

First Great Western Becomes Great Western Railway as Part of Historic Re-brand

Railway company First Great Western has been re-named Great Western Railway (GWR) as it marks the biggest investment in the railways since Brunel. The re-brand is centred on the company's commitment to putting its people and customers first.

Inspired by the legacy of Brunel, the new branding is a modern adaptation of the traditional Great Western Railway look and feel, drawing on its 182-year-old heritage to inspire a new identity. As part of the new look, travellers will soon be able to see refreshed branding, new uniforms and the phased introduction of new train liveries.

Central to GWR's activity is an improvement package, put together with the Department of Transport (DfT), which will deliver huge benefits to passengers in terms of journey times, capacity and reliability. Alongside the ongoing £7.5 billion investment in improvements to the rail network, a massive fleet upgrade will see new or more modern trains, all with free WiFi, on every area of the network by December 2018. During the same time frame, the addition of new trains will slash the average age of First Great Western's train fleet by more than half – and also help to create three million additional seats across the network.

A major timetable change in December 2018 will see quicker train journeys across the route with a reduction of journey times between South Wales, Bristol and London, shaving travel time into Bristol by up to 17 minutes and Cardiff by up to 14 minutes.

These new services will also see more direct trains into Devon and double the number of trains into and out of Cornwall. This will be supported by 100 extra members of customer-facing staff, and the introduction of dedicated Customer Ambassadors at key stations across the route to help customers with local information, directions and onward travel options.

Local businesses also stand to benefit as a result of being better connected to new and prosperous markets. Independent research conducted for the South West Economic Regional Development Agency (now LEPs) has shown that electrification will boost the South West economy by £120m per year alone.

Great Western Railway Managing Director, Mark Hopwood said: "This investment represents a historic milestone for us and so it was a perfect opportunity to launch the Great Western Railway once again. We are committed to improving the journeys of our passengers, as well as the economic prosperity and social footprint of the regions and communities we serve. It's a new dawn for our railway and we're excited to be at the helm."

Local communities along the Great Western Railway service will also benefit from financial support. A £2.2m Customer and Communities Improvement Fund, which will support areas of the railway where there is a real social need will be deployed, as well as a commitment to redevelop branch lines, offer free travel to jobseekers on their way to interviews and introduce a paid work placement programme for the long term unemployed.

FirstGroup Chief Executive Tim O'Toole said: "FirstGroup is the proud operator of GWR, a railway steeped in years of tradition, and our new brand for the franchise represents this strong heritage."

"We will be using our unrivalled knowledge and experience of the network to help deliver significant upgrades over the next few years and are already working closely with the DfT and Network Rail to deliver the initial phases of a £7.5bn investment programme to transform a key part of the country's transport infrastructure.

"Under our experienced management, the franchise will see new or refurbished trains on every part of the network, resulting in more frequent and faster journeys and an increase in the number of seats, keeping people moving and communities prospering across the GWR network."

Customers can find out more about the planned improvements at

<https://www.gwr.com/about-us/building-a-greater-west?rd=fgw>

Notes to editors:

Fleet upgrade summary

In total, the fleet and timetable changes proposed will mean three million extra seats a year on the network by December 2018.

New Super Express Trains will start taking over long distance services between London, Bristol and South Wales and the Cotswolds from summer 2017, unlocking 45 more services a day between London and Bristol, and cutting journey times into South Wales and Oxford and beyond.

New electric trains for the Thames Valley

In addition, 37 new and as-new four-carriage Class 387 and 21 four-carriage Class 365 electric trains – predominantly operating in eight- and 12-carriage formations – will replace the current train fleet on electrified routes into London from the Thames Valley from spring 2016 onwards. This will increase the number of seats for commuters travelling in the high peak by 25% from spring 2017.

More modern trains for west commuters

These new electric suburban fleets will mean that we are able to replace our smallest, oldest and least reliable diesel trains with more modern Turbo trains from the Thames Valley. They will drive a fleet cascade in which passengers in key cities will see significant improvements in capacity on local suburban services. There will be a 52% increase in seats in Bristol and a 58% increase in Exeter. We

will also increase the local mainline services in Devon and Cornwall using our fleet of regional Class 158 trains.

About Great Western Railway:

Great Western Railway (GWR) provides high speed, commuter, regional and branch line train services. We help over 100 million passengers reach their destinations every year - across South Wales, the West Country, the Cotswolds, and large parts of Southern England.

We're currently seeing the biggest investment in the network since Brunel so we can offer more trains, more seats, and shorter, more frequent journeys and continue the network's heritage of helping connect more businesses to new and prosperous markets. Through a series of initiatives we aim to be a good neighbour to the communities we serve and are committed to making a positive social impact in those regions. Learn how we're Building a Greater West at [GWR.com](https://www.gwr.com). GWR is a FirstGroup company.