

# [Press release: Planned roadworks in Central Southern England: weekly summary for Monday 27 March to Sunday 2 April 2017](#)

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 24 March 2017 but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

## **M3 junctions 2 (M25) to 4a Farnborough, Hampshire: smart motorway improvement**

Work to reduce congestion and improve journey times continues this week between junctions 2 and 4a with narrow lanes and a 50mph speed limit in place on both carriageways, with a free recovery service operating 24 hours a day. The scheme is due to be completed in June 2017.

For further information, [visit the scheme website](#).

## **M3 junction 6 (Black Dam Junction) Basingstoke, Hampshire: road markings, improvements and drainage**

Work to improve journeys by laying additional road markings at the Black Dam junction and improving footpaths along the A30 London Road continues this week. The A30 London Road approach to the junction and the link in the centre of the junction for traffic from the A30 heading to Ringway East will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 27 March for 5 nights.

A local diversion and access will be maintained for local residents only through Old Basing; all other vehicles and HGVs will be diverted from junction 5 (hook) and along the M3. In addition, work to maintain road user safety by carrying out drainage maintenance around junction 6 starts this week. Lane closures will be in place on the M3 north and southbound carriageways and on all slip roads overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 27 March for 5 nights.

## **M3 junction 8 Popham, Hampshire: bridge strengthening**

Work to maintain journeys by replacing bridge bearings and supports continues this week. Narrow lanes and a 50mph speed restriction are in place on the link from the M3 southbound to the A303 westbound 24/7 until May. The M3 southbound carriageway from junction 7 to junction 9 will be closed

overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Wednesday 29 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A30, A303 and A34.

The M3 northbound carriageway from junction 9 to junction 8 will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, on Thursday 30 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A34 and A303.

## **M3 junctions 8 Popham to 9 Winchester, Hampshire: safety barrier repairs**

Work to improve safety by carrying out repairs to the barrier along the M3 continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the southbound carriageway near Winchester Service Area overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Thursday 13 April (Monday to Friday only).

## **M3 junction 9 Winchester, Hampshire: signage**

Work to keep road users informed by maintaining the road signage along the M3 continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the southbound carriageway and exit slip road at the junction overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Tuesday 28 March.

## **M3 junctions 12 Chandlers Ford to 11 Winchester, Hampshire: signage**

Work to keep road users informed by maintaining the road signage along the M3 continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the northbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Monday 27 March.

## **M3 junction 12 Chandlers Ford, Hampshire: street lighting**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out street lighting maintenance at the junction continues this week. The southbound exit and entry slip roads will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Tuesday 4 April (Monday to Friday only). Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the adjacent junctions.

## **M4 junctions 5 Slough to 6 Windsor, Berkshire: street lighting**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out street lighting maintenance along the M4 continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the east and westbound carriageways overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Friday 28 April.

## **M4 junction 10 Wokingham, Berkshire: bridge reconstruction**

Work to improve journeys by refurbishing the bridge that carries the link roads over the M4 continues this week. Narrow lanes and a 40mph speed limit are in place on the slip roads and a 50mph speed limit is in place on the M4 carriageway until November 2017.

## **M4 junctions 10 Wokingham to 11 Reading, Berkshire: bridge joint and safety barrier**

Work to improve safety by replacing the joint of a bridge near Reading Services and carrying out repairs to the barrier along the M4 near Shinfield continues this week. The westbound carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 27 March for 3 nights and again on Friday 31 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A4.

## **M4 junctions 12 Theale to 13 Chieveley, West Berkshire: bridge refurbishment**

Work to improve journeys by refurbishing the bridges that carry the M4 over Dark Lane and Ashampstead Road continues this week. Narrow lanes and a 50mph speed limit will be in place on the east and westbound carriageways until August.

The westbound carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, on Thursday 30 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A4.

The M4 east and westbound carriageways, between junctions 12 and 13, will be fully closed from 9pm on Friday 31 March through to 6am on Monday 3 April. The main diversion will run via the A4. Road users are advised to avoid the area and use alternative routes including M40, M25, A34, A33 and A404.

## **M4 junctions 13 Chieveley to 14 Hungerford, West Berkshire: drainage and bridge maintenance**

Work to improve journeys by maintaining the drainage along the M4 near Welford finishes this week. Lane closures will be in place on the eastbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Friday 31 March.

