

News story: Transport Secretary welcomes progress on East West Rail

- project works at Bicester will reopen Varsity Line connection closed in 1960s
- completion of enabling works on western section will enable construction to begin in September 2019

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling welcomed a milestone moment for East West Rail during a visit to Bicester today, (4 October 2018) as he saw how enabling works are laying the ground for construction.

Meeting with Network Rail staff on the western section of the route, the minister saw how preparations are laying the foundations for a world-class rail link and significantly better journeys for passengers between Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

East West Rail will transform journeys in one of Europe's most vibrant economic regions, providing passengers and businesses with a transport system that unlocks economic opportunity and drives forward new housing and jobs.

As a hub for technical and scientific innovation, home to world-class universities and a skilled workforce that drives growth, the success of England's economic heartland is imperative to the UK's prosperity and productivity.

Rapid progress on the project means we will see construction underway on direct, fast and reliable services from next year, delivering significantly better connections for passengers.

Chris Grayling met with Rob Brighouse, Chair of the East West Railway Company, who said:

East West Railway Company is working hard with Network Rail to open this line as soon as possible. We're delighted to have the work underway. When open this line will boost economic growth, and make it easier and quicker for people who live here to travel in the local area.

Nigel Tipple – Chief Executive of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership – said:

We welcome the Transport Secretary's visit to Bicester today, which emphasises Oxfordshire's global prospects supporting innovation-led growth, greater productivity and major 'place potential' as we move towards an ever-increasing internationally-focussed economy.

East West Rail has the potential to drive dynamic economic growth. With a GVA of £23 billion per annum, Oxfordshire is one of only 3 counties that are net contributors to the Exchequer and – by leveraging the 2 internationally-renowned cities of Oxford and Cambridge – we can ensure that both communities and 'UK PLC' can capitalise on the economic strengths of this region.

Professor Sir Peter Gregson Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor of Cranfield University, said:

The Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford growth corridor is a beacon of innovation for the UK, featuring world-leading, research-intensive universities. For the UK to thrive, we must ensure that the potential of the region to boost the UK's skills and productivity is fully unlocked.

As a leading university at the heart of the growth corridor, we believe that increased connectivity across the region is vital to boosting skills and promoting innovation. East West Rail is an important step in that process and we welcome its progress.

Patrick Cawley, Director of Sponsorship for Network Rail's LNW route, said

The preparatory work we are currently carrying out will ensure we are ready to start construction as soon as we can. This will enable us to deliver a first class railway and all of the wider economic benefits it will bring to the local regions.

East West Rail is being built progressively in 3 phases. With phase 1 between Oxford and Bicester already complete, phase 2 will see major track and signalling upgrades extending services from Oxford to Bedford and Milton Keynes to Aylesbury. These works includes the reinstatement of the Varsity line between Bletchley and Claydon Junction, a mothballed section of railway closed since the 1960s.

The project is a vital part of the government's plans to provide the region with a road and rail network fit for the future, improving links to jobs, education, leisure and health services.

The government also recently announced the [preferred corridor for the Oxford to Cambridge expressway](#) will run alongside the East West Rail route, improving links between 2 of the country's intellectual powerhouses and delivering faster, safer and more reliable journeys.

The East West Rail route is divided into 3 sections:

- the western section phase 1 (Oxford to Bicester) and phase 2 (Bicester to Milton Keynes/Bedford and Aylesbury to Milton Keynes)
 - the central section (Bedford to Cambridge via Sandy)
 - the eastern section (Cambridge to Norwich and Ipswich) – existing railway which could link into East West Rail
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[Policy paper: Helston: reducing the risk of flooding](#)

This document explains what the Environment Agency is doing to reduce the risk of flooding in Helston, West Cornwall.

[Press release: First look at HS2's Euston tunnel portal site](#)

The work, a major milestone for the project, will help pave the way for the arrival of the specialist tunnelling teams on site next year.

At Euston, HS2 will deliver 11 new platforms in two phases. This will more than double capacity at the station, as well as providing a new concourse and expanded Underground station, linked for the first time, to the nearby Euston Square tube station.

