



Claire Perry MP, Richard Benyon MP  
House of Commons  
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**24 hour National Helpline  
03457 11 41 41**

*Dear Claire and Richard,*

*31<sup>st</sup>* May 2018

### **Upgrade work 2018**

You asked for an update on our work to electrify the railway from London Paddington, through Reading, to Newbury. As you know, this is a very significant piece of work that is vital to the delivery of the Government's investment in the modernisation of the Great Western Main Line.

From 2019 GWR will be able to run new electric trains along this route with more seats and better on-board facilities for passengers. These trains are also quieter and greener than the ones they are replacing which will benefit our railway neighbours.

### **Reading to Newbury electrification**

So far we have completed three parts of our upgrade work on the line and I can confirm that everything is running to schedule. Please be assured that we will continue to monitor the amount of time we have built into our schedule and will amend if needed. Equally, if we finish allocated work early on any of the railway closures then we will accelerate work, where possible.

The first phase of work, between 12 and 16 March saw foundations installed for the electrification masts; as well as the first pieces of overhead electrification equipment being erected. Platform extensions were started at Aldermaston, Thatcham and Midgham stations for the new, longer trains being introduced by GWR next year. Additionally work on the new Newbury footbridge was undertaken.

During the second phase of work, between 23 and 27 April, more electrification equipment was installed, including more than 30 miles of new wiring. Alongside this the platform extensions were completed at Aldermaston and Midgham stations. With the new footbridge at Newbury station now in operation, work was started to prepare to remove the redundant footbridge.

For the third phase of work, between 14 and 17 May, the platform extension at Thatcham was finished and further overhead electrification equipment was installed along the line.



During the next railway closure, between 4 and 7 June, we will be starting the testing and commissioning of the electrical equipment and the removal of the redundant footbridge at Newbury station. This will complete our project to improve the facilities at this key transport hub in West Berkshire.

Since the beginning of the year we have continued with our public engagement in town centres and at stations in both of your constituencies. Additionally, we regularly upload photographs and videos to our Twitter page @networkrailwest.

### **Installing additional track south of Bedwyn**

We have submitted our plans to install additional track south of Bedwyn station in the siding. Wiltshire Council has confirmed there has been no objection to the footpath diversion, following formal public consultation. We are now waiting for the diversion to be confirmed in the next 4-6 weeks.

By installing additional track here we will enable GWR to use brand new Intercity Express Trains from next year to serve stations from Bedwyn to Newbury and onto London Paddington. These new, five carriage trains will replace older three carriage diesel trains; which will then be freed to be used elsewhere.

For both the electrification programme and our work at Bedwyn siding I will continue to keep you updated as we progress. If you are able to come out to one of our worksites between Reading and Newbury over the course of this year I would be happy to show you the work we are undertaking on the ground.

If any of your constituents have any concerns they can contact our 24 hour National Helpline on **03457 11 41 41** or by emailing [crwest@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:crwest@networkrail.co.uk).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Langman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop under the "n" in "Langman".

**Mark Langman** FRICS  
Western Route Managing Director

*Cc Mark Hopwood, Managing Director GWR*