Work to replace the joints and waterproofing material to the bridge which carries the B4000 Ermin Street/Baydon Road over the M4 continues this week. Temporary traffic lights will be in place on the B4000 during day-time hours, Friday 28 April (Monday to Friday only).

In addition, the B4000 between The Long Yard/B4000 junction and the Five Bells Pub at Wickham will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 6 weeks (Monday to Friday only). A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A338, Hungerford, A4 and B4000.

## **M27 junctions 2 to 3 Southampton, Hampshire: road markings**

Work to improve road user's journeys by renewing the road markings along the M27 continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the westbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Monday 27 March.

## **M27 junction 5 Eastleigh, Hampshire: road markings**

Work to improve road user's journeys by completing the resurfacing work at the junction and renewing the road markings along the M27 continues this week. The eastbound exit and entry slip roads will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, on Monday 27 March. Clearly signed diversion will be in place via the adjacent junctions.

## **M27 junctions 7 Hedge End to 8 Bursledon, Hampshire: road markings**

Work to improve road user's journeys by completing the renewal of the road markings near junction 8 finishes this week. Lane closures will be in place on the eastbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Monday 27 March.

## **M27 junctions 8 Bursledon to 9 Whiteley, Hampshire: resurfacing and drainage**

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing and maintain the drainage asset along the M27 finishes this week. The eastbound carriageway will be closed from junctions 8 to 9 overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Friday 31 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A27 for standard vehicles (e.g. motorcycles, cars), with HGVs being diverted via Botley, Curbridge and Swanwick due to a low bridge along the A27.

## **A3(M) junctions 5 to 4 Bedhampton, Hampshire: signage**

Work to improve journeys by maintaining the road signs along the A3(M) continues this week. The northbound entry slip road at junction 5, lane 1 of the northbound carriageway and the northbound exit slip road at junction 4 will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Friday 7 April (Monday to Friday only). Clearly signed diversions will be in place via adjacent junctions.

In addition, lane closures will be in place on the southbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 27 March for 3 nights.

## **A3 Burpham, Surrey: street lighting**

Work to maintain road user safety by carrying out maintenance to the street lighting at the Burpham junction starts this week. The southbound exit slip road at the Burpham junction will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 27 March for 3 weeks (Monday to Friday only). A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the Stoke Interchange.

## **A31 Picket Post to Ringwood, Hampshire: communication sensors**

Work to improve journeys by reconnecting the communication sensors within the westbound carriageway takes place this week. Convoy traffic management with a reduced speed limit will be in place between Picket Post and Poulner Hill overnight, between 10pm and 6am, on Friday 31 March.

## **A31 Ferndown, Dorset: resurfacing**

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing the A31 near Ferndown starts this week. The A31 westbound carriageway from the Palmersford Roundabout (A347 Ringwood Road) to the Ameysford Roundabout will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 27 March for 7 nights (Monday to Friday only). A clearly signed diversion will be in place via Wimborne Road East.

## **A34 Bullington to Winchester, Hampshire: drainage**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out drainage maintenance continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the southbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Friday 8 April (Monday to Friday).

## **A34 Tufton Warren (Whitchurch), Hampshire: gap closure**

Work to improve safety by closing the crossing gap in the central reserve of the A34 at Tufton Warren/Firgo Farm starts this week. Narrow lanes will be in place 24/7 on the north and southbound carriageways until Thursday 13 April. In addition lane 2 of the north and southbound carriageways will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Thursday 13 April (Monday to Friday only).

## **A34 Speen, West Berkshire: resurfacing**

Work to improve road users journeys by resurfacing the northbound slip roads at the junction finish this week. The northbound exit and entry slip roads will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 27 March for 2 nights. Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the adjacent junctions.

## **A34 Peartree to Weston-on-the-Green, Oxfordshire: road markings and resurfacing**

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing a section of the A34 northbound carriageway between Peartree and Kidlington, and to renew the road markings up to the M40 continues this week. The A34 northbound carriageway will be closed from the A44 Peartree interchange to the M40 (junction 9) overnight, between 10pm to 6am, from Monday 27 March for 3 nights.

