

New railway sidings open on the Chiltern main line

January 31, 2023



Network Rail has released an impressive time-lapse video of the new railway sidings that have been opened on the Chiltern main line.

It is part of a £9.4 million investment to keep passengers moving during construction of Britain's new zero carbon, high-speed railway, HS2.

The first trains used the new tracks on Saturday (28 January) after a 6-month depot upgrade.

Working in partnership with HS2, the Department for Transport and Chiltern Railways, Network Rail has expanded the depot ahead of major work on the new railway in Buckinghamshire.

Later this year almost 2km of railway between Princes Risborough and Aylesbury will be realigned to create space for HS2 tracks to pass beneath.

When that construction work takes place access to Chiltern Railways' Aylesbury depot will be limited – so Banbury has been upgraded.

Patrick Cawley, director for 'On Network Works' for HS2 and Network Rail, said: "HS2 will transform journeys between London, the Midlands and the North, providing zero carbon journeys from day one and also making space on the existing network for more freight and local and regional passenger services. Our upgrades in Banbury are an industry team effort to keep passengers moving during construction of the new railway.

"The depot's four new railway sidings will provide our partners at Chiltern Railways with greater operational flexibility to clean and maintain their fleet of trains helping them to deliver a reliable service for their customers."

The work has included:

- 4 new railway sidings built to stable trains
- 4 new signals – traffic lights for trains – installed so services can get safely in and out of the depot
- 950 metres of new track laid
- 870 metres of new walkways created so workers can safely service trains

Ian Hyde, Chiltern Railways' engineering & safety director, said: "We are delighted that our Banbury depot has been transformed in collaboration with Network Rail. It significantly expands our capabilities on site, allowing us to undertake more maintenance work and ultimately, better serve our customers during the construction of HS2 and beyond.

"The improvements made will ensure that we can be flexible in servicing and maintaining our fleet, and illustrate how partners in the rail industry can collaborate to strengthen existing infrastructure and improve customer experience."

Meanwhile Chiltern main line passengers are reminded of railway closures this weekend for drainage improvements on lines into London Marylebone station and HS2 viaduct preparation work near Wendover.

Services will start and end at West Ruislip, with connections into central London on the Central and Metropolitan lines.

Passengers are advised that journeys will take longer and to check www.nationalrail.co.uk in advance so they know exactly what to expect during the essential work.

Photo credit: Network Rail