

## **West Midland Trains consult Railfuture on the design of their new DMUs.**

Following a suggestion to West Midland Trains (WMT) by Railfuture West Midlands Branch Secretary Colin Major that other TOCs had found value in consulting passengers on the layout of their new rolling stock he along with representatives of three West Midlands RUGS was invite to their Tyseley Depot on 11<sup>th</sup> June to meet the DMU Class 196 Lead engineer.

They spent three hours being taken through the design process and everyone was impressed on how West Midlands Trains had ensured that the basic CAF "Civity" platform was configured to meet WMT needs including widening doors for access, enhanced software to handle not only the carriage environmental ambiance but also to provide WiFi and Real time Passenger information. The cabling and software has extendable capacity to meet additional requirements throughout anticipated 35 year the life of these DMUs. Enhancements could include real time track monitoring as suggested in the technical press and others.

There was an opportunity to test the adopted cantilevered seat design and it was refreshing to find that rather than go for the bog standard FINA design. They had employed a design company to modify the chosen FISA seats with adjustments to the shape of the base cushions, head rests, with a better angle of tilt and lumbar support. WMT had also increased the distance between seats from standard CAF layout by 30mm which may seem small but when Colin was asked to try both spacings at 6'2" tall he found this increase provided a significantly more comfortable space for his long legs.

WMT have ordered 12 x 2 car units and 14 x 4 car units which as the current fleet of Class 170s is only three cars will require extending the Tyseley Depot to accommodate the longer four car units. A trip around the current depot impressed everyone with its cleanliness despite servicing and undertaking major overhauls of DMUs with their attendant oil and diesel emissions.

This visit emphasised WMT commitment to building a partnership with its rail user stakeholders and Railfuture's West Midlands Branch.