

# 12 months of breakthrough delivery on East Coast Digital Programme

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“It has truly been a year of breakthrough delivery on our East Coast Digital Programme, from the commissioning of new signalling to the testing of trains.” That was the message from Rail Minister Huw Merriman, who has visited London King’s Cross to mark a year of breakthrough delivery’ for the transformational East Coast Digital Programme (ECDP).

ECDP will see traditional lineside signals on the southern part of the East Coast Main Line replaced with state-of-the-art digital signalling – providing continuous, real-time information to the driver’s cab. The technology, using the European Train Control System (ETCS), will mean more reliable and greener services for passengers and freight, creating the next generation railway.

“This programme is a fantastic example of cross-industry working with Network Rail and train operating companies to deliver a safer, faster, and more efficient rail network right along the vital East Coast Main Line,” said Huw, who was in London to see the technology and meet the people involved with making it happen.

During 2022 the ECDP has delivered

- Commissioning of new signalling and the successful testing of trains using digital signalling on the Northern City Line between Finsbury Park and Moorgate. This is paving the way for the first passenger trains to operate with ETCS on that route in the Spring.
- **Successful testing of the first retrofitted passenger trains using ETCS at the upgraded Rail Innovation and Development Centre (RIDC) testing facility**
- The start of major ETCS retrofitting programmes for freight trains and for commuter trains not already fitted
- An extensive range of 'full cab' and desk top based driver simulators with ETCS capability, to enable nearly 3,000 train drivers to be trained to drive with digital signalling
- The progression of a world first project to enable ETCS on steam locomotives intended for main line use

Toufic Machnouk, Network Rail's Director, Industry Partnership for Digital Railway, said: "We are creating the future railway, and breakthrough delivery is happening at pace across the many partners involved with the Programme. We are pushing the boundaries with our collaboration across the industry, and demonstrating what the industry can achieve when working together across the whole system."

The year also saw Government approval of the Full Business Case for the ECDP. **Over £1billion of further investment was announced** to enable the full delivery of digital signalling for the first time to one of GB's premier intercity rail routes – the East Coast Main Line.

David Horne, Managing Director at LNER, said: "We are proud to be forefront of the digital transformation of the railway, working with our industry partners to make journeys even greener and more reliable for customers. This vital investment in digital signalling will enable our Azuma fleet to realise its full potential. LNER Azuma train cabs are already fitted with the latest world-class technology in preparation for the upgrade which will enable us to bring numerous benefits for our customers. It will help transform customer journeys and make rail travel even smoother, more punctual and more sustainable."

Rail Minister Huw Merriman was today hosted at London King's Cross where he was given a demonstration of digital signalling on a London North Eastern Railway (LNER) driver simulator, met industry leaders delivering the ground breaking programme, and visited the cab of an LNER Azuma train, already pre-fitted with ETCS.

Tom Moran, Managing Director of Thameslink and Great Northern at Govia Thameslink Railway, said: "By working together with Network Rail, Siemens and our trade unions, we have gone from a standing start to commissioning the new digital signalling system on the Northern City Line to Moorgate in under two years. This is a great start for such a complex project. The future really does look bright for the East Coast."

Maggie Simpson OBE, Director General, Rail Freight Group, said: "Digital signalling creates opportunities for longer, heavier and faster freight trains to run on a more reliable railway. By providing more attractive services for our customers we can reduce emissions by shifting more freight from road to rail. The freight sector is making great progress in delivering the necessary changes across our businesses."

*Photo credit: Network Rail*