

Five years of rail electrification



Picture: NETWORK RAIL

After all the plans, announcements, consultations and negotiations, Network Rail published its programme on 31 March 2014 for the next five years, which is called control period 5 (CP5) and which involves expenditure of £38 billion. £13 billion will be invested in major capital projects including the Northern Hub, the Thameslink programme and Crossrail, over 850 miles of electrified track, the East West Rail project between Oxford, Milton Keynes and Bedford, Borders Railway and the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street, Manchester Victoria, Glasgow Queen Street and London Bridge. A further £12 billion will be spent on less dramatic improvements to the rail infrastructure such as track and points renewal and platform resurfacing, which can significantly affect service delivery and passenger satisfaction. Over £100 million is budgeted for improved safety at level crossings, including the continuing process of closure and replacement. By autumn 2014 Network Rail will publish route-based climate change strategies for measures to mitigate the effects of severe weather and improve the railway's sustainability in the long term. An improved punctuality target of 92.5% by 2019 has been agreed, and though more passengers will be carried in more trains, it is anticipated that the annual government subsidy will be halved to £2 billion.

www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/better-railway/

National Audit Office gives its verdict on Crossrail

The National Audit Office published an interim report on the progress of Crossrail on 24 January 2014 in which it stated that if progress can be maintained and risk-managed, the project is on course to achieve value for money for the taxpayer. With about half the infrastructure complete, a little behind schedule, there was confidence that the planned delivery date would

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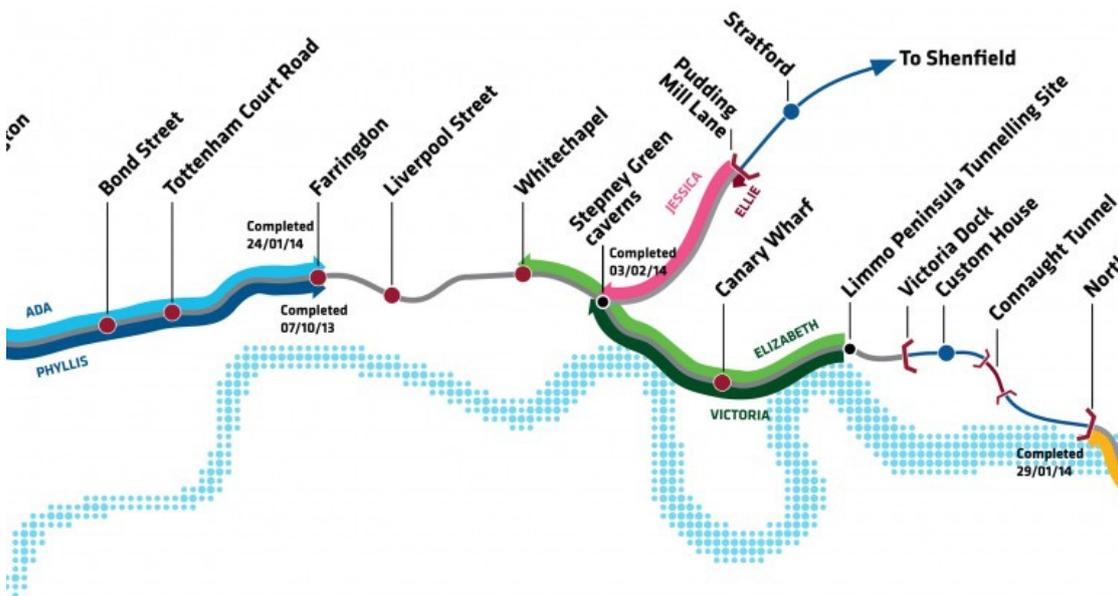
be met and that forecast costs would be within the available £14.8 billion, despite the lower than originally estimated contribution from the private sector. The NAO found that the strategic case for Crossrail had strengthened during the course of the project, with higher forecast population and employment growth in the London area. Risks remain before the planned full opening of the service in 2019, particularly over the delivery of trains and the appointment of the operator.

