

# Southern

Welcome to Southern region's strategic plan that is proudly aimed at 'Putting Passengers First'. We're one of five new regions in Network Rail and are here to serve passengers and freight users. Our region comprises of Wessex, Sussex and Kent routes, as well as Network Rail High Speed. We're also responsible for managing the major stations of Waterloo, Clapham Junction, London Bridge, Victoria, Charing Cross, Cannon Street and Guildford.

With over 6,500 employees, the Southern region is responsible for more than 700 million passenger journeys each year. What we do, and how we do it matters. Passengers and businesses rely on us to get to work, transport goods, get to the airport to catch a flight or visit family and friends.

We also affect the lives of those who live close to the railway and the millions of people who cross our bridges and level crossings every day. Our region links major towns and cities including Bournemouth, Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton, Canterbury, Ashford and Dover. We're also critical to London's transport south of the Thames and we transport large numbers of commuters to and from London and other employment hubs on some of the busiest and most congested lines in the country.

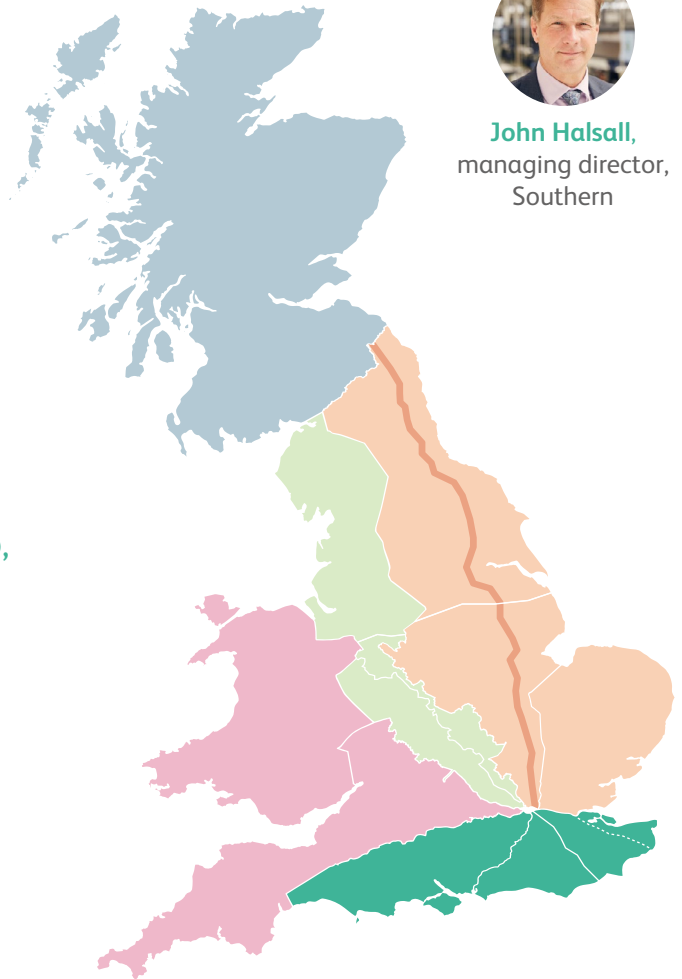
We serve channel routes to Europe, major ports, Gatwick and Southampton airports, and transport leisure travellers to south coast resorts and other tourist destinations. Over 7,000 passenger and freight services operate on the region every week day - more than a third of Britain's rail services. We also move over 266,000 tonnes of freight each week and own and maintain 3,300 miles of track, 4,986 bridges, 895 level crossings and 7,990 signals.

This strategic plan covers the five-year period from April 2019 to March 2024, known as Control Period 6 (CP6), and builds on the South East Route Delivery Plan and the Wessex Route Strategic Plan, both first published in March 2019. This plan provides an update at the end of year one of the control period and is our first as a new region.

The creation of the Southern region, as part of Network Rail's vision of 'Putting Passengers First', will bring about transformational change with real devolution of decision-making, resource and accountability.



**John Halsall,**  
managing director,  
Southern



The formation of the regions promotes better alignment to economic and political geographies and is a vital step to make sure investment meets the needs of local stakeholders and customers.

This plan shows how we're investing £7bn to operate, maintain and renew our railway. This will be complemented by extra investment for infrastructure enhancements, such as the development of Gatwick Airport station, investment in train depot and stabling facilities and plans to make our stations more accessible for those who find the railway difficult to use.

Our new region will champion the development of our network to drive sustainable economic growth in our communities and will work ever more closely with our supply chain to deliver our ambitious plan efficiently.

