

Siemens Mobility to deliver low-cost digital solution for Devon and Cornwall re-signalling programme

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Network Rail has awarded Siemens Mobility Limited the contract to deliver GRIP stages 4-8 of the Devon and Cornwall re-signalling programme. With minimal disruption to the railway, the programme will see a modular, network-based solution introduced to replace the existing signalling infrastructure. On completion in late 2023, the scheme will provide better connectivity for the South West region and a more reliable service for passengers, with improved maintainability and lower costs for the operator.

Rob Morris, Managing Director, Rail Infrastructure for Siemens Mobility, said: “We identified our Trackguard Westrace-based solution, building on its successful implementation on the North Wales Coast project, as the most appropriate for this scheme. The project team is now looking forward to further developing and designing the detailed solution before progressing to site next year.

“By deploying our low-cost, network-based system, we will be using templated designs and standardised components. With most of the testing carried out in a safe and controlled environment, digital schemes like this enable us to upgrade the railway more safely, quickly and sustainably.”

The use of digital technology together with simple bases and lightweight structures, means the embodied carbon in the scheme, and in turn the cost, will be significantly lower than conventional schemes. By providing attractive, low carbon solutions, schemes like this not only support the UK Government's decarbonisation agenda and help fight climate change but will also create green jobs and drive sustainable growth throughout the country, levelling up Britain's economy.

The modular components use flexible power sources and are interconnected using Ethernet-based networking, with plug-and-play wiring allowing fast and accurate interconnections to be made. In addition, using Siemens Mobility's 'hangar' testing unit in Chippenham, fewer people will be required on site and 'right first time' delivery will be assured. As a result, the time on site is significantly reduced, increasing safety and ensuring that the impact on the railway and its neighbours is also kept to a minimum during upgrades.

As well as installation of all signalling equipment, Siemens Mobility will be supplying its Controlguide Westcad control system at Exeter power signal box (PSB) for Cornwall, and at Plymouth PSB for Devon, as well as taking responsibility for all telecommunications; power distribution and civil engineering works required for the new equipment. Two level crossings feature in the scheme, one of which will be converted to CCTV operation and the second to a manually controlled barrier with obstacle detection.

Work is now underway, with the first major programme milestone being the completion of the GRIP 4 stage towards the end of 2021.

Photo credit: Siemens Mobility