

## New trains for Devon's regional railway routes following £75m contract

Class 175 diesels are to be reintroduced to GWR routes later this year, including Barnstaple, Okehampton, Exeter and Penzance, after a £75m service contract was agreed with manufacturer Alstom

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**The 'new' Class 175 diesel trains will begin to replace more outdated models on regional rail lines across Devon and Cornwall. Credit: GWR**

By **Tony Gussin** 27 Aug 2025 12:19 PM

North Devon's Tarka Line is set to be boosted with a fleet of new trains in the near future following a £75million maintenance deal between manufacturer Alstom and Great Western Railway.

The eight-year services contract will support the reintroduction of Class 175 diesel trains across GWR routes in Devon and Cornwall including Barnstaple to Exeter.

While not 'new', the 26 Class 175s, which were built between 1999 and 2001, will replace older and more inefficient diesels, with the first trains are expected to enter passenger service later this year, following recommissioning and driver training.

Owned by Angel Trains, the Class 175s will predominantly operate on key regional routes, including services between Exeter St Davids, Penzance, Barnstaple and Okehampton.

They can be connected in four, five and six-car formations and will improve reliability, efficiency and passenger comfort, GWR has said, supporting its plans to rejuvenate regional and suburban services, while preparing the way for decarbonisation.

North Devon's Tim Steer, Railfuture Devon and Cornwall regional branch chair, said: "The arrival of the Class 175 trains, from Alstom's Coradia 1000 family, is eagerly anticipated by passengers across the South West and Railfuture Devon and Cornwall welcomes the £75m contract.

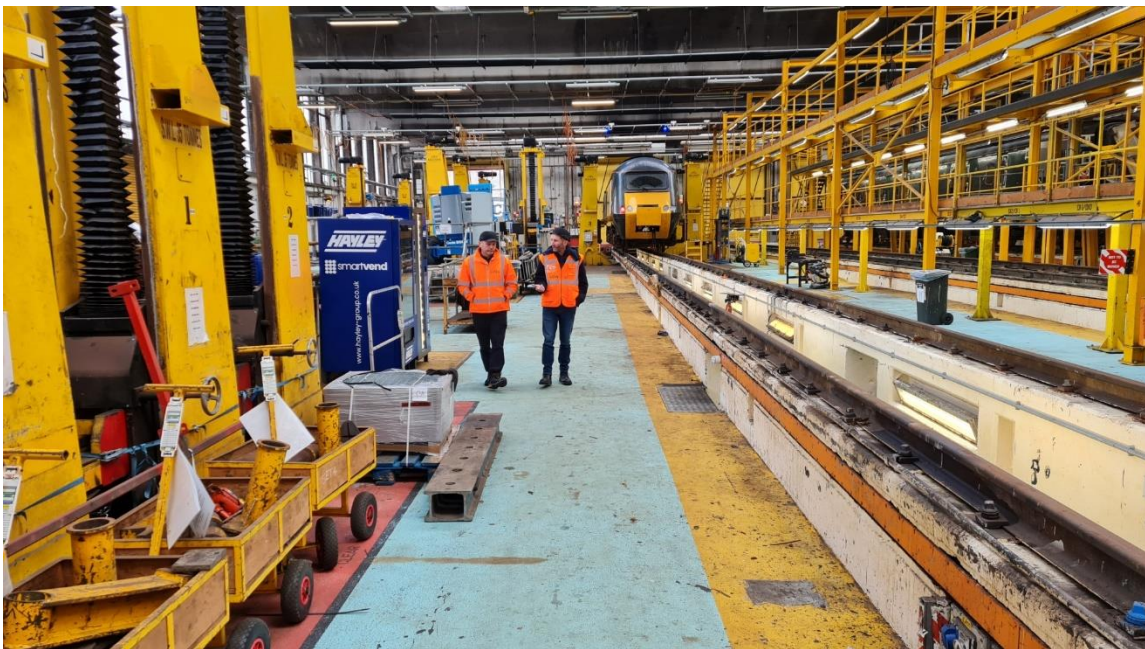
"Initially to replace GWR's few remaining and much-loved but now veteran InterCity High-Speed Trains, they will also release some new InterCity Express Trains to strengthen much-needed capacity on Paddington services.

“GWR need a larger fleet for the very welcome additional services on the Mid-Cornwall Metro from Newquay starting later this year, all being well and to strengthen existing services on their regional network.

“The Dartmoor Line will gain a new station just off the A30 outside Okehampton next year, while Barnstaple to Exeter services in particular continue to set new usage records, far in excess of pre-pandemic volumes.

“Extra capacity for GWR's customers especially at peak times is long overdue on the North Devon Line (Tarka) Line, additional carriages coming into Barnstaple station will help solve this challenge and bring more users to the rail network.”

Under the eight-year agreement, Alstom will deliver ongoing maintenance support from GWR's Laira depot in Plymouth. The contract supports more than 15 roles, including engineers, material planners and administrators, as well as many more in Alstom's wider supply chain.



*Above: The Alstom contract will see maintenance and support provided from the GWR Laira Depot in Plymouth.  
Credit: GWR*

Dr Simon Green, engineering director for GWR, said: “We are really pleased to be able to reach agreement with Alstom to support this major investment in our train fleet.

“The Class 175 are a welcome addition to the GWR train fleet and will provide a tangible boost as we seek to rejuvenate our regional and suburban services.”

David Jordan, chief operating officer at Angel Trains, added: “We’re pleased to support Great Western Railway as they work to further improve the passenger experience.

“In partnership with GWR and Alstom, the reintroduction of the Class 175 fleet will provide additional capacity and improved reliability that will benefit customers across the network.”

The Class 175 trains are also the first in the GWR fleet to use Alstom's HealthHub digital solution, which analyses and displays all the data captured by the train.

Every 30 seconds, a train will send data on more than 200 factors –from the speed of the train to the temperature inside the carriages and its exact location. This provides real-time information that alerts the team if there is anything wrong with the train and helps to prevent incidents before they can affect passengers.