

High Speed Train (HST) arrives ahead of introduction into Hull Trains fleet

January 30, 2019



One of Great Western Railway's (GWR) Intercity 125 High Speed Trains (HST) has arrived at Hull Paragon Station today [29 January 2019] to provide an additional train to service Hull Trains' timetable.

The arrival of the HST is a boost for the company; the leadership team have been working around the clock to tackle reliability challenges that troubled the award-winning business throughout 2018.

There is a significant lack of spare rolling stock in the UK, which has meant that an additional train was very difficult to secure. GWR was only able to provide the rolling stock following the introduction of a brand-new fleet of trains in the south west – resulting in the HST becoming available.

The HST will enter service ahead of the delivery of a fleet of new state-of-the-art Class 802 trains in December – currently under construction by Hitachi Rail using Japanese bullet train technology.

Hull Trains, which operates 92 services a week, needs three of its four trains to fulfil its timetable with one always being in a scheduled rolling maintenance programme. This meant that a fault on one service could sometimes result in a change to its operating schedule – impacting on the company's customers. Whilst this hasn't been a major problem since Hull Trains received the fleet in 2008, fragility in the operational performance of the trains throughout 2018 resulted in Hull Trains having to look further afield for additional capacity. The introduction of the HST into the fleet will, it is hoped, reduce the risk of further disruption should there be any further issues with the Class 180s ahead of December.

The HST is the fastest diesel locomotive in the world, with a regular service speed that matches Hull Trains' current trains. Used by British Rail before the privatisation of the railways, these trains are still in use with other train operating companies widely across the UK.

Work is still needed to bring the HST into service, including final works on making the train ready for customer use, along with staff training. Announcements on the first service for the HST will be made in the next few weeks.

Louise Cheeseman, Managing Director for Hull Trains, said: "The introduction of the HST is an important milestone for Hull Trains and demonstrates Hull Trains' and FirstGroup's commitment to addressing our recent challenges so that we can get back to delivering the great service we are renowned for. I hope that it will help to reassure our customers that we are committed to providing a strong service that they can rely upon.

"We've shared our customers' frustrations over the last year following prolonged periods of disruption and this, alongside the £60m investment of the new trains ready for later this year, further establishes our dedication to the region to provide a direct link to London with excellent customer service. We would also like to thank our industry partners who have helped us with alternate arrangements for customers during that time.

"Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to colleagues at GWR and FirstGroup for their contribution to the solution, as well as weeks of ongoing invaluable advice and support to help bring this train into service. Our focus is now to finalise staff training and complete any remaining work to bring it into service in the next few weeks."

The train will be different to the rest of Hull Trains' fleet, so customers will be provided with information online to familiarise themselves with the different characteristics before using the service. Information will also be available on-board.

Further announcements regarding the train and when it is ready for service will be made on www.hulltrains.co.uk