www.nao.org.uk/report/crossrail

Crossrail services (two trains an hour) will be extended to Reading

Crossrail announced on 27 March 2014 that it will have a western terminus at Reading when full services on the west-east line through greater London start in late 2019. This follows an agreement by the project's co-sponsors, the Department for Transport and Transport for London with Network Rail. The two trains an hour from Reading will also stop at Twyford and should significantly widen the number of passengers able to travel into London without having to change at Paddington.

www.crossrail.co.uk/news/articles/dft-and-tfl-extend-crossrail-route-to-reading



OLYMPIC VENTURE: This Crossrail map shows how the tunnelling is progressing. In February, the eighth Crossrail boring machine, named Ellie (after paralympic gold medal swimmer Ellie Simmonds), started work on the second tunnel on the northern section from Pudding Mill Lane, near the Olympic Park at Stratford, heading towards the Crossrail underground junction at Stepney Green. Jessica, named after Jessica Ennis-Hill, was scheduled to start on the final tunnelling section from the Limmo Peninsula towards Victoria Dock, after completing the first tunnel between Stepney Green and Pudding Mill Lane. The map shows the work already done by the boring machines Ada, Phyllis, Elizabeth and Victoria.

MPs call for more targeted action on level crossing safety

The House of Commons transport committee published a report on safety at level crossings on 7 March 2014. Although the number of accidental deaths at level crossings has decreased in recent years, they remain a significant source of risk on the transport network and nine people died in 2012-13. The committee recommended that the Office of Rail Regulation should adopt an explicit target of zero fatalities at level crossings by 2020. Deciding which crossings are the riskiest is complex, but it was estimated that there may be many hundred which exceed

Map: CROSSRAIL

Railfuture press releases

Recent press releases issued by Railfuture have included:

- Solving Somerset's transport problems (10 February)
- Passengers call for better access to ferry ports (17 February)
- Inflation figures highlight rail fares rip off (18 February)
- Demolish Euston Station and then go further (23 February)

A summary of media coverage of Railfuture, both locally and nationally is available on Railfuture+in+the+news

Press releases can be read at: [Railfuture press releases](http://Railfuture+press+releases)

Health and Safety Executive guidance on the acceptable level of fatality risk. Network Rail should be more transparent about its assessment of risk, its plans for closures and improvements and continue to employ level crossing managers to focus on improving safety. However, the ORR, which has just seven qualified signalling engineers, needs to improve its grip on overseeing how Network Rail identifies and deals with the riskiest level crossings. The media largely focused on the committee's strictures on the lack of sympathy and sensitivity shown by Network Rail to the families of victims of level crossing accidents and which led to an apology being offered by the newly appointed chief executive of Network Rail, Mark Carne. The report also includes recommendations on detailed matters including driver training, teaching children about rail safety, the legal framework of level crossings, road signage and whistleblowing in the rail industry.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmtran/680/68002.htm

Proposed fares and timetable for Borders Rail services



The Scottish Transport Minister Keith Brown announced that fares on the Borders Rail route will be in line with those on the rest of the network. His proposed timetable, which has

to be confirmed by the rail industry, is for a half-hourly peak time service and hourly at other times including Sundays. The first departure from Tweedbank will be at 05.20 to allow for onward connections and the last train will leave Edinburgh at 23.55. The announcement was welcomed by the Campaign for Borders Rail.

www.transportscotland.gov.uk/news/borders-fares-and-timetable-revealed

Network Rail coped well with conditions in early winter



The Office of Rail Regulation has published its assessment of Network Rail's performance between 13 October 2013 and 4 January 2014. This analysis found that Network Rail, working with the rest of the rail industry, coped well with the wettest winter in over

200 years. The report highlights that rather than focusing on performance targets during this period, Network Rail rightly concentrated on working with train operators to keep passengers informed and get them to their destinations safely. ORR has asked Passenger Focus to research passengers' views on how well information was provided during the storms of January and February. Network Rail also successfully completed a record number of over 300 engineering projects over the Christmas and New Year period. The report also identified longer-term issues affecting rail performance, including timetable planning and elements of Network Rail's performance plans, which need improvement to turn around the recent decline in performance.

