebrating 100 years of the Royal Air Force.

Members of the local Stone and Stafford branches of the Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) took their turn in travelling with a commemorative RAF token as part of it's journey across the country. The token, one of three in total, arrived in Stone on Sunday 2 September. The tokens will finish their journey at the Birmingham Military Tattoo on 24 November.



Widney Manor marks 100 years of rights for women

Station adopters at Widney Manor have been celebrating the centenary of the Suffragette movement, with a themed display on the station platform.

The group, who are all members of Soroptimist International Solihull & District Club, created special planters with flowers and foliage in Suffragette colours, purple, white and green. They also set up a display of photos and memories in the station windows to help educate passengers about the journey to women's rights over past 100 years.



Saying thank you to our station adopters



We would love to welcome more adopters to come on board. See below for the details of our new heads of stakeholder and community who will be able to provide further information for any groups or individuals who are interested in joining us.

This summer, we had the privilege of being able to celebrate the hard work and dedication of our station adopters, with a day out on the **Severn Valley Railway**.

On Thursday 28 June, 85 volunteers enjoyed a return journey from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth as a thank you for their efforts in brightening up stations across our network.

We currently have around 150 station adopters working at our stations, and it is fantastic to see such a range of community projects taking place, from gardening, to art installations and engaging with local schools.

As well as being a day for volunteers to relax and enjoy a scenic journey through the countryside, the event was also a great opportunity for adopters meet together, share ideas and discuss their plans for the future.

Stakeholder Survey - coming soon

Early 2019, we will be issuing our first 'Stakeholder feedback survey'.

By sharing your views, you'll be helping us to address the issues important to you.

New community partnerships

Getting closer to communities is a major part of how we do business.

Since the start of the year, we have already supported a number of organisations and will be highlighting the work of these over the coming months and in future WMT Business Update issues.

Eastside Projects



Introducing...

We would like to introduce two new members of our team – our heads of stakeholder and community for West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway.

They will be the main point of contact for anything relating to community rail and station adoption.



Vicky Cropper
London Northwestern Railway
vicky.cropper@wmtrains.co.uk



Fay Easton
West Midlands Railway
fay.easton@wmtrains.co.uk

How we're performing

Over the past two periods, PPM came in below target, but with consistent fleet performance.

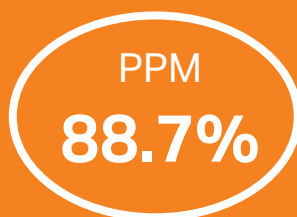
During P6, a number of level crossing issues on the Snow Hill lines, including a lorry strike near Stourbridge, led to an afternoon of widespread alterations to services on the route.

Period 7 was slightly more challenging. Signalling problems at the recently renewed Wembley Junction caused significant delays and cancellations on the West Coast mainline. In addition, on a separate occasion, a fire alarm at Rugby Rail Operating Centre led to an extended evacuation of the signal box. This left a number of trains stranded on routes via Stafford and Crewe.

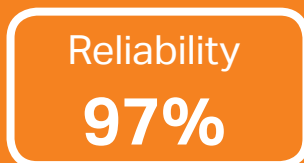
Over both periods, fatalities and axle counter failures contributed to dips in performance, particularly on London Northwestern Railway routes.

We are continuing to work closely with Network Rail and Samaritans to help reduce the number of fatalities on the railway. We will be featuring some of the latest campaigns in future issues.

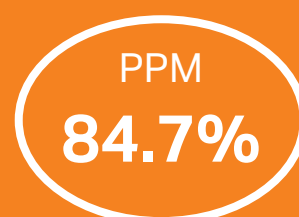
Period 6
19 Aug - 15 Sept



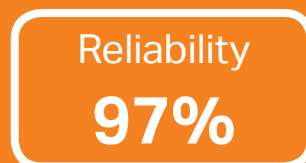
MMA
85.8%



Period 7
16 Sept - 13 Oct



MMA
85.6%



Key

- PPM (*Public Performance Measure*) is the % of trains arriving within five minutes of their advertised times.
- MMA (*Moving Annual Average*) is the average PPM over the last year to date
- Reliability is the % of trains that ran for the whole of their journey.



Operated by West Midlands Trains

Get in touch

We hope you find this West Midlands Trains Business Update useful and informative. If you would like to speak with our Corporate Affairs team for more information, please contact:

corporate.affairs@wmtrains.co.uk / 0330 095 5150

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