



Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde

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Merseyrail's Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde appointed Managing Director of West Midlands Trains

Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde has today been appointed as Managing Director of West Midlands Trains, which will take over the next West Midlands franchise on 10 December. He joins from Merseyrail where he has been MD since 2015.

Prior to joining Merseyrail, Jan spent three years as Abellio UK's Deputy MD. In this role he was a member of the Merseyrail board and played a critical role in the company's successful bid for the ScotRail franchise.

Jan has also held a number of director roles outside of Abellio including Operations Director at South West Trains, Commercial Director at Southern and Operations & Retail Director at Thameslink. He first joined the sector in 1989 as a British Rail general management trainee.

Merseyrail's new managing director will be Jan's former deputy, Andy Heath. Andy first joined Merseyrail as Trains Manager in 1998 and has been Operations Director since 2005. He will be stepping into the role on 10 December, following Jan's departure.

Abellio, with its partners JR East and Mitsui, will be overseeing nearly £1bn of investment into the West Midlands network over the next nine years. This includes £680m on new trains, £70m on depots and £60m on station improvements.

Patrick Verwer, the outgoing MD of London Midland, will move on after six successful years at the helm of the business. He made this decision before the announcement of the franchise award and he leaves with the best wishes of West Midlands Trains.

There will be an announcement on the rest of the executive team for West Midlands Trains before the franchise starts on 10 December.

Jan Chaudhry-Van der Velde said:

"It's a real honour to take on this role at such an exciting time for the West Midlands. The near £1bn of investment going onto the network over the coming years will deliver significant improvements to our customers' journeys."

"Performance and customer satisfaction levels at Merseyrail were best in class during my time there, and I'm looking forward to delivering similar improvements at West Midlands Trains."

Andy Heath said:

"I am extremely pleased to be taking on this new position, having worked at Merseyrail over the last two decades. During this time, we have delivered one of the best performing franchises in the country – an achievement that I will endeavour to maintain under my stewardship."

“My focus as managing director will be on three major projects: to deliver the new trains, modernise ticketing and improve customer facilities at our stations. This will not only drive Merseyrail’s success, but also support the ambitions of the Liverpool City Region.”

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For more information about Jan’s appointment please contact George Robinson at george.robinson@abellio.com or on 07841 533805.

For more information about Andy’s appointment please contact Alice Owen at aowen@merseyrail.org or on 07885 814 354.

About the new West Midlands franchise

Abellio UK, JR East and Mitsui will be running the next West Midlands rail franchise from 10 December 2017 until 2025/6. Abellio has a 70.1% share of the company and JR East and Mitsui own the remaining 29.9% in a 50:50 split.

The new plans for the franchise include:

- Nearly £1bn invested into the overall network over the course of the franchise;
- £680m investment into new trains with 413 new carriages manufactured by Bombardier and CAF, creating space for an extra 85,000 passengers on rush hour services in Birmingham and London;
- £70m invested in new and existing depots to improve train reliability;
- Over £60m invested in station improvements delivering over 1,000 new car parking spaces and over 2,500 cycle parking spaces. This is alongside new and refurbished waiting rooms, more seats at stations and feasibility studies into developing new stations in the West Midlands;
- A greater choice of travel options for passengers thanks to the introduction of new Sunday services by 2021. This includes services from Birmingham to Shrewsbury and between Bedford and Bletchley;
- Greater provision of passenger information with audio visual displays on all trains by the end of 2019 as well as 800 new digital customer information screens across the network;

- Free Wi-Fi on all trains by the end of December 2019;
- The creation of over 900 new apprenticeships over the course of the franchise, with existing staff benefitting from a £13m investment in staff training and development; and
- An investment of £1.25m into community rail initiatives.

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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