

EMR Connect: All electric train service launches this week

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East Midlands Railway's (EMR) new all electric train service running twice hourly between Corby and London St Pancras launches this week.

EMR Connect, which uses a fleet of 360 trains, is the company's first electric route - delivering a reduction of carbon emissions by 77 per cent, as well as lowering noise levels for lineside neighbours.

Over the last six months, 87 mainline drivers and 107 train managers across four traincrew depots, have been trained to work on the 360s - with more staff to come.

To keep the teams safe during the pandemic, all of the 'close contact' training required drivers to enter into COVID-secure training bubbles with every Instructor and trainee taking a COVID-19 test every week, prior to training. This, alongside daily safety declarations and temperature checks, were vital to ensuring the teams could continue to train safely.

Working in collaboration with Siemens Mobility, EMR has worked to enable the fleet to reach the required speed of 110mph needed for the route and the first trains of the 21 fleet have now undergone many test

runs between their brand new home at Kettering Depot Sidings to Cricklewood – 66 miles away.

Simon Brick, a Driver Instructor at EMR, is part of the team who trained the staff and will also drive 360s himself.

He said: “What I am looking forward to most of all is to be able to drive a more dynamic and powerful train. Being electric, the 360s accelerate faster than our current fleet and react quicker to driver inputs. With this in mind, the 360s will enhance our working day and allow us to be able to widen our skillsets and ongoing development.

“I have seen so many colleagues contribute and come together to overcome many challenges to get the project to this stage. It has been a great privilege to be able to contribute from a driver’s aspect and I’m enjoying delivering the traction training course with my fellow Instructors.”

Jonathan Rolling, On Train Depot Manager at EMR, is also excited about the introduction of the 360 trains and the benefits they will bring to customers.

He said: “It is great to see the arrival of the class 360 fleet. This is something that we have all been waiting a long time to see in the south of the route.

“The benefits this added capacity brings to the Midland Main Line and to our customers will be huge. It really will be a proud moment to see every part of this project come together and I can’t wait to see the first Class 360 run between Corby and London St Pancras.”

The introduction of the new fleet really has been a team effort, a fact that Andrew Briddon, the 360 Project Engineer, knows all too well. “Everyone across the business has come together to deliver this project,” he explained.

“I’m particular proud of the team who has worked on the logistics and engineering aspects of it. We have worked hard to upgrade the trains so they can run at 110mph and its been rewarding to be able to work with Siemens to develop this highly reliable fleet, which will help us be more environmentally friendly.”

Lisa Angus, Transitions and Projects Director at East Midlands Railway, said: “Being able to launch EMR Connect this week is the culmination of a lot of hard work by many teams across the business. I would like to say a big thank you to all of those involved in this exciting project to bring electric trains to our customers.

“The 360 trains are a vital part of our plan to be able to run our services with a smaller carbon footprint and we are very excited to begin using them with passengers later this week.”

Sambit Banerjee, Managing Director of Rolling Stock and Customer Services for Siemens Mobility, in the UK, said: “We are delighted to see the Siemens Mobility Class 360/1 fleet going into service on the East Midlands Railway and are very proud to be supporting passengers in the region commute and travel for leisure in comfortable, reliable trains.

“Getting the fleet ready for their new service has been a great collaborative effort between the Siemens Mobility and EMR operations team, with work continuing all throughout the covid lockdown. This has included technical upgrades, testing and supporting driver training. We are looking forward to continuing our great partnership with East Midlands Railways in the years to come.”

Photo and video credit: East Midlands Railway