The A34 northbound carriageway will then be closed from the A44 Peartree Interchange to the Kidlington junction overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Friday 7 April (Monday to Friday only). Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the A44, A40 M40 for motorway permitted vehicles and via the A44, A4095 and A41 for non-motorway vehicles.

## **A303 Thruxton, Hampshire: resurfacing**

Work to improve road user's journeys by resurfacing a section of the A303 eastbound carriageway takes place this week. The A303 eastbound carriageway will be closed from the A338 Parkhouse Cross junction (Shipton Bellinger) to the A343 Hundred Acre junction overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 27 March for 5 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A338, Ludgershall and Weyhill.

## **Safety at roadworks**

Highways England is working with the industry and road users to reduce the risks of working on the roads. For the safety of road workers and all road users, when you are approaching roadworks:

- keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety
- get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching
- concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks
- be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering roadworks
- keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front
- observe all signs – they are there to help you
- be alert for road workers, the roads are their workplace

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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## [Press release: Planned roadworks in Kent and Sussex: weekly summary for Monday 27 March to Sunday 2 April 2017](#)

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 23 March but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

### **A2 Gravesend, Kent: carriageway resurfacing**

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the A2 between the Hall Road junction and the B255 Bean junction. There will be a full closure of the westbound carriageway between Hall Road and Bean on Monday 27 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. There will be clearly signed diversion in place via Hall Road, B262, A226 and the B255.

Works are scheduled to be complete by early April 2017.

### **M2 Rochester, Kent: Vegetation clearance**

Works to improve journeys begins this week on the M2 between junctions 2 and 4. There will be slip road closures in both directions at Junction 2 on Monday 27 March for 2 nights between 8pm and 6am. There will be slip road closures in both directions at junction 4 on Wednesday 29 March for 2 nights between 8pm and 6am. Traffic will be diverted via the next junction of the motorway.

### **M2 Chatham, Kent: Carriageway works**

Works to improve safety take place this week on the M2. There will be an westbound entry slip closure at junction 3 on Monday 27 March overnight between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the next junction. There will also be lane closures on the westbound carriageway overnight on Monday 27 March between 8pm and 6am.

On Tuesday 28 March there will be lane closures on the westbound carriageway overnight between 8pm and 6am. There will be lane closures on the eastbound carriageway on Wednesday 29 March for 2 nights between 8pm and 6am.

There will be lane closures on the eastbound carriageway on Friday 31 March overnight between 8pm and 6am.

## **A2 Dover, Kent: carriageway works**

Works to improve safety take place this week on the A2 Jubilee Way. There will be a full closure southbound from 12pm on Saturday 1 April until 12pm on Sunday 2 April. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A256.

## **A20 Dover, Kent: street lighting works**

Works to improve journeys take place this week on the A20 between York Street and Limekiln roundabout. There will be lane 2 closures in both directions on Monday 27 March for 4 days between 7am and 6pm. Works are scheduled to be complete by the end of March.

## **A21 Tonbridge to Pembury, Kent: major improvement**

Work to improve journeys on the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury continues this week. A 40mph speed limit remains in place 24/7 between the Vauxhall interchange and the A228.

A full closure will be in place overnight between 8pm and 6am on Thursday 30 March on the southbound carriageway between Quarry Hill and Pembury interchange and on the northbound carriageway between Pembury interchange and Vauxhall interchange. In addition Longfield Road will be closed in both directions between Longfield roundabout and Knights Park roundabout. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A26, A2014, A26 and the A228.

Two way traffic lights will be in place on the A21 overnight between 8pm and 6am from Monday 27 March for three nights and overnight on Friday 31 March.

Tonbridge Road will remain closed after Pembury Hospital up to and including Longfield Road roundabout until Spring 2017. A clearly signed diversion route will be in place via the A228 and the A21.

The scheme is due to be completed in Summer 2017.

For further information, [visit the scheme website.](#)

## **A27 Polegate, Sussex: resurfacing**

Work to improve journeys take place this week on the A27 between Wilmington and Folkington. There will be a full closure in both directions on Monday 27 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A26 and A22.

## **M20 junctions 3 to 5, Kent: smart motorway surveys**

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the M20 between junctions 3 and 5. There will be various lane closures in both directions on Monday 27 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Surveys are scheduled to be complete in April 2017.

