

News Release from Network Rail

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A New Start For Passengers

Tomorrow marks the start of a new era for rail in Britain as Network Rail embarks on a £35bn programme of expenditure targeted at building a bigger and better railway.

The ambitious five year rail industry blueprint of investment includes plans for over 500 schemes and projects aimed at providing extra capacity or capability for passengers and freight customers with more seats, more trains, longer trains and faster trains.

The blueprint, called the CP4 Delivery Plan (CP4 is control period 4, 01 April 2009 to 31 March 2014) and its supporting documents runs to over 800 pages. It details the improvements to be made on the national rail system over the next five years, how train performance will increase to even higher record levels and how safety will also reach new highs.

Iain Coucher, chief executive said: " Britain is poised on the brink of a rail revolution. Tomorrow we embark upon one of the most exciting chapters in the history of our railways. Network Rail is ready to unleash the biggest expansion of Britain's railways since the age of Brunel.

"The next five years will see massive investment in improving the railways for passengers and freight users by adding capacity and relieving overcrowding. We will see a transformed railway through ambitious plans that will deliver more trains, more seats, longer trains and faster trains.

"Services will be even more reliable, delays caused by the infrastructure will be cut by nearly 25% and we will embark upon an investment programme that is bigger and more ambitious than anything seen in generations.

"Delivering all this will require major change across the industry and we should not underestimate the scale and difficulties of the challenge that lies ahead."

Of the £35bn to be spent on Britain's railways over the next five years almost £12bn will be invested on projects designed to relieve overcrowding by lengthening platforms and increasing capacity and capability to enable more trains to run. £11.5bn will be invested in replacing older parts of the network (rail, signalling, bridges). A further £11.4bn will be spent on day-to-day maintenance and the costs of operating and running the network safely over the period.

Mr Coucher continued: "Stations will be transformed and new ones built. Speeds will be increased. Bottlenecks will be unblocked. Thousands of new trains will debut, services will run more frequently at weekends and at bank holidays. And all this while time keeping is ramped up, costs driven down and safety boosted."

"The last five years has been about putting right the ills of the railway - this has been achieved with train punctuality, passenger satisfaction and railway safety all at record levels and billions cut from the cost of running the railway. The next five years will be focused on doing the basics even better and delivering a bigger, better railway for passengers and freight."

Network Rail is committed to making even more trains run on time. By 2014 it is committed to record punctuality levels of 92.6% across England and Wales, and 92% in Scotland. This compares to just over 90% now and 78% at the time of Railtrack's demise. Network Rail will also provide even better value for money for the British people – making savings of an extra 21% – on top of the 27% already achieved since 2004.

Network Rail's planning horizons extend far beyond the next five years and is looking up to 30 years ahead with detailed reviews already well underway into possible main-line electrification and the building of further high speed lines.

The next five years will also see Network Rail committing itself to furthering its environmental sustainability. With carbon emissions an ever growing cause for concern, Network Rail will champion the cause for rail – the most environmentally friendly form of mass transit.

Mr Coucher added: "Rail is the greenest way to travel, I think it's the greatest way to travel and I intend to champion the cause of rail in Britain over the years to come."

Notes to Editors:

Major projects include:

Thameslink:

The Thameslink programme is one of the biggest rail projects ever in the UK and currently Network Rail's largest infrastructure project. The scheme will see massive benefits to passengers with much longer, more frequent services on the route.

The £5.5bn + project (including over £1bn being spent by on new trains) will increase capacity through the heart of London by over 400%, taking the number of train carriages per hour from 64 to 288, or 3,500 seats per hour to 17,000.

Delivered in two stages, the first, before London 2012, will see passengers on the northern section of the route main benefiting from 50% longer trains with dozens of stations upgraded and a new station constructed at Blackfriars.

The second phase, for completion by 2015, will see the removal of key bottlenecks and a brand new station at London Bridge freeing up even greater capacity increases through the core central London route.

Birmingham New Street:

£600m is to be invested into transforming Birmingham New Street station in a collaborative project called the Gateway Project . CP4 will see the first phase of funding to redevelop one of the UK's busiest stations – tackling overcrowding and greatly enhancing passenger experience.

Originally designed to handle 650 trains a day, the station now takes over 1,250 every day. The new concourse will be over three times its current size and passengers will have better, modern facilities in a light and spacious station. Links to the city will be improved and the New Street Gateway will create 3,000 new jobs and deliver economic benefits of almost £2bn

Crossrail:

Over £2bn on Crossrail – the largest civil engineering project in Europe with the huge redevelopment at Paddington. Taken with the Thameslink expansion there will be viable through-London north-south and east-west routes for the very first time

King's Cross:

Over £450m is being invested at King's Cross station to completely redevelop the site which handles 47m passengers per year. By completion in 2013, the project will triple the size of the concourse area, providing more space and shops for people to use whilst waiting for trains; deliver a glass and aluminium concourse roof; improve access, including for disabled passengers, as well as link to underground, Thameslink, and domestic and international St Pancras services. An extra platform will also be added to increase the stations' train capacity.

Reading:

£425m at Reading untangling railway lines – leading to faster, more reliable train services. New tracks and platforms will be added to improve train speeds, reduce delays and ease overcrowding

Scotland:

- £300m+ on a new line from Airdrie to Bathgate, a new passenger railway that Network Rail is rebuilding after 50 years of closure. It will be a double track, electrified railway connecting communities in central Scotland to Scotland's two major cities, energising local economies and creating access to work, education and leisure opportunities.

- £150m+ Glasgow Airport Rail Link, will provide a fast, reliable service between Glasgow Central station and Glasgow International Airport. The new nine mile link will call at Paisley Gilmour Street before reaching its final destination at a new purpose-built station at the airport

East Coast Main Line improvements:

- An investment of around £250 million in remodelling junctions, removing or altering level crossings and works to bridges and platforms. Benefits will include capacity for more trains, faster and heavier trains and higher and wider freight containers. This will free up capacity on the East Coast Main Line for more express trains, help increase punctuality and provide alternative routes to help deliver a 7 day railway

- Investing some £50m in a new link between the East Coast Main Line and Cambridge to create extra capacity to run more services to and from London every hour, reduce delays to train services by nearly 30,000 minutes every year, and allow us to keep the railway open when essential maintenance is needed, by keeping one link between Hitchin and Cambridge running, whilst the other is being worked on

Paddington Span 4:

£26m is being invested in restoring the Edwardian roof over Paddington's platforms 9 to 12. Passengers will benefit from a lighter, brighter station as Network Rail restores the metalwork and reglazes the roof, allowing the light back in.

Nuneaton:

We are investigating plans to invest around £40 million to build a short section of new track north of Nuneaton station. This will allow freight trains from Peterborough

to join the West Coast Main Line without the need to cross it at grade, offering capacity benefits and reducing potential causes of delay.

Delivery Plan:

For access to the full suite of documents, totaling over 800 pages please use our website: <http://www.networkrail.co.uk>

For more information contact:

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About Network Rail

Network Rail is the 'not for dividend' owner and operator of Britain's railway infrastructure, which includes the tracks, signals, tunnels, bridges, viaducts, level crossings and stations - the largest of which we also manage

We aim to provide a safe, reliable and efficient rail infrastructure for freight and passenger trains to use

Our website: <http://www.networkrail.co.uk>