

History made as Dorothy – HS2's state-of-the-art tunnel boring machine – completes the project's first tunnel after 8 months underground

- Dorothy, HS2's whopping 2000-tonne custom-made tunnel boring machine, has completed her first tunnel breakthrough along the London to Birmingham route
- this is the first of 64 miles of intricate tunnels set to make up Europe's largest infrastructure project, marking a huge step towards quicker, greener and more reliable transport
- once complete, HS2 will play a vital role in revolutionising transport and levelling up the north alongside the government's record-breaking £96 billion Integrated Rail Plan

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 breakthrough on the London to Birmingham route after 8 months underground.

Breaking through at Long Itchington Wood late last week, Dorothy – one of HS2's 10 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 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 conveyor belt out of the site rather than by lorries and trucks, 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.