## **M20 junctions 4 to 6, Kent: resurfacing**

Work to improve journeys begin this week on the M20 between junctions 4 and 6. There will be a full closure of the Eastbound carriageway at junction 6 on Monday 27 March for 5 nights, and overnight on Sunday 2 April between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the entry and exit slip road. There will also be lane closures on the westbound carriageway between junctions 6 and 4 on Monday 27 March for 5 nights, and overnight on Sunday 2 April between 8pm and 6am. Works are expected to be complete by the end of May 2017.

## **M23 junctions 8 to 10a, South Nutfield to Crawley: smart motorway surveys**

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the M23 between junctions 8 and 10a. There will a full closure of the westbound Gatwick Spur Road on Monday 27 March for 4 nights between 10pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M23, A2011, A23, and Airport Way. Surveys are scheduled to be complete in April 2017.

## **A23 West Sussex: vegetation clearance**

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the A23 between Pease Pottage and Patcham. There will be various slip road closures in both directions on Monday 27 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Traffic will be diverted via the next junction.

Works are scheduled to be completed by the end of April.

### **General enquiries**

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### **Media enquiries**

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## **[News story: Holocaust memorial designs exhibition in the Scottish Parliament](#)**

Visit the exhibition of shortlisted designs for the National Holocaust Memorial at the Scottish Parliament from 27 March to 1 April.

An exhibition of the shortlisted designs for a [National Holocaust Memorial and education centre](#) is on display in the Scottish Parliament between 27 March and 1 April.

The new National Holocaust Memorial and accompanying education centre will stand in Victoria Tower Gardens in Westminster, London. This striking new structure will honour victims and survivors of Nazi persecution and will act as a national voice against hatred in our world today.

The [international design competition](#) sought to harness the very best architectural talent to create an emotionally powerful and sensitively designed memorial. 92 design teams expressed an interest in the project, with a [shortlist of 10](#) invited to submit concept designs on display as part of this exhibition.

Consultation with the public, those working in the field of Holocaust remembrance and education, as well as technical experts will play a crucial role in informing the final decision of the jury. Visitors are invited to give their views as part of the exhibition.

You can also view the [10 shortlisted designs](#) and submit your feedback by email: [ukhmf@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:ukhmf@cabinetoffice.gov.uk). Remember to specify which design team you're referring to when providing feedback.

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## [Statement to Parliament: South Western rail franchise](#)

I am pleased to inform the House that following a rigorous competition I intend to [award the South Western rail franchise to First MTR South Western Trains Limited](#) pending the successful completion of a standstill period of at least 10 days.

The House will know that this government is determined to transform the way that the railways work to deliver a revolution in services for passengers. In December 2016, I set out my vision for achieving this through a [new era of joined up working between train operators and Network Rail](#). Earlier this month my Department announced a [consultation on the South Eastern franchise](#) which explained our ambition for bringing together the operation of track and train, so that one team of people is focussed on providing the best service to passengers. Today's announcement that First MTR South Western Trains Limited has been awarded the South Western franchise means we are a step closer to achieving that ambition.

The new franchise will see closer partnership working between track and train. A railway that is predominantly run by an integrated local team of people with a commitment to the smooth operation of their routes, improving

services and performance is at the heart of my vision for the network, and First MTR South Western Trains Limited expects to work even closer with Network Rail with the shared aim of giving passengers exactly that. The joint teams will work to drive higher performance, achieve greater productivity in operations, improve maintenance delivery and infrastructure renewals, and support infrastructure improvement delivery, all for the benefit of passengers across the South Western network.

The new franchise will run for 7 years from 20 August 2017 to 18 August 2024, with an extension of 11 railway periods callable at my discretion.

This is the thirteenth franchise award since 2013: a rapid programme of renewal which represents the government's determination to transform the travel experience for rail passengers across the country. In the last 12 months alone, new franchise agreements have released private funding for brand new trains in the north and the east of England. The new South Western franchise will also see investment in brand new and refurbished trains.

This government is funding the biggest investment in rail since Victorian times, and the award of this new franchise is the latest step in making journeys better: simpler, faster and more reliable. Passengers across the South Western network will see improvements to their journeys, whether travelling into central London, or between the towns and cities in the southern and south-western counties of England. The new franchise will support the communities and boost economic growth in the regions it serves.

