

Wessex



The Wessex route is one of the busiest in the UK, providing a vital economic artery into central London from the south coast, with 230 million passenger journeys each year generating £1bn in revenue.

As well as a vital commuter service connecting many towns and cities between London and the South Coast, the route is a crucial freight link for the UK, bringing goods in and out of Southampton docks, one of the country's busiest deep-water ports. Our network also plays a crucial role in supporting tourism and weekend travel across the region.

Our biggest challenge is peak-time capacity. Passenger numbers on Wessex have more than doubled in the last 20 years and London Waterloo is the UK's busiest station with almost 100 million passenger journeys a year. We also manage Clapham Junction - Europe's busiest interchange station. We are operating at full capacity on the network. At peak times, 24 trains an hour run on our mainline.

This pressure on our infrastructure increases train station dwell times, causes crowding and means minor incidents can have a big impact on the service. This pressure is only forecast to increase - by 2043 passenger numbers on Wessex are expected to rise by 40%.

While the challenges on our route are significant, they bring with them enormous opportunity to make a lasting and positive difference to the lives of many millions of people; not to mention the chance to help grow our national economy and boost the prosperity of businesses and communities across our route.

As we carefully manage this growing demand for our service, we remain focused on our vision, to be trusted by our customers to deliver a safe and reliable railway for Wessex. With this at the heart of all we do, we are delivering more than £2 billion of renewals, maintenance and investment across the route through to 2024. This includes completing our £800 million investment to increase peak time capacity at Waterloo station by 30% by the end of this year.

It's not just about investment in infrastructure, but also working smarter and safer. The alliance with our main franchise holder, South Western Railway, is seeing joint teams working together as we continue to move more of our staff into our new state of the art Rail Operating Centre in Basingstoke to manage the service better for our passengers.

While we do all this we are also investing in the latest technology to make us more efficient and help reduce the time we need to be on the tracks working. And the less time our teams spend trackside, means a safer railway for everyone.

As we move into control period six (CP6) we will be reducing the burden on tax-payers by seeking increasing levels of third party funding to help deliver a whole range of exciting projects, from footbridges through to major station re-developments. Wessex now has a dedicated team, working with our stakeholders, doing just that.

In setting our priorities for the future we have looked outside of our organisation and worked closely with our stakeholders to seek their views on what they would like from the railway in the future. We look forward to delivering a world class railway, while playing a crucial role in increasing investment and supporting growth for all the communities we serve across the Wessex route.



Becky Lumlock
Route Managing Director
Wessex

At a glance



230m passenger journeys each year



200 stations



1,983 bridges



323 level crossings



1,800 employees



2,000 passenger and freight services every day



1,300 miles of track

Our vision is to be trusted by our customers to deliver a safe and reliable railway in Wessex

To deliver this during CP6 we will:

- Meet our customers' expectations
- Relieve congestions at stations
- Reduce service affecting failures
- Work towards zero lost time injuries
- Reduce level crossing risk
- Manage our assets safely
- Deliver faster, safer isolations
- Lay groundwork for the digital railway
- Efficient and effective financial management
- Attract more 3rd party investment
- Develop CP7 3rd party schemes
- Create a great place to work where everyone brings their whole self to work

Benefits to our passengers

Throughout CP6 we will be investing in many improvements for our passengers including more room and a more reliable service, with more third party funding.

Our investment is overwhelmingly focused on continuing to deliver a safe railway infrastructure and to drive continuous improvements in reliability.

We will build on the £800 million Waterloo and South West Upgrade through a series of major projects. This includes seeking industry consensus on solving congestion issues at Clapham Junction station so we can deliver a safe and high quality passenger interchange, developed in partnership with Crossrail 2 to achieve a future-proof design. And at Woking we will continue to develop plans for the grade separation of the main and Portsmouth lines, as well as converting platform 6 into a through platform, allowing increased numbers of services to run and stop. In order to progress these plans to delivery, additional funding will be required and this will be treated separately, outside of the 5 year strategic business plan.

The South London high voltage (HV) power supply programme is also planned for delivery in CP6. This will provide long-term capability and resilience of HV power supply. It will take account of future service and rolling stock needs associated with Wessex capacity, train service specification and Crossrail 2.

We have also identified a series of smaller scale station improvements that could take place in CP6, subject to additional funding, including improvements to stairs and the footbridge at Surbiton; an additional footbridge at Wimbledon and improvements to address congestion at both Waterloo exit two and Guildford station.

Ready for digital railway

We will continue preparing for a modern, digital railway in CP6.