Twin 13 mile (21 kilometre) long tunnels, the biggest tunnelling project since Crossrail, will take the 360 km/h trains out of London via a new station at Old Oak Common linked to Crossrail. At the southern end, a tunnel portal will be built on the site of the carriage sheds, just south of Mornington Street Bridge.

The demolition, which took 9 months to complete was managed by HS2's London enabling works contractor, CSJV working with demolitions contractor Keltbray. Up to 70 people were employed on site during the painstaking demolition of the sheds, which are adjacent to the west coast mainline.

[Timelapse of HS2's Euston tunnel portal site clearance](#)

Specialist teams used drones to survey the inside of the Victorian structure, before taking the fragile roof structure apart. In total, more than 7,000

glazing panels had to be removed from the 250 metre long building. The team then used a cranes to remove the 27 huge 50 metre long steel trusses which supported the ceiling.

Out of use since 2004, the sheds were built to house carriages and later used for Royal Mail trains. Surplus track, switches and points removed from the sheds have been donated to the Bluebell railway, a heritage line in Sussex.

Welcoming the progress, HS2's London Programme Director, Rob Carr, said:

The demolition of the old carriage sheds marks an important step forward for the project, clearing the way for the start of construction works next year, and the delivery of one of the most exciting new stations on the HS2 route. I'd like to congratulate the team on a job well done and look forward to moving ahead to the next stage of the project.

Peter Jones, CSJV Programme Director, said:

The CSJV team, consisting of people employed from the local area and other experienced professionals, alongside Keltbray have worked carefully and efficiently to ensure that this structure has been demolished safely. It marks a great milestone in the construction of HS2 and shows the fantastic progress that we are making in Euston and across Area South.

News story: Britain's high-speed future provides opportunity for all

Empowering and inspiring jobs building Britain's new high-speed railway are providing incredible opportunities for young people of all backgrounds, HS2 Minister Nusrat Ghani said yesterday (3 October 2018).

The minister met brand new students enrolling at the National College for High Speed Rail (NCHSR) in Birmingham, as well as those entering their second year of study, to hear how they were gaining the vital skills that will unlock brilliant careers working on HS2.

HS2 will connect Birmingham to London before branching out to connect the great cities of the north, including Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield – dramatically boosting capacity and connectivity on our rail network.

HS2 Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

The enthusiasm and ambition that this diverse group of students share is truly infectious, and they demonstrate the bright future that HS2 is offering young people – no matter their gender, ethnicity or background.

HS2 is quite simply more than a railway – it is an incredible opportunity to forge a well-paid, highly skilled and rewarding career. With 2000 apprentices expected to play their part in construction, these students are inspiring role models that can help build the talented workforce we need for the future.

Student Mariah Ahmed, 18, said:

Thanks to the National College for High Speed Rail I'm part of real engineering linked to our community and the biggest infrastructure project of my time, and all at such a young age.

Student Darren Chikono, 19, said:

The NCHSR has provided me with transferrable skills, which I can apply in industry. Being able to take on information from many industry leaders has proved to be crucial.

The visit follows the launch of [HS2's Skills Employment and Education Strategy](#), which is focused on encouraging more young people into transport-related careers and ensuring the project leaves a skills legacy for the UK economy. Over 100 apprentices are already working on HS2, with 30,000 new jobs to be supported during construction.

Throughout the [Year of Engineering](#) the government is joining forces with 1,400 partners, including the National College for High Speed Rail, to give young people across the UK a million direct and inspiring experience of engineering.

The industry needs 203,000 skilled recruits every year to 2024, and of those working in engineering only 12% are women and only 8% come from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

[News story: Animal medicines seizure: Border Force, East Midlands Airport](#)



A parcel was detained and subsequently seized at the Border Force, East Midlands Airport, Castle Donnington, Derby. This parcel was addressed to a residential premise in the UK and contained;

- 1 DMG injection
- 1 MSM injection
- 32 ITTP Paste

These products intended for use in horses are not authorised products in the UK.

The medicines were seized under Regulation 25 (Importation of unauthorised veterinary medicinal products) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013.

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