Passengers, local authorities, businesses and other stakeholders across the area contributed to a highly demanding and challenging specification for the new South Western franchise. Bidders were invited to demonstrate how they would meet this specification, and I am delighted that First MTR South Western Trains Limited set out an exciting plan for the franchise that will not only meet but significantly exceed these expectations.

First MTR South Western Trains Limited will oversee a £1.2 billion investment programme to improve services for passengers on all parts of the network from London to the South West. There will be 22,000 extra seats into London Waterloo each morning peak and 30,000 extra seats out of Waterloo each evening peak, and a fleet of 90 new trains will provide more space for passengers on Reading, Windsor and London routes.

The plans were designed to make optimum use of our major investment to increase platform capacity at London Waterloo. First MTR South Western Trains Limited will use the experience of one of its major shareholders MTR, who operate the busy Hong Kong metro, to deliver smooth and rapid journeys for passengers travelling around London's suburban network. Faster journeys will be delivered through a consistent fleet of new suburban trains offering a regular, metro-style service. Passengers can look forward to more space, ensuring that the railway can support London's growth.

The train journey is only one part of the passenger experience, so we were very pleased with First MTR South Western Trains Limited's plans for significant investment in station improvements. They will deliver at least

1,500 new car park spaces, refurbished waiting rooms, more seats and new waiting shelters. There will be investment to make Southampton Central station a destination fit for the community it serves, with a new entrance canopy, improved retail, and better facilities for passengers.

The use of smart cards will be expanded, and there will be a new smart card product, automatically offering the cheapest walk-up single or day return fare. A new flexible season ticket will benefit people working fewer than 5 days a week, there will be a discount offered for people buying 12 consecutive monthly season tickets, and new discounts for student travel. Season, single and return tickets will be made available on smart cards across all of the franchise.

I am pleased to announce also that the new South Western franchise will introduce new delay repay compensation, including for delays of 15 minutes or more, and with automatic claims for smart card season tickets and advance purchased tickets bought through their digital channels.

There will be better information for passengers, so that they can make more informed decisions about their journeys. Real time information will be available on screens on trains and at stations, as well as on the website, and through the new customer app. Station staff will also be well informed through innovative use of smart devices so they can better help passengers, especially during times of disruption. There will also be live information about seating availability and crowding levels, so that passengers know the best place to stand to board the train.

Reflecting the government's commitment to create 30,000 apprenticeships across all transport modes by 2020, First MTR South Western Trains Limited will offer more than 100 apprenticeships each year. Their plans also include funding to support community rail partnerships, station adoption groups, and to encourage community use and regeneration of available station space. The franchisee will reduce energy use at stations and depots by over 40%, and water use by over 18%.

This government has set a clear vision for the future of rail travel and is investing to deliver on that vision for passengers across the country. Over the past few years the franchise renewal programme has resulted in significant new investment and exciting innovations for passengers. The new South Western franchise represents the next chapter in that journey and we look forward to working closely with First MTR South Western Trains Limited and Network Rail to ensure that passengers receive the improvements they have demanded as we transform their rail travel experience.

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**[News story: First MTR South Western](#)**

# [Trains Limited wins South Western franchise](#)

We are determined to transform the way that the railways work to deliver a revolution in services for passengers. Two weeks ago we announced a [consultation on the South Eastern franchise](#) which explained our ambition for bringing together the operation of track and train, so that one team of people is focussed on providing the best service to passengers. And today (27 March 2017) we can announce that First MTR South Western Trains Limited has been awarded the South Western franchise which will run for 7 years from 20 August 2017. This is the first franchise awarded since the Secretary of State set out his [vision for the future of the railways](#) in a speech on 6 December 2016, and marks a new era in joined up working between train operators and Network Rail.

First MTR South Western Trains Limited will use the experience of one of its major shareholders MTR, who operate the busy Hong Kong metro, to deliver smooth and rapid journeys for passengers travelling around London's suburban network. Faster journeys will be delivered through a consistent fleet of new suburban trains offering a regular, metro-style service. Passengers can look forward to more space, ensuring that the railway can support London's growth.

Passengers travelling across the South Western network will also benefit from more space and faster rail services as the new 7 year South Western Franchise has been [awarded today to First MTR South Western Trains Limited](#).

