

News

The train now arriving will be announced in Mandarin



Graeme Paton Transport Correspondent

London Marylebone is to become the first station in the UK to make platform announcements in Mandarin and Arabic after a surge in tourists using the terminus over the past 18 months.

The station, managed by Chiltern Railways, has become a huge draw for foreign visitors travelling to Bicester Village, the retail outlet in Oxfordshire known for luxury brands such as Prada, Armani and Dior.

A railway line from Oxford Parkway to Marylebone, via Bicester Village, was completed in October 2015 and new figures from Chiltern show that 1.6 million journeys have been made

through Bicester Village's station since.

The shopping village is thought to be the most visited place by Chinese holidaymakers in the UK after Buckingham Palace. It has also acted as a draw for wealthy visitors from Middle Eastern states such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

The recorded announcements at Marylebone, which is used by about 16 million people a year, have been made by foreign language-speaking employees at Chiltern and will be introduced over the next few weeks. New staff fluent in the languages will be employed to assist on the station concourse.

It is believed to be the first time that station announcements have been made

in the UK in a non-European language. French is used on Eurostar services and some airport links such as the Gatwick Express make announcements in a number of languages.

Chiltern already makes on-board announcements on trains in the two languages as they approach Bicester Village and Arabic and Mandarin signs have been installed in stations.

Dave Penney, managing director of Chiltern, said: "Foreign tourism, particularly around the Middle East and Far East markets, is really important. Over the last few years we have used the railway to tap into that market and make it easier for people to use Chiltern to access the shops."

VALUE RETAIL