

## **News Release from Department for Transport**

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### **Major £1.1bn investment in electric rail boosts travel, the economy and the environment**

The Government will announce a major programme of modernisation and investment today to help create a 21<sup>st</sup> century railway, improve passenger journeys, cut carbon emissions and boost the economy.

The Prime Minister and Transport Secretary Andrew Adonis will unveil £1.1bn plans for the first big electrification of the rail network since the late 1980s, involving the London to Swansea and Liverpool to Manchester lines. It will mean the first electric main line trains ever running in Wales.

Work will start immediately on these two railways as this significant investment in Britain's infrastructure brings real benefits for passengers, including travelling on faster, greener and more reliable electric trains with more seats.

Electrification will stimulate further intercity and regional transport improvements across the country. For example, it will enable electric train services to run from Manchester and its airport to Glasgow and Edinburgh and open up the option of extending Crossrail to Reading.

Completing work on the first two railways will increase the proportion of electric train journeys in Britain from 60% to 67% - currently only 33% of Britain's rail network is electrified. There were about 21 million passenger journeys on the Great Western line alone in the last financial year and over 1 million passenger journeys on the Liverpool-Manchester railway.

Work will start immediately and for Liverpool-Manchester will be completed within four years and for London-Swansea within eight years, although stages in between will be completed earlier.

The Great Western electrification will include the lines to Oxford and Newbury. It will also make possible the direct replacement of the ageing Intercity 125 fleet by electric Super Express intercity trains, and by hybrid diesel/ electric Super Express trains to serve destinations beyond the electrified network. This, and other replacements of

diesel by electric trains, will yield significant savings in train leasing and operating costs, as well as benefiting passengers with more reliable and quieter trains.

First Minister for Wales Rhodri Morgan will also join the Prime Minister and Transport Secretary today at Cardiff to mark the announcement which will significantly strengthen the rail connection between England and Wales.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown said: "To build a better Britain, we must be bold, innovative and forward-looking and invest with confidence in our country's transport infrastructure, jobs and industry. This electrification programme is vital to building a 21st century transport system."

Transport Secretary Andrew Adonis said: "It is essential that we invest in our railways now and over the longer term. This is the biggest electrification programme for a generation and a vital part of our rail investment and carbon reduction strategies. It will be of huge benefit to passengers who will gain from faster, cleaner and more reliable trains.

"Electrification of the Great Western Mainline will bring significant new strategic opportunities for developing rail services. In particular it would be possible to run Crossrail services west of the existing proposed terminus at Maidenhead, through to Reading. I look forward to discussing with the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, the potential for developing new services and integrating these major Crossrail and electrification programmes.

"Electrification of the Liverpool to Manchester line also makes possible the through-running of electric trains from Manchester Airport and Manchester to Scotland. At present these services are diesel because the last stretch of line into Manchester is not electrified. This will be a major strategic benefit to passengers in the north of England and Scotland."

First Minister for Wales Rhodri Morgan said: "I'm delighted that this major modernisation, the first rail electrification in Wales, will boost travel links to and within Wales. It will improve connections between London, Cardiff and Swansea and make a rail journey between London and Swansea almost 20 minutes shorter. We need to work closely now to ensure these exciting plans dovetail with our own National Transport Plan."

The Government will in the coming months consider the case for further electrification, particularly in respect of the Midland Main Line (between London, Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield) and routes between Manchester and Preston and Liverpool and Preston.

The Government also announced today that a new rolling stock deployment plan, taking into account the new electrification, will be published in the autumn.

### **Notes to editors**

1. Britain's Transport Infrastructure - Rail Electrification is available at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/>

### **2. Benefits of “going electric” not diesel**

Electrified tracks are essential to getting maximum efficiency and capacity from a modern railway, so that train operators can match rolling stock to meet the demand from passengers and give them a better service than diesels.

Compared to diesels, electric trains are:

- Faster;
- Quieter;
- Greener as they produce less CO2 and emit no air pollution at the trackside;
- More reliable;
- Lighter and cause less wear and tear on the tracks;
- More cost-effective for carrying freight loads;
- Provide more seats; and
- Cheaper to buy, operate and maintain.

### **3. Boost to economy**

It will also be good news for jobs and industry including tourism and freight, Britain's competitiveness with our European partners, and provide excellent value for money for the taxpayer. The electrification programme will boost hundreds of jobs across the country and reduce the business costs of unreliable trains and workers arriving late.

The electrification programme will pay for itself over the long term through lower train leasing, maintenance and operating costs. The short term cost of Network Rail's financing will be met by the Government, and there will be no impact on other Network Rail investment programmes in the five year investment period to 2014.

### **4. Benefits for the passenger**

Electrification, combined with other improvements to track and signalling on the line, will mean that minimum journey times between Liverpool and Manchester will be reduced from 44 to 30 minutes and between London and Swansea by 19 minutes.

Electrification will also mean making rail more reliable and quieter for commuters, reducing the potential cost to the economy of workers getting in late.

It is also expected that introducing the new Super Express on the London to Swansea line will increase capacity on intercity services during the morning peak hour by at least 15% and also mean more space on trains generally during the day and evening peak.

## **5. Greener journeys**

Rail electrification is an important part of the Department's carbon strategy. Typically an electric train emits between 20% and 35% less carbon per passenger mile than a diesel train. This benefit will only improve as the electricity generation industry reduces its carbon levels. Electric trains also have zero emissions at the point of use, of particular benefit for air quality in pollution hot spots like city centres and mainline stations.

## **6. Rail renaissance**

Today's announcement is part of a wider Government rail strategy to meet future increases in demand, promote a move from other transport modes to rail and ensure Britain has the world-class infrastructure it needs. Major projects on the agenda include the £16bn Crossrail scheme, the £5.5bn Thameslink modernisation and evaluating the case for a new high-speed link between London and Scotland.

The electrification of Great Western Main Line now creates the option of extending Crossrail further to Reading, with Reading station also getting a £425m major upgrade which will cut bottlenecks and delays.

The Department for Transport and Network Rail will work closely with the Welsh Assembly so that plans for electrifying the Great Western Main Line are coordinated with the Assembly's own rail plans.

## **7. Minimising disruption**

Electric trains are more reliable than diesel. An electric intercity train will travel 40% further than an equivalent diesel train before a technical failure and an electric commuter train will travel well over twice as far.

Network Rail will use newly developed construction techniques which minimise the inconvenience to passengers of work on the Great Western line through utilising high-tech factory trains and extensively using overnight closures of less than eight hours. Passenger Focus will be given a key role in representing travellers' views.

**Public Enquiries: 020 7944 8300**  
**Department for Transport Website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/>**