New state-of-the-art London passenger train unveiled

The full-size mock-up of the state-of-the-art Desiro City train that will transform rail travel across London was unveiled by UK Rail Minister Stephen Hammond yesterday.

The new electric Class 700 train will offer a much improved travel experience for passengers and alongside the wider infrastructure work will boost capacity and reliability across one of Europe's busiest stretches of railway.

Speaking at the unveiling of a full-scale mock-up of the train at London's ExCel Centre yesterday, Rail Minister Stephen Hammond said: “We are transforming our railways through the biggest programme of rail investment ever. These exciting new trains, combined with the wider Thameslink Programme are a real boost to UK Plc, creating thousands of jobs in construction and across the supply chain, which is driving forward our economy. Once operational they will provide a huge benefit to the hundreds of thousands of passengers who travel into London every day. It will vastly improve train travel providing fast, reliable and more frequent services.”
The trains have been designed specifically to meet the demands of the ambitious Thameslink infrastructure programme delivering high frequency, high capacity services. They will be more reliable and more energy efficient than existing rolling stock and their lightweight design will mean less wear and tear on the tracks, saving money in maintaining the network over the long term.

Steve Scrimshaw, Managing Director, Siemens Rail Systems UK, commented: “Over £80 million pounds (around €97 million euros) has been invested by Siemens in the design and development of the Class 700. The innovative design incorporates the feedback of UK train operators, train crew, cleaners and maintainers, as well as dedicated passenger research, helping us turn proven technology and expertise into a state-of-the-art train of the future.”

First Capital Connect operates the current Thameslink franchise and has worked closely with the government to develop the new trains. MD David Statham said: “This new fleet will give passengers more trains, more carriages and more capacity which our passengers desperately need. The Thameslink Programme will deliver more than double the number of carriages across the heart of London. At London Bridge alone the programme will deliver 60% more carriages in the morning rush hour. There will also be exciting new journey opportunities along the route – from Cambridge and Peterborough across the Thames to Blackfriars and beyond.”

Cross London Trains, a consortium comprising of Siemens Project Ventures GmbH, Innisfree Limited and 3i infrastructure plc, is financing the new trains and will lease them to the operator of the Thameslink franchise. Andy Pitt, Executive Chairman of Cross London Trains, said: “Cross London Trains is delighted to have provided the finance for these Class 700 trains which will provide significant benefits to passengers and a step change in capacity.”

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