While our investment plans are progressing well, there have been several challenges in year one. The most notable is train performance on the Wessex route, where we've let passengers down. Wessex's underlying asset performance has improved but it is nowhere near good enough and, during the second half of this year, we have seen some significant failures that have had a particularly disruptive effect on the train service.

Train performance has also been affected by an increase in the number of trespass incidents and fatalities, and

passengers have also experienced widespread industrial action. We are working hard to address these issues.

Elsewhere, in Sussex and Kent routes, train performance has been better and we are delivering on most of our performance targets. Reducing the number of train cancellations on GTR services remains a focus and we will be working hard with all our operators to do even better. We are also exploring how we can make the network more resilient to changing weather patterns, with the high rainfall experienced this autumn and winter proving a real challenge to our older embankments and cuttings which has led to several temporary line closures.

At our major stations we have been focusing hard on passengers' needs. As gateways to the rail network, a passenger's experience at our stations can have a major influence on their overall journey satisfaction. We have been focusing on getting the basics right, making sure stations are clean and tidy, that lifts and elevators work, and that staff are readily available to help passengers.

The results from the latest autumn 2019 National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) show our managed stations scoring 83.1 per cent, compared to 80.3 per cent in August 2018. London Bridge station managed an impressive 91 per cent, up seven per cent in a year.

Improving the reliability and capability of our network through focused renewals, quality proactive maintenance and first-class railway operations will deliver for our passengers and freight users by improving train performance. This is our purpose, but we must never lose sight of the fact that the railway is an inherently risky environment. The safety of those working on and using the railway is paramount. Our safety vision is 'Everyone Home Safe Everyday' and is as applicable to our passengers and neighbours as it is to our workforce.

This is an ambitious plan but 'Putting Passengers First' requires it to be so. We must improve train performance, deliver our investment plans and retain the confidence of our passengers and workforce by driving ever higher safety standards.

## Major improvement work in CP6

### Across our Kent route:

- We're spending £340m on track and junctions, plus completely replacing over 200km track and replacing more than 560 switches and crossings.
- We're spending £235m on major signalling renewals at Hither Green and Victoria and will spend £75m on earthworks to protect passengers against the risk of landslips.
- More than 110 underbridges, 12 overbridges, 23 footbridges and one tunnel will be replaced or refurbished with £177m.
- £88m will be spent on station improvements.
- We're analysing data at graffiti hotspots to reduce trespass incidents and collaborating with the rail industry to create suicide prevention plans, including dedicated welfare officers at stations to identify and help vulnerable people.
- Our ever-closer partnership with Southeastern has seen a joint focus on performance improvement, targeting smaller delays, enhancing timetables to address common problems and investment in a new state-of-the-art Kent Integrated Control Centre (KICC).
- We're working more closely on passenger behaviour, with the introduction of extra rail enforcement officers to reduce anti-social behaviour, as well as improved management of sick passengers.



## Region at a glance



**700m**

passenger journeys each year



**7,000+**

passenger and freight services operate on the region every week day



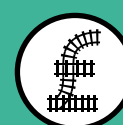
**3,300**

miles of track



**6,500**

employees



**£7bn**

invested over CP6 in operating, maintaining and renewing the railway





## Benefits:

- We're investing a record £1.25bn over CP6 (2019-2024) to upgrade track, signalling, embankments, stations and depots to give passengers in Kent and South East London better journeys, with fewer delays.
- This includes replacing 429km of track – more than twice the distance round the M25 – and investing £162m in new signalling equipment, and another £170m replacing switches and crossings, to reduce faults and the subsequent delays for passengers.
- Our major projects include signalling renewals on the Greenwich and Blackheath lines over the Easter and May bank holidays in 2019, as well as in Hither Green, which is due for completion in Easter 2020, and will reduce delays caused by signalling faults and points failures.
- Over December 2019 and January 2020, we replaced track and three sets of old switches and crossings – the moveable rails which allow trains to switch tracks – at Ashford International station.
- We'll also tackle delays caused by trespass by renewing 90km of fencing at a cost of £2.1m.
- In the February half term in 2020, we closed the Bexleyheath line (pictured) for nine days to carry out major work to protect passengers from disruption caused by landslips. We invested £6.6m to provide a safe, permanent solution after four landslips in the past decade – the most recent in February 2019, which blocked the line for seven days.
- We'll also reduce the delays caused by leaves on the line by clearing overgrown vegetation across more than 50km of railway.





