

[Work begins on PPP high-speed railway in Zhejiang](#)

Construction of a new high-speed rail link between east China's cities of Hangzhou and Wenzhou began on Thursday and is expected to be complete by 2021.

The Hangzhou-Wenzhou line stretches about 331 km and is China's first public-private partnership PPP funded high-speed railway project by the National Development and Reform Commission, with the private sector having holding status.

Upon completion, travel time between two cities will be more than halved from 2.5 hours to about one hour. Passengers can also transfer to Beijing and south China's Guangdong Province via the the new line.

The Wenzhou-Hangzhou high-speed railway is part of a national initiative to establish a modern, integrated transportation system laid out in the country's 13th five-year plan (2016-2020).

China has the world's largest high-speed rail network, stretching more than 22,000 km, while its total rail network is over 124,000 km.

By 2020, the length of high-speed railways in operation is expected to be around 30,000 km, connecting more than 80 percent big cities.

[Press release: Huge response to join cyber security apprenticeship scheme](#)

- Successful recruits will be placed in jobs in energy, water and transport companies
- Programme is led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and part of the Government's National Cyber Security Programme

Almost 1,250 people applied for 23 apprentice roles as part of a bold new pilot scheme to help protect the nation's critical national infrastructure from cyber threats and attacks.

The apprenticeships in Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) scheme aims to help develop tomorrow's online security professionals and tackle the risk of a future skills shortage.

The successful recruits will be employed in energy, water and transport companies which cyber criminals could target. Thirteen firms including

Northern Powergrid and Network Rail are taking part in the initiative.

The scheme will see the apprentices receive around 60 days of specialist classroom and lab training alongside their on-the-job education where there will work with existing cyber security professionals. This will help them develop skills to become cyber security professionals in under two years.

Minister of State for Digital and Culture Matt Hancock said:

As part of National Apprenticeship Week, our cyber security apprenticeships in Critical National Infrastructure scheme will take those with the right aptitude and thirst for new technology and place them in essential industries with tough on-the-job training.

This is an important part of our National Cyber Security Programme and recent Digital Strategy to prepare Britain for the challenges it faces now and in the future.

It's fantastic to see such a huge response to this scheme and I'm sure all the apprentices will help make these workplaces more productive, bring in fresh ideas and contribute from day one.

Training will include a three-day capture the flag cyber security workshop as well as topics including ethical hacking, network defence, malware analysis, cryptography, encryption and cyber security operations. This will be delivered by an external provider at sites across the country.

The apprentices will complete the new Cyber Security Technologist higher apprenticeship standard, which has been developed by Government working with industry. The scheme is for those aged 16 and over with a natural flair for problem solving and a passion for technology.

The programme is led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and part of the Government's National Cyber Security Programme.

Cyber security is a fast-paced and fascinating industry with strong job prospects. Recent figures from the Tech Partnership show there are already 58,000 cyber security specialists in a growing sector worth £22bn a year to the economy.

The apprenticeships in Critical National Infrastructure scheme is one of a number of cyber skills initiatives to develop a strong supply of cyber security professionals alongside the Government's Cyber Schools Programme and Cyber Retraining Academy. The pilot will contribute to the goal of delivering up to 1,000 cyber apprenticeships by 2021.

The figures are released as part of Government's celebration of National Apprenticeship Week. The week will also see a group of new recruits for the Government's own Cyber Security Apprenticeship scheme tour the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) tomorrow (March 10) to meet some of the people at the

forefront of the fight against cyber attacks.

Protecting the UK's Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) from hostile cyber activity by strengthening the nation's cyber security and resilience is a major operational priority for the Government.

The NCSC was opened by Her Majesty the Queen in February and plays a pivotal part of the Government's National Cyber Security Strategy that has committed £1.9 billion of investment into transforming the nation's capabilities in cyber defence, deterrence and development.

Notes to editors

Media enquiries and interview requests – please contact the DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210.

DCMS is initially working with employers in the energy, water and transport sectors to support the first round of cyber apprentices for critical national infrastructure sectors.

DCMS is keen to hear from employers in the following sectors to support future rounds of cyber apprentices in energy, civil nuclear, water, transport, telecoms, finance and broadcast media.

To apply to join the Government's own Cyber Security Apprenticeship scheme visit
<https://civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk/cyber-security-technologist>.

Further recruitment rounds in the Apprenticeships in Critical National Infrastructure Sectors scheme will be advertised here
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cyber-security-cni-apprenticeships>.

