

## Hitachi wins new UK contract to build intercity battery trains

- Order worth around £300 million for fleet of new trains, which will increase seats by 20 per cent, improving capacity and connectivity.
- 45 rail cars to be manufactured at Hitachi Rail in the North East and financed by Angel Trains, helping secure highly skilled jobs and unlocking a new advanced manufacturing opportunity for rail.
- State-of-the-art 'tri-mode' train technology has proven its ability to cut emissions and fuel costs by around 30 per cent to support UK Government's decarbonisation agenda.
- Announcement is made from Hitachi's Newton Aycliffe factory and attended by the Secretary of State for Transport, Heidi Alexander MP.



**London, April 03, 2025:** Arriva Group announced today an order for nine cutting-edge battery hybrid trains to replace its entire Grand Central fleet, providing a major boost to regional economies and offering passengers more comfortable, greener travel options.

The order for 45 Hitachi Rail 'tri-mode' cars, which have the flexibility to run on electrified and non-electrified tracks, along with a 10-year maintenance contract, represents an investment of around £300 million. Tri-mode means the trains can be powered using electricity, battery or diesel.

It follows approval by the rail regulator for extended track access rights for Grand Central's existing services through to 2038, with the investment underpinning Arriva's long-term commitment to UK rail and to delivering sustainable public transport solutions to communities up and down the country and across Europe.

The trains will be manufactured at Hitachi's Newton Aycliffe factory, helping to protect jobs and skills at their UK manufacturing base. Meanwhile, the battery element of the order unlocks a new advanced manufacturing opportunity for the factory, and wider supply chain. The order supports both the UK Government's Industrial Strategy and mission for economic growth, cementing the North East's role as UK battery hub.

The new trains will increase seat numbers by 20 per cent which means 400,000 additional seats per year will be available to passengers travelling between the North East, Yorkshire and London. Because of their tri-mode capability the trains could be used on other routes in the future. They are also expected to reduce both emissions and noise.

The trains will be delivered in 2028 under a 10-year leasing arrangement, in partnership and financed by Angel Trains.

**Amanda Furlong, Managing Director of Arriva UK Trains**, said:

"This major investment underscores our commitment to the UK market. We are proud to connect under-served communities with regional and national centres, helping make sustainable train travel the easy choice. These best-in-class, greener trains will deliver more comfortable journeys and a step-change in capacity on our popular Grand Central services. We look forward to announcing further rolling stock orders, providing jobs and wider economic benefits, as and when our network grows."

**Secretary of State for Transport, Heidi Alexander MP**, said:

"Just four months since the Prime Minister and I welcomed a significant deal for Hitachi and its workforce in Newton Aycliffe, this new £300m investment marks yet another step forward in securing the future of rail manufacturing in the North East. The landmark deal is proof that our Plan for Change is delivering results – creating the right environment for investment, which in turn supports high-skilled jobs, drives economic growth and delivers real improvement in people's lives. Not only will this new battery technology deliver greener journeys for passengers, but it will also boost skills for the workforce and futureproof jobs here in Newton Aycliffe as we continue to deliver a railway fit for the 21st century."

**North East Mayor, Kim McGuinness**, said:

"I made it one of my first priorities as Mayor to secure the future of Hitachi in County Durham, and with that the jobs of hundreds of people who work at the Newton Aycliffe plant. Today's announcement confirming a new £300m order by Arriva for state-of-the-art trains is just the latest sign we are succeeding. This is great news for Hitachi and its highly skilled workforce, showing there's real confidence in advanced manufacturing in North East England. I'm so proud to say that in the very near future, the entire Grand Central fleet which links Sunderland to York and London will have been proudly built in our region."

**Jim Brewin, Hitachi Rail Chief Director of UK & Ireland**, said:

"As we celebrate 200 years since the birth of the modern railway in the North East, it's symbolic that innovative battery trains are being developed in Newton Aycliffe. Battery trains' ability to deliver cheaper, greener, and more reliable journeys means we are unlocking a new advanced manufacturing opportunity for rail today. Following the successful trial of this pioneering battery technology last year, Arriva and Angel Trains are transforming Hitachi's £17 million R&D investment into the first battery train order to be built in the UK."

**David Jordan, COO of Angel Trains, said:**

“Our multimillion-pound investment into these state-of-the-art tri-mode trains will deliver significant benefits for Grand Central passengers, connecting communities across the North of England and driving essential economic growth. This latest development builds on the momentum created by the successful conclusion of our battery trial with Hitachi Rail at the end of last year and demonstrates the transformative potential of battery technology in both existing and new fleets.”

The pioneering technology will cut emissions and fuel consumption by around 30 per cent. The trains can enter and exit stations in zero-emission battery mode, helping improve air quality and reduce noise in urban centres. The new trains will include 20 per cent more seats than existing rolling stock, helping to meet increased passenger demand and encouraging the switch to public transport. Travellers will also benefit from more luggage storage, in-seat power and an electronic reservation system.

Arriva has welcomed the swift decision-making by the regulator, the ORR (Office of Rail and Road) and the backing of the Department for Transport and Network Rail to extend its track access rights. It has two further outstanding applications currently under consideration, which if granted, would extend existing routes to bring direct rail services to under-served communities in the UK. The Group also has an option to buy more trains if applications are approved.

**Note to Editors:**

- The rolling stock order follows approval by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) of Arriva's application to extend existing track access rights for Grand Central until 2038.
- Grand Central has been running services on the East Coast mainline since 2007 as an open access operator, which means it receives no government funding or subsidy.
- Last month (March), Arriva formally applied to the ORR to expand its Grand Central Services into Lincolnshire from 2026, providing the first direct train service from Cleethorpes to London since 1992. It is also seeking approval for proposals for two extra daily return services between Bradford and London and an early morning and late evening return from York to London, together with services to Seaham in County Durham, which would be the town's first and only direct connection to the Capital.
- Arriva Group's train operators include Grand Central, Chiltern Railways, CrossCountry and Arriva Rail London. It is the only owning group with experience of all contract types currently in use on Britain's railway, including national rail contracts, a concessionary contract and an open access company. Arriva also supports the critical maintenance of rolling stock through Arriva Train Care and provides rail replacement services through Arriva Road Transport Solutions. It also owns a digital smart ticketing platform, Arriva Customer Engine.
- Hitachi Rail and Angel Trains successfully trialed the tri-mode technology on the UK rail network in 2024. More information on the trial and the capabilities of tri-mode technology can be viewed [here](#).

**About Hitachi Rail:**

Hitachi Rail is connecting the future of mobility - helping every passenger, customer and community enjoy the benefits of more seamless, sustainable transport.

With innovative technology and world-leading delivery capabilities, Hitachi Rail is a trusted partner to customers and consortia partners globally. The company is an expert in every part of the railway: from train manufacturing and maintenance to digital signalling and smart mobility. Its pioneering products, such as the iconic high speed bullet train, enable billions of passenger journeys and the transport of millions of tonnes of freight, every year.

Drawing on the powerful expertise of the wider Hitachi group companies, Hitachi Rail is uniquely placed to further enhance its offer to customers through pioneering new digital solutions and services.

In FY22, Hitachi Rail had revenues of over €5bn. The company has around 15,000 employees in 38 countries, and it invests in its diverse and talented teams.

Hitachi Rail's business is local, but its reach is global. With deep roots in its communities, the company is committed to delivering sustainable progress for all.

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Information contained in this news release is current as of the date of the press announcement, but may be subject to change without prior notice.

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