http://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/11299/network-rail-monitor-2013-14-q3.pdf

Study into best location for new high speed rail college

Following an announcement in January 2014 by Skills Minister Matthew Hancock that a new further education college was to be established to develop skills required in all aspects of the development of high speed rail in Britain, on 7 March a consultation was launched to find a location for the core site. It is intended that while using its own skills, the college will work with the industry and use the resources of other relevant training providers on a "hub and spoke"

Rail resilience in the south west

Following the reopening of the line through Dawlish, Railfuture is calling for a package of measures to ensure the future of a resilient rail network in the south west of England including a stakeholder conference to agree service levels both in normal operation and at times of weather disruption and planned work.

For further information, a briefing and to express your support see:

www.railfuture.org.uk/Dawlish

Railfuture at Parliament

Railfuture officers met MPs and peers at a reception in the Houses of Parliament on 12 March 2014. The reception, hosted by MP and Railfuture vice president Caroline Lucas, had the aim of contacting MPs on local campaigns that could benefit their constituents. The reception attracted 29 parliamentarians and a wide range of issues was raised.

www.railfuture.org.uk/article1451-Railfuture-lobbies-MPs

model. It is expected that a decision on the location will be made in June and that this, the first new further education college for more than 20 years, will open in 2017.

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/high-speed-rail-college-possible-location

Wokingham is landmark in station improvement programme

On 14 March 2014, Transport Minister Baroness Kramer unveiled the improved Wokingham station, the 400th station to benefit from the national station improvement programme. The £6 million refurbishment of Wokingham included contributions from South West Trains, Network Rail and Wokingham Borough Council.

www.gov.uk/government/news/passengers-to-benefit-from-over-220-million-station-improvements

Twitter and Facebook must be included in complaints analysis



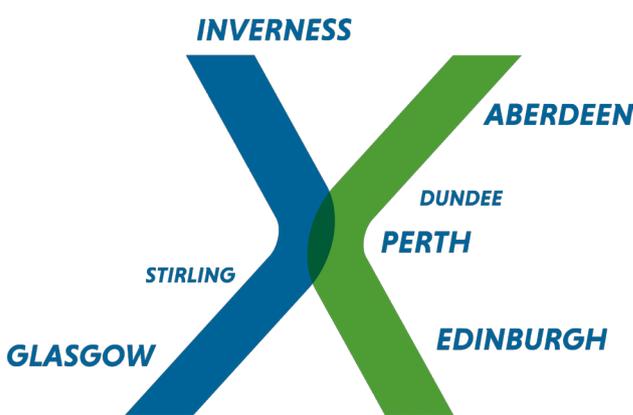
OFFICE OF RAIL REGULATION

The Office of Rail Regulation has published its statistics on passenger complaints for the period from October to December 2013, a period that included some widescale weather related disruption to services. There were 32 complaints per 100,000 journeys, a decrease of 14.2% over the same period in the previous year.

The current statistics do not include complaints made through social media and ORR would like to hear views on this on Twitter at #openrail. The full report includes a breakdown of complaints and the way in which they are received and dealt with by each train operating company, figures that can be useful in campaigning.

http://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/11560/passenger-rail-service-2013-14-q3.pdf

Campaign to transform Scotland's railway network



Transform Scotland, an organisation working for sustainable transport in Scotland is spearheading a campaign to establish rail links worthy of the 21st century between Scotland's seven cities. A proposed 15-year programme would include extending planned electrification from Perth to Dunblane, reducing journey times between Aberdeen,

Inverness and Dundee and the Central Belt by electrification and line doubling, upgrading and modernising the single line track between Aberdeen and Inverness, building a new line between Perth and Edinburgh and establishing a new interchange hub at Perth. The Inter-City Express campaign is supported by a variety of interested parties including the Railfuture affiliated Friends of the Far North Line.

www.transformscotland.org.uk/campaign-launch-calls-for-scottish-rail-revolution.aspx