## Across our Sussex route:

- We are targeting signalling reliability at key junctions to prevent track circuit failures, the renewal of signalling cables and fixing webcams to monitor before faults happen, so passengers experience fewer delays.
- Our wider enhancement work includes a vital £150m upgrade to Gatwick Airport station to increase capacity, reduce delays, improve accessibility and transform the experience for more passengers, with work set to begin in May 2020.
- We will spend £3.9m at Crawley station to install a new footbridge and two new lifts, making access easier for customers with reduced mobility, as well as those with children, heavy luggage or shopping. New £2.5m lifts were also opened at Carshalton station in July 2019. Other schemes to look forward to include Coulsdon South and Selhurst.
- We're introducing British Transport Police teams and welfare officers at hotspot locations to prevent people from trespassing or potentially taking their own life, which will ultimately reduce delays for passengers.
- A new £240m fleet of Class 717 trains continues to drive improvement in reliability.
- We're investing in an "On Time" culture change programme, working collaboratively with GTR, to help frontline colleagues understand the role they play in delivering brilliant performance. This includes an in-depth look at smaller delays and how to prevent them in the future.

## Benefits:

- We carried out £67m of improvement works over a 9-day blockade during February half term 2019, supported by 15 weekends of engineering works, to make passenger journeys more reliable. With GTR we maximised the closure by investing £800,000 in essential maintenance and repairs at eight nearby stations.
- We invested £5m during a closure of the Barnham to Havant line during October half-term in 2019. We replaced 1.37 miles of worn-out track including four key level crossings and improved stations. The work will increase the reliability and safety of our infrastructure to improve performance for passenger journeys.
- We carried out a major upgrade of the line between Lewes and Seaford in 2019. The upgrade saw signalling control of the Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford areas moved to our state-of-the-art route operating centre at Three Bridges. It increased the number of trains that can use the diversionary route for London–Brighton services via Lewes to three trains per hour. The improvement will give Southern the flexibility to move three times as many passengers on the route when there is disruption on the Brighton Main Line.
- Passengers will soon benefit from clearer information on train performance as we move towards using "On Time", which measures trains arriving at each stop within a minute of their scheduled time. It will also provide targeted data on where we're not meeting those targets so we can address the reasons behind this and improve reliability.
- GTR's On Time performance means it is the top high-volume train operator in the UK with 71 per cent of trains arriving at every scheduled stop on time. However, we know performance can still be better, especially at peak times when we've suffered too many train cancellations, which is now a focus area.
- Our closer than ever partnership with GTR continues with joint performance improvement teams looking at innovative ways to make journeys better for passengers.



## Across our Wessex route:

- We're spending £1.3bn on renewals, £598m on maintenance, £441m on operations and support to provide a more reliable and safer railway which is easier to access and has more space for passengers.
- A new Joint Performance Improvement Centre (JPIC) is focussing on getting back to basics of running a railway, with a focus on resilience (starting on time), managing the service through the morning and evening peaks (keeping on time) and recovering quickly when things go wrong, including the management of fatalities, joint decision-making, keeping passengers informed and making sure lessons are learned for future improvement.
- We are investing an additional £10m to improve the resilience of our earthworks and embankments during prolonged periods of wet weather.
- We're spending £454m upgrading the signalling for Feltham and Wokingham where a state-of-the-art system will help reduce delays.
- We're spending almost £80m on earthworks including on the West of England line to prevent landslips at Crewkerne, Gillingham in Dorset and Honiton.
- We've replaced track at a critical junction at Wimbledon on the most intensively used part of our infrastructure between Waterloo and Woking.
- We've introduced extra frontline staff from controllers, signallers and mobile operation managers, to train service managers and clerical support.
- We're spending £2.3m to reduce trespass incidents with the installation of platform-end gates and new fencing.
- Paramedics are to be trialled at Waterloo, Clapham and Wimbledon stations to deal with sick passengers quickly and reduce the impact on train services.

## Benefits:

- We've reduced platform overcrowding and improved the reliability of train services at Feltham station, by lengthening platforms to allow 10 car trains to stop. When this long-term project to improve the station and the surrounding area is completed later this year, it will include a new station entrance linked directly to the bus stops by fully accessible ramps and a dual-purpose bridge for cyclists and pedestrians. These improvements will help provide smoother passenger journeys and a safer railway environment.
- Passengers will benefit from faster and more reliable journeys thanks to upgrades between Castle Cary and Weymouth. We will strengthen tunnels, bridges and refurbish and renew track on the Heart of Wessex line, which links Weymouth and Bristol. The main area of work is at Yetminster in Dorset where a 129-year-old bridge crossing the River Wriddle will be renewed (pictured).
- Passengers will enjoy fewer delays on trains between London and Guildford, Woking and Portsmouth, Reading and Redhill, and Guildford and Alton, thanks to a major upgrade during a 10-day closure in April 2020. Engineers replaced points, track circuits, plus two miles of track and conductor rail.