[News story: £220 million to help motorists beat congestion](#)

Traffic hotspots across England have been identified by Transport Secretary Chris Grayling to receive millions of pounds for junction upgrades, roundabout improvements and better traffic signalling.

The schemes, worth about £110 million, will cut congestion and journey times for motorists and improve safety. They will be completed by spring 2020.

This includes 2 larger projects, worth £30 million, which will create an unbroken stretch of dual carriageway on the A69 between Hexham and Newcastle. A further £14 million will go towards creating a new junction on the M11 to provide another route into Harlow, cutting journey times as well as unlocking housing developments.

A further £110 million will be invested on improving more roads, with details revealed at a later date.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

We are making the most extensive improvements to roads in the last 40 years, investing a record £23 billion to keep our country moving and make journeys faster, better and more reliable for everyone.

We are also spending a further £1.3 billion over the course of this parliament to relieve congestion and provide important upgrades to ensure our roads are fit for the future.

These schemes announced today will provide quick relief to millions of drivers and save them from getting stuck in traffic.

Nick Harris, Highways England Operations Director, said:

This continued investment in our motorways and major roads is bringing real benefits to communities up and down the country, and we will continue working with our partners to improve journeys for everyone who uses our roads.

The funding is broken down as follows:

£90 million for the North

In the North West, Highways England has identified 4 schemes, worth £6.4 million, to tackle congestion – 2 to improve the A595/A66 junctions at Great Clifton and the Fitz Roundabout, as well as the A585 at Norcross and junction 3 of the M55. These projects will all start by winter 2018 and be completed by spring 2019. A further £21 million has been set aside to improve roads in the North West.

North West	Estimated cost £millions
A595 / A66 Fitz Roundabout (Low Rd)	1
A595 / A66 Great Clifton Widening	1.6
A585 Norcross Capacity Improvement	3
M55 Junction 3 Signals	0.8
Future small schemes	21
North West total	27.4

Yorkshire and the North East will benefit from the £30 million A69 upgrades as well as £14.8 million invested in enhancing 7 congested junctions as well

as a further £18.2 million on other areas to be identified shortly. Improving the A63 Garrison Road in Hull will save more than half a million hours of delays in the first year alone.

Yorkshire and North East	Estimated cost £millions
A69/A68 Junction Improvements near Corbridge	15
A69/A6079 Junction Improvements near Hexham	15
A63 Garrison Road Signals and Road Improvement	6.35
M18 Junction 3 Improvements	0.25
M62 Junction 27 Widening	2.65
M62 Junction 28 Widening	2.25
A66/B6280 Morton Palms Widening	0.5
A19/ A179 Sheraton Signals	0.8
M1 Junction 36 Slip Road Improvement	2
Future small schemes	18.2
Yorkshire and North East total	63

£23 million for the Midlands

Four schemes, worth £9.9 million, will cut congestion in the Midlands, reducing queues at Old Stratford and Ogley Hay on the A5, junction 3 of the M42 and junction 27 on the M1. Details of schemes benefitting from an additional £14 million will be announced in due course.

Midlands	Estimated cost £millions
A5 Old Stratford Widening	3.3
M1 Junction 27 Capacity Improvements	0.9
A5/A5195 Ogley Hay Traffic Signals	1.5
M42 Junction 3 Improvement	4.2
Future small schemes	14
Midlands total	23.9

£53 million for the South East

The South East will benefit from £11.6 million on four projects and £41.6 million for future schemes.

South East	Estimated cost £millions
M27 Junction 7 Improvements	2.5
A3 Northbound Off Slip at University Interchange (Guildford)	1.6
A3 Stoke Interchange Southbound Off Slip Improvements (Guildford)	2.5
A20 Port of Dover Technology Improvements	5
Future small schemes	41.6
South East total	53.2

£32 million for the South West

M5 in the South West will see almost £20 million of improvements to ensure better journeys for motorists. About £12 million will be allocated shortly.

South West	Estimated cost £millions
M5 Junction 19 Improvements	2.8
M5 Junction 17 – 18 Driver Information and Queue Protection Scheme	4.3
M5 Junction 24 – 25 Driver Information and Queue Protection Scheme	7.1
M5 Junction 23 – 24 Driver Information and Queue Protection Scheme	5.5
Future small schemes	12.4
South West total	32.1

£16 million for the East

On top of the £14 million investment in the M11 junction 7a scheme at Harlow, the East will benefit from £2.8 million of investment to ease congestion.