Progress on Wisbech

A Wisbech rail summit called by Steve Barclay, the MP for north east Cambridgeshire, on 11 March 2014 was attended by Rail Minister Stephen Hammond who recognised that reopening the line was considered a strategic priority and that transport schemes can be accelerated where there is a strong political and business will to do so. He particularly valued a bottom-up approach where local expertise informs rail priorities. The summit was a tight-knit meeting of key stakeholders, including Chris Austin of Railfuture. It clearly showed how local Railfuture campaigning can build a group of interested parties to influence decisions on rail development.

www.railfuture.org.uk/article1448-Wisbech-shows-the-way

New chord speeds up freight trains from Felixstowe to Midlands

A visit by Transport Minister Stephen Hammond on 21 March 2014 marked the completion of the Bacon Factory chord north of Ipswich station that will enable freight trains from Felixstowe to travel to the Midlands without the need to reverse in sidings at the station and increase the reliability of the main line passenger services. The chord opened for commercial work on 31 March. The total cost of the work was £59 million which was co-funded by the European Union as part of the Trans-European Transport Network. A brief account of the role of the local authority and particularly of Ipswich councillor and Railfuture member Phil Smart is on the Railfuture website.

www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/News-Releases/Rail-minister-visits-new-59m-Ipswich-rail-line-202e.aspx

www.railfuture.org.uk/article1452-strike-a-chord

Minimal progress on improving passenger satisfaction



Passenger Focus has published the report of the autumn 2013 National Rail Passenger Survey, in which almost 30,000 people were questioned between September and November 2013. This showed an overall satisfaction level of 83%, marginally higher than in the spring survey, but 2% lower than a year previously. The survey investigates various aspects of travel including the stations, trains, punctuality and value for money and also in relation to the general purpose of travel such as commuting, business or leisure. The results are also given for individual train operators, showing considerable variations, and can be valuable for rail campaigners. The detailed breakdown of the results of the survey can be downloaded from the following link.

www.passengerfocus.org.uk/rail-passengers

Ten locations chosen for rail flooding resilience measures

A package of flood recovery measures announced by Prime Minister David Cameron on 12 February 2014 included £31 million for a package of 10 resilience measures to be carried out by Network Rail. These will be for work at Cowley Bridge junction, Chipping Sodbury, Hinksey, Whiteball Tunnel South, Athley-Cogload, Hele, Bradninch, Flaxbourton, Patchway up Tunnel, Honiton and Crewkerne earthworks strengthening. In addition rainfall, river flow and groundwater monitoring systems will be installed around Cowley Bridge and Chipping Sodbury.

www.gov.uk/government/news/further-flood-support-from-government

Government responds to MPs' assessment of rail policy

On 14 February 2014 the House of Commons transport select committee published the Government's responses to three of its recent reports *Access to ports*, *High Speed Rail: On track?* and *Cancellation of the InterCity West Coast competition: the Laidlaw and Brown reports*. These can be seen on the following links.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmtran/1083/108302.htm

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmtran/1085/108504.htm

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmtran/1086/108602.htm

Hitachi Rail move

Hitachi which is to build a factory at Newton Aycliffe to provide trains for the East Coast and Great Western main lines, has announced it is to move the headquarters of its global rail division to Britain. This will be the base from which the company will seek future contracts in mainland Europe as well as Britain. This could eventually lead to significantly more staff than the 750 who are expected to be employed when the factory opens next year.

www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-26657455

London Overground helps rail industry achieve new record

Use of the railways has continued to increase as shown in the latest passenger rail usage statistics issued by the Office of Rail Regulation for the October-December 2013 quarter. There were 402.8 million passenger journeys, an increase of 4.5% over the same quarter in 2012, and they travelled a total of 15.1 billion kilometres, an increase of 2.8%. This reflects the fact that a significant proportion of increased passenger numbers are attributable to the opening of the London Overground service between the East London Line and Clapham Junction. Passenger revenue rose to £2.8 billion, an increase of 6.2%. All these figures are the highest since quarterly records began.

http://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/10651/passenger-rail-usage-quality-report-2013-02-20-q3.pdf

