

# Porterbrook makes new digital trains a reality for Heathrow Express

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Porterbrook has signed a contract with Bombardier Transportation to fit digital signalling equipment and complete specialist on-board conversions to Class 387 trains set to serve the Heathrow Express rail link.

The 12 specially converted trains will form a dedicated Heathrow Express fleet as part of a management contract announced in March 2018 which sees Great Western Railway deliver some of the operational aspects of the airport service.

Porterbrook's £11m investment in the class 387 'Electrostar' trains sees proven Digital Railway in-cab 'ETCS' signalling installed as well as on-board conversions including improved seating, additional luggage space, at seat power, on-board TV and fast WiFi.

Engineering and design work will take place at Bombardier's Derby Litchurch Lane works, with fitment taking place at the company's Ilford depot. The work will be completed by December 2019, meeting the Secretary of State's commitment to replace existing rolling stock on the route with highly reliable, digitally

enabled, Electrostar trains as well as extend the track access agreement to confirm the Heathrow Express service running until at least 2028.

Fitment of ETCS to the Class 387 trains will be the first time that digital signalling has been installed on an existing fleet of electric passenger trains. Mary Grant, CEO of Porterbrook said: "I am delighted that Porterbrook and Bombardier can lead the way in the fitment of digital signalling to Heathrow Express Electrostar trains that connect London to the UK's gateway to the world."

"This first-in-fleet fitment will enable us to accelerate ETCS fitment on other Electrostar fleets, as and when our customers require it." Richard Hunter, President Rail Control Solutions at Bombardier Transportation, said: "As a global signalling solutions provider, we are delighted to be working with Porterbrook, Heathrow Express and Great Western Railway on this project, an exciting next step in the delivery of the Digital Railway."

Les Freer, Director of Heathrow Express said: "The introduction of a fleet of Class 387 trains specially converted for airport passengers is one of the main benefits of our new partnership with Great Western Railway. This helps us build on our 20 year history of excellent customer service as we continue to offer the same fast and frequent non-stop service between Heathrow Airport and London Paddington for years to come."

Fitment of digital signalling to the Class 387 trains for use on the Heathrow Express route will result in 'type approval' from the Office of Rail and Road, enabling ETCS to be fitted to all Electrostar fleets.