

Network Rail completes once-in-a-generation scheme at King's Cross

June 7, 2021



A multi-million pound, once-in-a-generation improvement scheme designed to future proof King's Cross station and radically improve services for passengers completed today (Monday 7 June).

The scheme – dubbed 'King's Uncrossed' – involved a wholesale replacement of the over 40-year-old tracks and track layout on the 1.5-mile approach into the station as part of the £1.2 billion East Coast Upgrade.

It also saw the reopening of a disused tunnel after 44 years to add two additional lines into the station from the north. The complex and challenging programme has seen the replacement of:

- Over 6km of new track
- Over 30 new sets of points
- Over 50 new signals
- Over 20km of new overhead wires

At the same time as the King's Cross work, Network Rail engineers have been continuing work on a new

tunnel and 1.9 miles of new line at Werrington, north of Peterborough, so that slower moving freight trains will no longer cut across the East Coast Main Line, helping to unlock capacity on the route. This new tunnel is due to open in the Autumn.

They are also improving the power supply on the East Coast Main Line to enable faster, quieter and more environmentally friendly electric trains to run.

Taken together, these upgrades will deliver improved reliability and punctuality for passengers, as well as ensuring the route has the capacity to deal with future passenger volumes.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said: "This is an amazing achievement and a huge step in the extensive £1.2bn upgrade of the East Coast Main Line, which will better connect the country North to South."

Rob McIntosh, Managing Director for Network Rail's Eastern region said: "This is a day to remember for everyone involved in this mammoth undertaking – they should all be extremely proud of what they've achieved.

"To complete such an ambitious scheme that will bring so many important benefits to passengers, whilst at the same time working hard to keep disruption to a minimum, is testament to the dedication and teamwork of the many different professionals who have worked on it.

"I want to put on record my thanks to all our industry partners, including those operators who, while not directly impacted by the King's Cross work, have helped to ensure our passenger handling plans were thorough and were able to deal with all eventualities. This has been a truly fantastic example of cross industry working.

"Finally, I want to say a big thank you to our passengers for their patience and understanding, especially during those periods when it was necessary to close the station or reduce services."

David Horne, Managing Director at LNER, said: "The completion of the East Coast Upgrade programme will allow us to continue our transformation of the LNER route. We are very grateful for the patience and understanding of customers while the work has been carried out over the past two years. I would also like to thank Network Rail and other industry partners for their hard work ensuring the successful delivery of the project.

"We are looking forward to bringing the significant benefits of the East Coast Upgrade to our customers and communities, transforming rail services with faster, more frequent and more reliable train journeys between London, the north of England and Scotland."

Thameslink and Great Northern Managing Director Tom Moran, co-chair of the delivery board, said: "I am delighted that passengers can now reap the benefits of this massive upgrade several months earlier than originally planned. The rail industry has worked together to complete these works during the national lockdown when fewer passengers were travelling and, as a result, King's Cross will now be fully open just as we welcome more and more customers back to rail."

Anthony Smith, Chief Executive of Transport Focus, said: “Passengers tell us that they like to know in advance when works will be taking place, so they can plan around it.

“We were pleased to work with Network Rail and train operators throughout the planning stages of the east coast upgrade. We stressed the importance of putting passenger needs at the heart of the engineering arrangements. The final plans delivered as many journeys as possible, included replacement services and had detailed communications to keep passengers informed.”

Photo credit: Network Rail