

TransPennine Express to Equip Class 185 Fleet with Advanced Digital Signalling System

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UK rail operator TransPennine Express (TPE) is set to enhance its operational capabilities and passenger experience through the integration of the European Train Control System (ETCS) digital signalling technology across its Class 185 train fleet. This strategic upgrade is a critical component of the multi-billion-pound Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) project, a significant investment aimed at transforming rail connectivity between key Northern cities including Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds, and York.

The integration of ETCS will be undertaken at Siemens Mobility's Ardwick depot in collaboration with Eversholt Rail, the owner of TPE's Class 185 trains. The project follows the UK government's recent allocation of £415 million in funding to further advance the TRU programme, which will also facilitate the future widespread implementation of ETCS across the route.

Sambit Banerjee, joint CEO and managing director of Siemens Mobility UK&I Rolling Stock and Customer Services, commented: "Siemens Mobility is delighted to partner with TransPennine Express and Eversholt Rail on this important initiative to enhance passenger journeys. Upgrading the Class 185 fleet with ETCS digital signalling technology aligns with our mission to transform rail travel."

The implementation of ETCS will enable closer and safer train operation, facilitating more frequent services on existing infrastructure and contributing to a reduction in delays. The system provides drivers with real-time, continuous updates on train speeds and braking distances directly within the driver's cab, leading to enhanced control and improved safety by ensuring adherence to safe operating parameters.

TransPennine Express anticipates that the deployment of ETCS will also bolster the resilience of the railway network, leading to faster recovery from disruptions, fewer maintenance requirements, and a reduced need for engineering works.

Chris Nutton, TPE's TRU and major projects director, stated: "The introduction of ETCS on our Class 185 fleet marks a significant leap forward for rail travel in the North. This advanced technology will not only enhance the safety and reliability of our services but also provide crucial support for the wider Transpennine Route Upgrade, ultimately benefiting our passengers and the communities we serve."

This upgrade project follows the recent appointment of Jacobs by Network Rail as the technical services integration delivery partner for the TRU in February, further underscoring the momentum behind this transformative rail infrastructure programme.