Volunteer opportunities with the National Railway Museum



The National Railway Museum is looking for people with an interest in research and/or railways to work from home to help complete a new railway research tool based on the work of

esteemed railway historian Alan Jackson. Jackson wrote many books in his lifetime and, as part of his work, created an extensive collection of reference cards of railway-related themes from books, magazines and accompanying boxes of clippings. The Railway and Canal Historical Society has provided funding to have these hand-written cards digitised. Volunteers are needed to transcribe the many thousand entries of the digital index cards into a usable spreadsheet, the goal being to create an online reference tool. However, the more volunteers NRM have, the sooner the tool will be ready to use, which is why they need your help. This is the first time NRM have supported volunteers who work away from the museum. All transcribers work at home from all over the country. If you would like more information about this project or would like to become involved in making this resource a reality, please contact: karen.baker@nrm.org.uk

Review of rail ticketing to check if the 'market' is working

The Office of Rail Regulation has launched a review of the rail ticketing market to study whether arrangements for selling rail tickets are encouraging innovation and competition to the benefit of passengers. In the initial phase, from 20 February 2014, ORR asked for views from across the industry, from stakeholders and passengers, on how well the market works and what can be done to improve it, particularly focusing on the industry arrangements and practices with respect to the range and type of ticket products that train companies sell, the sales channels and the third party market for ticket selling.

Later in 2014, the regulator will also oversee the development of a code of practice on the provision of ticket retail information. This will provide clarity on what information passengers can expect from train companies, including information on the different types of fares, any restrictions that apply, and key terms and conditions such as compensation and

Western rail access to Heathrow Airport

Network Rail has announced its plans for the western access route from the Great Western main line at Langley, east of Slough, to Heathrow Airport Terminal 5. Journey times from Heathrow would be six minutes to Slough and 28 minutes to Reading with consequent faster journeys to the West Country, parts of the Midlands and to South Wales. When the link opens, which could be in 2021, it is estimated that there would be a million fewer car journeys, and over 12 million passengers would find their journey times reduced by 70%.

<http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/NewsDetails/rail-access-to-heathrow-route-announced-4026>

refund rights. Allied with this, ORR has also published a report on passenger compensation and refund rights. This found that only one in five passengers was confident of their rights in the event of a delay or cancellation, while two in five had no knowledge of being able to make a claim. A response to the initial consultation was made by Railfuture's Passenger Group.

<http://orr.gov.uk/publications/reports/rail-passenger-compensation-and-refund-rights>

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/submissions>

Review of Department for Transport rail organisation

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin has accepted the recommendations of a review of the organisation of the department in relation to rail that was initiated after the Brown Report last year, following the breakdown of the West Coast main line franchise procedures. A railway executive is to be established within the department. This will contain an Office of Rail Passenger Services, with an externally recruited managing director, to manage existing franchises and carry out the new franchise programme. The following link is to Patrick McLoughlin's statement from which the full report of the review can be downloaded.

www.gov.uk/government/speeches/rail-review-update

Glasgow Queen Street development

A public consultation was opened on 25 February 2014 for the planned redevelopment of Glasgow Queen Street station, as part of the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme.

This phase of the consultation will close on 31 May 2014 with a second phase taking place between September and December 2014.

www.egip.info/projects/we-are-redeveloping-queen-street-station

Franchising

Bidders for East Coast main line

Three groups have been shortlisted as bidders for the East Coast franchise: First Group, Keolis/Eurostar and Stagecoach/Virgin. The Department for Transport issued the invitation to tender on 21 March 2014 after which there will be three months for proposals to be developed by the potential operators. It is anticipated that the winner will be announced in November with the new franchise, which will last for eight years with the possibility of a one-year extension, will start in March 2015. The invitation to tender highlights the introduction of the new inter-city express fleet of trains, continuing services to all current destinations, faster and more frequent services to and from King's Cross by May 2020, faster average journey times to Leeds and Edinburgh from May 2020, the potential for improved services to destinations such as Lincoln, the potential for serving new routes including Huddersfield, Scarborough, Harrogate via York, Middlesbrough and Sunderland via Newcastle, and a fund to drive innovation and give benefits to the rail industry.

