

Alstom win major Network Rail project

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Alstom is undertaking a £49million signalling contract with Network Rail for the delivery of new signalling, level crossings and other assets between Farncombe in Surrey and Petersfield in Hampshire on the London Waterloo to Portsmouth line – the Portsmouth Direct route built more than 150 years ago.

The delivery stages of the project, will involve signalling, track and level crossing improvements between 2022 and 2024 and will benefit passengers travelling on the line between Woking and Portsmouth. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, about 40,000 passengers used the line every day, making it one of the busiest commuter routes in the country.

The Farncombe to Petersfield project will deliver much-needed technology enhancements. By replacing life-expired equipment with the latest Alstom technology, passengers will experience greater reliability, and Network Rail will benefit from improved asset performance, resilience, and much safer access for track workers. In partnership with Network Rail, Alstom and its supply chain the project will renew assets and add digital-ready technologies including:

- Level crossing enhancement for enhanced safety and reliability: nine level crossings replaced including five existing automatic half-barrier crossings upgraded to full barrier control, plus three footpath crossings installed with stop lights and object controllers;
- Control of the area's signalling transferred from three local signal boxes to Network Rail's Basingstoke Rail Operating Centre, using Alstom's MCS 'Infinity' remote signalling control and MAR-S automatic route setting technology;
- Alstom's digital Smartlock interlockings increasing reliability, performance and capacity;
- Track circuits replaced with axle counters; delivering a 50% power saving across the project area and improved safety for trackside maintenance staff.

The project forms part of the Major Signalling Framework Agreement (MSFA) for the Southern Region which Alstom won in 2020. Alstom is collaborating with Network Rail as one "Customer Excellence team" to safely deliver Network Rail's commitments to passengers and freight users. Alstom is working closely with its supply chain to improve pipeline visibility of future works and recruit new apprentices in a range of technical and project management roles for a diverse and sustainable workforce.

Jason Baldock, Alstom's managing director, digital & integrated solutions said: "By delivering our shared commitment to work collaboratively as "one team" with our supply chain and Network Rail Southern's team, we are in a great place to deliver a more reliable railway for passengers on the key Farncombe to Petersfield route. Combining automation with the latest Alstom digital technology, we will reduce operating costs, drive greater efficiencies, and improve safety for trackside workers"

Nick Higgins, senior programme manager for Network Rail said "This contract marks a significant step forward for our work on the Portsmouth Direct Upgrade which will mean our passengers have more reliable journeys. It has been a collaborative effort with the Network Rail and Alstom teams working as one to get us to this point and we're looking forward to more successes as we deliver this important project."