

HS2's state-of-the-art tunnel boring machine, Dorothy, completes project's first tunnel after 8 months underground

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Passengers across the North and Midlands are one step closer to quicker, greener and more reliable train services as Dorothy, HS2's Tunnel Boring Machine, has made her first break through on the London to Birmingham route after eight months underground.

Breaking through at Long Itchington Wood late last week, Dorothy - one of HS2's ten custom built Tunnel Boring Machines - completed the first of 64 miles of tunnel which will span intermittently between London and Manchester. The tunnel network is set to improve transport across the country, level up the North and Midlands and bring the Europe's largest rail project to life.

As well as boosting local economies through fast and reliable services, the Tunnel Boring Machines are already delivering for communities along the route with Dorothy alone employing 400 workers, adding to the over 25,000 jobs created through HS2 so far.

HS2 Minister Trudy Harrison said: "This is, quite literally, a ground-breaking moment - demonstrating that

we are getting on with delivering on our promises and progressing our transformative plans to boost transport, bring communities together and level up the North and Midlands.

“As Dorothy paves the way for journeys between Birmingham and London, we continue to strive towards a greener, faster and more direct transport network. And along with our record breaking Integrated Rail Plan, we’re boosting the economy, delivering over 25,000 jobs.”

The tunnels have been specially designed to protect the ancient woodland and complex ecosystem above. They integrate with the natural landscape by reusing material excavated from the tunnel to build a soil ‘roof’ around the tunnel entrance. The rest of the excavated material will be transported by a conveyor belt out of the site rather than lorries and truck, avoiding the use of around 30,000 HGVs on the local roads. HS2 will play a key role in the Government’s £96 billion Integrated Rail Plan – the biggest ever public investment in Britain’s rail network – which through the creation of 3 new high speed lines will add more seats, shorten journey times, support local services and deliver a modern, fully connected transport for the North and Midlands quicker than under any previous plan.