East	Estimated cost £millions
M11 Junction 7a, Harlow, Essex	14
A11 Fiveways Roundabout, Barton Mills Signalisation	0.4
Future small schemes	2.4
East total	16.8

Map of schemes

PDF, 2.49MB, 2 pages

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Cabinet Secretary confirms £6.5m 'Circular Economy' fund

The [Circular Economy Capital Investment Fund](#) will help SMEs make the transformation towards a 'Circular Economy'; an approach that encourages keeping resources in circulation instead of being burned or ending their life in a landfill.

The £6.5m Fund, which will begin in 2019, builds on the highly successful £14m Accelerating Reprocessing Infrastructure Development (ARID) project which helped businesses create 178 new jobs, reduce, reuse or recycle 399,000 tonnes of waste and avoid 79.5 KT carbon emissions.

In a world where resource prices are rising fast, the circular economy model has the potential to provide significant cost benefits for Welsh businesses. Recent studies have found the adoption of a Circular Economy could save the Welsh economy up to £2billion and has the potential to create up to 30,000 jobs.

Wales already leads the way in the UK on recycling rates. The fund announced today will help Wales towards the milestones of 70% recycling by 2025 and 100% recycling by 2050, as set out in the Welsh Government's waste strategy [Towards Zero Waste](#).

Wales' commitment to a Circular Economy is further demonstrated by our membership of CESME (Circular Economy for SMEs), an EU project, comprising ten partners from six European countries, that supports knowledge sharing and learning. Wales hosted the first ever CESME meeting last year and has played a full role in subsequent events in Aalborg, Denmark and Bologna, Italy.

During the Bologna meeting it was agreed businesses are developing circular economy solutions when there are incentives to do so. Wales' £6.5m Circular Economy Capital Investment Fund will demonstrate to Welsh manufacturing companies the many and varied benefits of the Circular Economy model.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

"The £6.5m fund I am announcing today underlines our commitment to moving towards a Circular Economy. This will help businesses save money by becoming more resource efficient and resilient, an approach that will deliver numerous environmental benefits including less waste and reduced CO2 emissions.

"We are proud if Wales were an EU member state, we would be fourth in terms of the amount we recycle. We will continue to advocate the widespread adoption of a Circular Economy among businesses and our European partners as we aim towards the ambitious targets we have set ourselves in Towards Zero Waste."

Harsher measures will target smog

Curbing winter smog in the north has become a priority and challenge for air quality improvement, leading to harsh measures this year, the environmental minister said on Thursday.

Measures will include more efforts to reduce coal consumption for heating, stricter laws and regulations on environmental protection, and more inspections to deter polluters and push governments to fulfill their duties in reducing pollution.

“The central government will take harsher measures to curb winter smog in the north this year, especially by implementing fully the efforts in reducing coal consumption for heating,” said Chen Jining, minister of environmental protection, during the ongoing plenary session of the National People’s Congress.

Although the average concentration of PM2.5 – hazardous airborne particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less – has decreased by 9.6 percent over the past three winters in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, several bouts of severe smog hit the region since autumn last year, causing another round of national debate.

In contrast, PM2.5 levels dropped by at least 20 percent over the same period in the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta.

Besides weather conditions in the north that were not conducive to dispersing pollutants, other critical factors were excessive discharges of pollutants from industrial production and consumption of coal.

The minister said previous control measures are proving effective, with large drops in pollutants. These measures were mainly those listed in the national campaign against air pollution, with specific requirements since 2013 for lowering pollutant emissions.

Though the concentration of PM2.5 dropped slowly this past winter, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region’s annual average PM2.5 concentration last year was 33 percent lower than in 2013.

The new Environmental Protection Law, which took effect on January 1, 2015, presented environmental authorities with more weapons to fight polluters, said Tian Weiyong, head of environmental inspection for the ministry, in previous statements.

Data from the ministry showed that, based on the new Environmental Protection Law, 2,465 polluting companies were shut down last year, and environmental authorities at all levels levied fines totaling 6.63 billion yuan (\$959 million) on the polluters, a year-on-year increase of 56 percent.

Additionally, inspection teams sent by the central government reviewed 16 provincial-level regions last year.

Governments that fail to protect the environment as required will face punishments as well, he warned.

Despite the challenge, Chen was confident that China can solve pollution issues faster than developed countries.

“Many of them have spent 20 to 40 years, or even 50 years, to solve air pollution,” said Chen. “It’s hard to solve air pollution (in China) within two to three years. ... I can assure you that we can solve the air pollution issues faster than the developed countries.”