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Following on from our announcement on the start of the South Eastern Franchise consultation, this deal is more great news for rail passengers.

First MTR South Western Trains Limited will deliver the improvements that people tell us they want right across the South Western franchise area, from Bristol and Exeter, to Southampton and Portsmouth, to Reading, Windsor and London.

We are delivering the biggest rail modernisation programme for over a century and this franchise will deliver real changes for passengers, who can look forward to modern trains, faster journeys and a more reliable service.

The new franchise will see closer partnership working between track and train. A railway that is predominantly run by an integrated local team of people with a commitment to the smooth operation of their routes, improving services and performance, is at the heart of Secretary of State's vision for the network and First MTR South Western Trains Limited expects to work even closer with Network Rail, with the shared aim of giving passengers exactly

that.

First MTR South Western Trains Limited will oversee a £1.2 billion investment that will improve journeys for millions of train passengers, and provide a boost for the communities served. The next franchise will see:

- 22,000 extra seats into London Waterloo each morning peak and 30,000 extra seats out of Waterloo each evening peak
- a fleet of 90 new trains, providing more space for passengers on Reading, Windsor and London routes
- refurbished existing trains with charging sockets, new seat covers and refurbished toilets
- more frequent and additional services across the franchise
- faster journeys across the network; journeys to London will be:
  - 8 minutes faster from Southampton
  - 5 minutes faster from Portsmouth
  - 10 minutes faster from Reading
  - 12 minutes faster from Hounslow
  - 11 minutes faster from Salisbury
- earlier first and later last trains, including between London and:
  - Twickenham
  - Hounslow
  - Windsor
  - Reading
  - Epsom
  - Guildford
  - Portsmouth
  - Salisbury
- more Sunday services across the network, with many routes having the equivalent of a Saturday service after 1.00pm

The government is supporting record investment in rail that will not only deliver new world-class infrastructure but will create thousands of jobs opportunities across the country. The government is committed to creating 30,000 apprenticeships in the road and rail sector by 2020 and the new franchise will also see First MTR South Western Trains Limited offer more than 100 apprenticeships each year helping boost skills and jobs.

The new contract will see passengers provided with better information throughout their journey, on-board trains, on platforms and through a new mobile phone app, including live information on seating availability and crowding levels, so that passengers know the best place to stand to board the train.

The new contract will also see:

- investment to make Southampton Central station a destination fit for the community it serves, with:
  - a new look entrance
  - improved retail
  - better facilities for passengers
- new delay repay compensation, including for delays of 15 minutes or

more, and with automatic claims for smart card season tickets and advance purchased tickets bought in advance through their digital channels

- free wifi at all stations and on-board mainland trains
- investment in station improvements including:
  - refurbished waiting rooms
  - additional seating
  - improvements for step-free access
  - 60 electric vehicle charging points
- new smart card, automatically offering the cheapest walk-up single or day return fare
- new flexible season tickets, offering a discount for passengers travelling fewer than 5 days a week
- season, single and return tickets on smart cards across all of the franchise
- new discount for purchasing 12 consecutive monthly season tickets
- new student connect smart ticket for 16 to 18 year-olds, offering one-third off weekly or longer tickets, and further term-time discounts for under 16s
- mobile phone barcode tickets will be available on the network for the first time
- better connections for the Island Line, and work with the Isle of Wight Council and other local bodies to develop a business plan and option for a more sustainable long-term future
- at least 1,500 new car park spaces
- over 40% reduction in energy use at stations and depots

FirstGroup Chief Executive Tim O'Toole said:

We are delighted that our partnership with MTR has been selected by the DfT to run the South Western rail franchise, a key part of the country's railway network which millions of people rely on every day. Our successful bid will deliver the tangible improvements that customers and stakeholders have told us they want from this franchise. Passengers can look forward to new and better trains, more seats and services, quicker journey times, improved stations and more flexible fare options.

Jeremy Long, CEO – European Business, MTR Corporation said:

MTR is known across the world for the excellent quality of its rail services, and we look forward to working with FirstGroup to provide a best-in-class travel experience for passengers in London and the South West. Together we will deliver a major programme of upgrades, including improvements to both rail services and customer experience, for passengers travelling across the South Western network.