**Saturday 23rd April**

**Virgin Trains invests further £1.5m into Preston station**

Preston station is to benefit from further enhancement works later this month, as part of Virgin Trains’ wider £20m investment programme to enhance customer experience along the west coast route.

The second phase of enhancement work, follows the new retail offering at the main entrance of the station and will improve passenger flow and enhance customer experience for those travelling to and from Preston.

The £1.5m investment will transform access to the station from Platform 7 with a new entrance and concourse that will include Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs), Customer Information Screens (CIS), car park payment machines and a new retail unit.

Work will start on Monday 25th April and is scheduled to be completed at the end of October.

Shirley Ross, Virgin Trains Station Manager at Preston, said: “We’re really excited for the next phase of investment to begin at Preston. We received a great response to the new retail offering last year and we’re sure that the latest enhancement scheme will offer an even better experience for those travelling to and from Preston. During the works, access to the station from Butler Street will change slightly, so we advise customers to allow extra time for their journey and thank them for their understanding.”

Beckie Joyce, Head of Strategic Development Service at Lancashire County Council, said: “With over two million passengers every year, Preston Railway Station is a critical transport asset and gateway for Lancashire and communities further afield. We welcome these proposals from Virgin Trains, which will provide much needed and immediate improvements to the passenger experience at the railway station. We are hopeful that these improvements are just the start of a longer term programme to make sure Preston Railway Station is, over the coming years, transformed into a modern, 21st century facility fully compatible with HS2.”

Ruth Connor, Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire, said: “Preston station is the most pivotal station on the West Coast Mainline and an incredibly important gateway for both Lancashire and the UK with over two million passenger trips starting and ending at the city’s station. Virgin Trains’ investment and improvements on the back of the continued growth of the Anglo Scotland route, coupled with the significant investment taking place in and around Preston showcases the increasing confidence in the region. We have a two hour Virgin train connecting Preston and London and just over two hours to Glasgow, which is a key selling point in attracting more visitors and business into Lancashire. As a key partner of Marketing Lancashire, we look forward to working closely with Virgin Trains to realise our collective ambitions.”

ENDS

**Editor’s Notes**

**Enhancement works**

The new entrance and concourse will feature the following:

* Three Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs)
* Two Customer Information Screens (CIS) displaying departures, arrivals and other relevant information (eg. Network Rail improvement works)
* Two car park payment machines
* A new retail space
* Greater customer assistance with members of the Virgin Trains team at Preston welcoming customers to the station

**Station Access**

Pedestrian access to Platform 7 will change slightly from Monday 25th April until the enhancement work is completed at the end of October. A temporary entrance will be located on Platform 7 providing access to the subway and lift and will be clearly signposted from the multi-storey car park.

**Parking at Preston station**

Whilst the enhancement work takes place, the outside car park (adjacent to Butler Street) will be closed and the short stay parking off Butler Street will be limited.

The closest alternative car parks to Preston station are:

* Avenham Car Park (PR1 3AX) – Open 07:45 – 20:00
* Market Hall Car Park (PR1 2JD) – Open 24 hours
* Hill Street Car Park (PR1 2BB) – Open 24 hours
* Trinity Square Car Park (PR1 2EU) – Open 24 hours

More information can be found here: [www.preston.gov.uk/yourservices/transport-and-parking/parking/city-centre-car-parks/](http://www.preston.gov.uk/yourservices/transport-and-parking/parking/city-centre-car-parks/)

**About Virgin Trains**

Stagecoach and Virgin are working in partnership to operate the East Coast and West Coast inter-city routes under the Virgin Trains brand. Together, they are on track to revolutionise rail travel across the UK.

The combined network connects some of the nation’s most iconic destinations including Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, York and London.

Virgin Trains is committed to delivering a high speed, high frequency service, offering shorter journey times, more comfortable travel and excellent customer service. Customers consistently rate Virgin Trains as one of the top long-distance rail franchise operators in the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) commissioned by industry watchdog, Transport Focus.

On the East Coast route, £140m is being invested to create a more personalised travel experience. This includes a major fleet revamp, smarter stations and exciting new routes. From May 2016, there will be 42 additional services (22,000 extra seats) per week between Edinburgh and London. 2018 will see the introduction of completely new Azuma trains being built in the UK by Hitachi.

The West Coast route has a proud record of challenging the status quo - from introducing tilting Pendolino trains, to a pioneering automated delay repay scheme and becoming the first franchised rail operator to offer m-Tickets for all ticket types.

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