www.gov.uk/government/news/east-coast-on-course-for-improved-rail-services

Six-month extension for First Capital Connect

On 19 February 2014, Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced that a direct award contract had been agreed with First Capital Connect to continue operating the Thameslink service until September when the new combined Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern comes into effect.

www.gov.uk/government/news/passengers-on-track-to-receive-multi-billion-pound-improvements-to-services

www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/about-us/media-centre/news/2014/six-months-first-capital-connect-franchise-award-leads-customer-improvements/

Agreement on Northern franchise extension

On 27 March 2014 an agreement was announced by the Department for Transport that Northern Rail will continue to operate its franchise until February 2016. The agreement, which was co-signed by the five passenger transport executives in the north of England, includes new targets for punctuality, reliability and passenger satisfaction. In making the announcement, Transport Minister Stephen Hammond said that the department would work with Northern Rail to provide new electric trains to strengthen services across the network.

www.gov.uk/government/news/new-deal-for-rail-in-the-north

Railfuture responses

Over recent months Railfuture has responded to official consultations including:

The route from the West Midlands to Manchester, Leeds and beyond (HS2 Ltd)

Draft CP5 Delivery Plan (Network Rail)

Draft National Policy Statement on the national road and rail networks (Department for Transport)

December 2014

Southeastern
Timetable Consultation (Southeastern)

Railfuture submissions



PROGRESS IN BIRMINGHAM: The Midland Metro is currently being extended from Birmingham Snow Hill station through the city centre to serve New Street station. A new fleet of Urbos 3 trams, as in the artist's impression above, is being delivered to the Metro's Wednesbury depot. The Metro is expected to be extended further to serve the High Speed Two terminus at Curzon Street

High Speed Two

Birmingham's masterplan for HS2 station at Curzon Street

Birmingham Council launched a plan for the redevelopment of a 141 hectare site around the proposed HS2 station in Curzon Street on 27 February 2014. The proposals include a new Metro tram line branching off the extension currently being built through the Eastlands area to the new station for which Centro has issued an initial consultation. It is thought that the development could create over 14,000 jobs. The historic facade of the earlier Curzon Street station, the original terminal for the London-Birmingham railway, should be incorporated in the new one.

www.centro.org.uk/about-us/news/2014/curzonhs2-masterplan/

Crewe wins crucial place in Higgins review of HS2

On taking up his position as chair of HS2 Ltd at the beginning of the year, Sir David Higgins started a review of the progress of the project and plans for future development. The report *HS2 Plus* was published on 17 March 2014. Among the highlights of the review was the adequacy of the budget for phase one while maintaining the contingency figure. At the southern end of the route, the review proposed a comprehensive redevelopment of Euston, reconsidering the link between HS2 and HS1 and providing interchange facilities to the west and commuter lines at Old Oak Common. For phase two, emphasis was placed on the need to develop greater connectivity in the north of England and the Midlands, both east-west as well as north-south, to maximise the economic impact of HS2. Local authorities and other interested parties should develop plans that could be included in Network Rail's programme for the 2019-2024 control period. An accelerated programme would enable a new interchange hub to be available at Crewe in 2027, six years earlier than originally proposed. The full *HS2 Plus* report, Sir David's launch speech and the Government's response can be downloaded from the following link.

www.hs2.org.uk/david-higgins-launches-his-vision-for-hs2

How urban regeneration can be delivered with HS2

Soon after the Higgins review, the HS2 Growth Taskforce published its recommendations to the Government on action to maximise the wider economic benefits of HS2. The taskforce, chaired by Treasury Minister Lord Deighton, included representatives from local government, business and trade unions. Their recommendations include local bodies to create growth plans for cities along the route, city regions to create world-class transport links to kick-start urban regeneration, work to ensure young people know and take up the career opportunities that HS2 will open up, give help to British firms to bid for HS2 contracts and ensure that those contracts lead to local job creation and training.

www.gov.uk/government/news/hs2-will-drive-urban-regeneration

What's on

A list of events of interest to rail campaigners can be found on the Railfuture website:

[Railfuture events](#)