



Department
for Transport

Lilian Greenwood MP
Chair,
Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
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From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling

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Dear Lilian,

23 July 2018

I am writing to update you on our investment plans for the East Coast Main Line and the better journeys this will deliver for passengers.

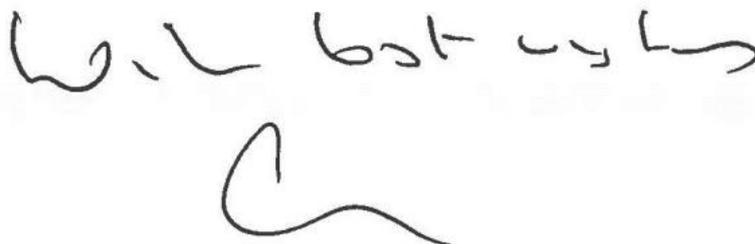
As you are aware, the £5.7bn Intercity Express Programme will deliver state of the art trains for the East Coast Main Line. From the end of this year, as a result of this investment, passengers along this important route will begin to benefit from the greater capacity and comfort offered by these new trains built in the North East.

Today, the Prime Minister announced that we will invest up to £780m to deliver upgrades to the East Coast Main Line by the early 2020s. This is on top of the £400m invested since 2014 in power upgrades between London and Doncaster and infrastructure improvements elsewhere across the route. This programme of works supports the introduction of new Intercity Express Trains and other services and, over the next few years, will see power improvements between Doncaster and Edinburgh, as well as enhancements at King's Cross and in the Peterborough area. Early works to support these upgrades to platforms, tracks, signals, junctions and the power supply have already begun, and more significant engineering work will be delivered from this Christmas.

These improvements will enable the fastest journeys between London and Edinburgh to be reduced by around fifteen minutes. The fastest journeys between London and Leeds and London and Newcastle will be around ten minutes faster, and there will also be more services between London and Doncaster and London and Newcastle. Passengers on long distance services into London from across the route will benefit from approximately 40 percent more seats an hour.

In conjunction with our £3bn upgrade of the Transpennine Route between Manchester, Leeds and York, which will begin next year, this investment will also benefit passengers travelling between Manchester and destinations north of York on the East Coast Main Line. For example, once major upgrades are delivered, the fastest journeys between Newcastle and Manchester are expected to be around 10 minutes quicker than today.

To deliver further benefits for passengers, we are also developing proposals for rolling out digital railway technology on the East Coast Main Line, as well as the Transpennine Route, in the next few years. Replacing traffic light signalling with digital technology would mean fewer signal problems and more reliable services, and would mean trains could run safely closer together, enabling more frequent services.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W.L. Grayling' with a stylized flourish below it.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT