

Network Rail completes final phase of £375m investment to install state of the art signalling system

February 19, 2024



Network Rail and South Western Railway have officially switched on new signalling equipment to bring more reliable journeys to customers travelling between Reading, London and Guildford.

From Saturday 10 to Sunday 18 February, Network Rail completed the final phase of the resignalling work in the Wokingham area as part of the five-year £375m programme of work to bring the 1970s signalling equipment up to modern standards.

During the most recent nine-day closure, engineers worked around the clock to install 43 new signals, as well as upgrade two level crossings at Wokingham station and Easthampstead Road (Star Lane) and renew a double railway junction at Wokingham.

Now complete, customers will benefit from a modern digitalised signalling system that will help improve train performance, increase future capacity, result in fewer delays, and enhance the safety of level crossings.

As part of the five-year programme, Network Rail moved control of the signalling equipment between Feltham and Wokingham and transferred it to Basingstoke, into the Rail Operating Centre (ROC), as well as upgraded 16 level crossings and installed 500 pieces of signalling equipment, which covers 80 miles of

railway across Feltham, Hounslow, Shepperton, Twickenham, Windsor & Eton Riverside and Wokingham.

Moving control to the ROC allows signallers to communicate more effectively with each other as they are in the same room rather than remote signal boxes and is more cost efficient to operate.

Matt Pocock, Network Rail's Wessex route director, said: "It's fantastic to see the completion of our Feltham to Wokingham resignalling programme. We've worked closely with SWR and our contractors over the past five years to bring the signalling system up to modern standards and I'm pleased to see the completion of the final piece of this complex and challenging jigsaw puzzle.

"The new digital signals have replaced the old equipment which became unreliable and harder to maintain and the new state of the art signalling will improve the reliability of this key stretch of railway and in turn help reduce delays for our customers.

"We're extremely grateful to customers and local residents living alongside the railway for their patience and understanding while we carried out this final phase of work and I look forward to seeing the realisation of the benefits this investment will bring."

Peter Williams, South Western Railway's customer and commercial director, said: "We're very pleased to see that the Feltham-Wokingham Resignalling Programme has been completed, bringing a modern, more reliable signalling system to some very busy parts of our network.

"Work to introduce this new signalling system has been disruptive at times and we'd like to say a big thank you to our customers for their continued patience."

Scott Kelley, managing director for AtkinsRéalis, commented: "The Feltham-Wokingham resignalling programme was a complex project which required extensive collaboration across the supply chain and with our client Network Rail. Its completion is a significant achievement for the UK rail industry, as demonstrated by industry awards for innovation and collaboration for the brilliant team. We pioneered several cutting-edge digital solutions, including advanced systems engineering and automated testing and data compilation.

"The modern signalling system provides advanced fault detection and prediction capabilities, meaning this key passenger and freight network now provides improved levels of reliability and safety."

Photo credit: Network Rail