## Across our Southern region:

- We've led a variety of schemes to tackle extreme weather, including a trial of a new anti-icing product to prevent the formation of ice on the rails, as well as running extra seasonal treatment trains during autumn and winter, and the replacement of equipment that applies a special gel to improve train grip during heavy leaf fall and icy conditions.
- In response to passenger concerns, we have developed PIDD Plus (Passenger Information During Disruption) to improve the passenger information available before, during and after disruption to their journey.
- We have also introduced a programme called 'Brilliant basics in stations' which has seen improvements in several key areas. These include:
  - **Seating:** New wooden seating (pictured) with charging points and tables have been installed at London Bridge, Victoria, Charing Cross and Canon Street stations. Seats will be replaced at Waterloo and Clapham Junction in year two of CP6.
  - **Cleaning:** In year one of CP6 we have engaged a facilities consultant to review our cleaning contract. We have seen an improvement in quality demonstrated by the audit results. This will be rolled out to other stations in the region during year two.
  - **Wi-fi:** Better wi-fi technology to benefit passengers and staff has begun at Victoria station and London Bridge platforms and a full wi-fi roll out will be completed in Southern Region stations by June 2021.
  - **Toilets:** Victoria station has been refurbished and won 'best toilets' in the transport sector at the Loo of the Year Awards 2019. Plans are in place to upgrade and increase facilities in all other Southern region-managed stations.
  - **Wayfinding/signage:** A central programme to develop a new wayfinding/signage standard has been developed and funding will be sourced to roll this out to Victoria Station first, to be completed by the end of CP6.
  - **Safety improvement:** Much work has been done at London Bridge station around escalator safety, including new "hold the handrail" signs. At Victoria Station, work has started to fix the roof and reduce slippery floors. If successful, this will be rolled out to all appropriate areas.
  - **One Team approach:** In a first for Britain's rail industry, Network Rail staff and employees at train operators Southeastern, Southern and Gatwick Express at Victoria station, ditched their individual company uniforms in favour of a new outfit. Staff are now trained to assist every passenger regardless of the service they're using. This means passengers no longer need to seek out specific staff for help, leading to better customer service. This has now been adopted at London Bridge, Victoria, Charing Cross and Cannon Street stations in the past year. We are working with colleagues at Waterloo, Clapham Junction and Guildford to look at the roll-out of this way of working.

## Our stakeholders

Passengers, customers and stakeholders have been central to the development of our plan with 88 organisations consulted and 370 individual requirements received from 39 organisations.

In September 2019, we established a fully integrated regional communications team under the leadership of a new Communications and Engagement Director. Their purpose is to deliver transformational change in the way we communicate with our internal and external stakeholders.

We already collaborate closely with train and freight operating companies on joint initiatives, such as seasonal campaigns for passengers around the problems caused by leaf fall and ice, plus joint stakeholder events, meet the manager drop-in sessions for passengers and joint updates on key announcements or incidents.

We will integrate our activity even further in 2020 to improve how we communicate with passengers, especially

during planned works and unplanned disruption, as well as building partnerships with third-party investors to help fund improvements to the railway.

We aim to fully align all our planned communications activity with the relevant train operating companies, so we can speak with one coordinated voice to passengers and stakeholders.

Our strategy involves listening to stakeholder concerns and feedback, taking action and reporting back to them in a “you said, we did” approach.

Through more effective working relationships, we can keep our passengers up-to-date, provide better information to our lineside neighbours regarding planned works, and proactively approach MPs and other key stakeholders regarding mutual interests.

## Our people

Our people remain fundamental to our success and are key to putting our passengers first. We want our staff to feel that Network Rail is a great place to work where they are involved in the decisions we make.

We value our people’s commitment and reward high performance. We develop our staff so they have the skills needed for tomorrow. We’re also striving to be an organisation that reflects the diverse range of people who use our services.

We have produced Route People Plans to address the key issues within our Routes which will be updated annually and reviewed quarterly.

To ensure new colleagues quickly understand our main priorities, we have launched a unique, five-day induction programme. This takes every new employee through the key elements of our business and shows them how we are putting passengers first in all our work.

We are carrying out a thorough review of what we expect our frontline managers to do, and whether we currently give them the tools and support they need to be successful.