Whether redeveloping key stations, planning for a brand new railway line or re-signaling work across the route, our new infrastructure projects will be 'digital ready' as we all work towards a digital railway.

We are also supporting South Western Railway in improvements to workforce management and communications, using modern control systems that will be more efficient, reduce reactionary delays and see better passenger communication during moments of disruptions.

Sources of additional funding

In CP6 we will reduce our reliance on the public purse, by exploring business development and third party funding opportunities. Our strategy sets out a process for securing incremental, third party funding for projects. We know this process will evolve over time and, as expertise grows, it will be regularly reviewed so it continues to meet business and stakeholder needs.

Our third party strategy is underpinned by the idea those parties benefitting from a project should contribute proportionately towards it. This represents a significant change from the current position, where beneficiaries of railway enhancements would often see them delivered by Network Rail and funded by the Department for Transport (DfT). To bring about this change we will work closely with our partners and stakeholders to shift the paradigm away from rail projects being funded wholly by central government.

We continue to work closely with potential investors on our route and we are always open to discussing any proposal for third party investment.

Our people

We want to continue to build a great place for all of our 1,800 employees to work. A big part of that is creating a more diverse workforce that better reflects the people we serve.

This includes helping Network Rail meet its 20 by 2020 target – that is to have 20% of our workforce female by 2020.

We will help do this through:

- Creating a cadre of Wessex diversity champions to help drive the right behaviours across the route.
- Training a team of Wessex STEM Ambassadors to go into schools on our route and encourage girls to remain interested in STEM subjects.
- Carrying out exit interviews to understand the reasons behind why people leave Network Rail.
- Improving facilities for men and women working on and around the track.
- Introducing blind shortlisting for job applications to avoid unconscious bias.

Looking ahead to CP7

On 1 April 2024, control period 7 will be starting and the Wessex route will look and feel very different to our passengers than the railway they see today.

As one of the most crucial and busy parts of the UK's railway network, we will have delivered billions of pounds of investment in making our infrastructure safer and more reliable. Significant re-signalling work will help turn a fully digital railway into a reality by 2034.

We will be less dependent on the public purse, as we seek more innovative sources of funding, and spending less time on the tracks as new technology helps us work smarter. We will also be a more diverse organisation.

All this means we will be providing a safer, more reliable and a more affordable railway for the future.

Our plans for CP6

Digital railway

- Development of strategic outline business cases for Woking and Digital Railway is a key activity for late CP5/early CP6
- Anticipate introduction of European Train Control System (ETCS) in CP7, with detailed implementation planning developed in CP6

Alliance operations

- Continue our alliance with SWR which includes joint control, performance, planning and Waterloo station
- Work to develop the alliance and expand wherever there is opportunity to deliver a better outcome for our passengers or the taxpayer.

Asset management

- 100% intelligent infrastructure where applicable
- Supported by 24/7 fault controllers
- Expand intelligent infrastructure to cover more dimensions of assets
- Smarter allocation of resources and targeted interventions

Reducing delays

- Support digital management of rolling stock and crew
 - Dwell times and peak killer reduction plan
 - Incident management system
 - 2018 and 2020 timetable rewrites
 - Delay per-incident action plan
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Our stakeholder engagement

We are focused on the needs of our route stakeholders and keep in close contact with them, including Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities and freight and train operating companies. As part of our ongoing engagement, we ran a series of stakeholder workshops before drafting our CP6 plans so we could be sure it reflected their needs and met their expectations.

The themes raised by the majority of our stakeholders were:

Better consultation in possession planning

- Value for money possession options through sharing cost information.
- Early engagement.
- Alignment with other routes during disruptive possessions.
- Fewer late notice changes with better possession planning.

Better asset reliability

- Smoother and quicker journeys with better track quality and the removal of Temporary Speed Restrictions (TSRs).
- Increased capacity and reliability by delivering Feltham and Farncombe to Petersfield re-signalling schemes.
- Reduced Delays Per Incident (DPI).

Growth

- Opportunity to capture more revenue as Sunday passenger numbers rise.
- Overall journey time improvements, which are key for long distance operators.
- W10 freight diversionary route to allow works on Reading to Basingstoke (BKE).
- Three trains per hour on the North Downs line (from 2 tph).

Freight

- Reduce journey times from Southampton to Reading.
- Increase East/West services for the growing aggregate market.
- Reduce derailments through effective maintenance and renewals plans for sidings and yards.
- Review and establish the value of removing Heavy Axle Weight, Restrictions where applied on track / structural assets.
- Better TSR/PSR management and removal plans.

