

Crawley, UK
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Maidenbower Lane Underbridge improvements offer lighter, brighter route for local residents

- Henry Smith MP praises underpass development as part of Thameslink rail depot construction works

The extended Maidenbower Lane Underbridge in Three Bridges, Crawley, has been officially re-opened by local MP Henry Smith who commended the improvements made to this major thoroughfare as part of Siemens Rail Systems' investment in the new Thameslink rail depot at Three Bridges.

Construction work has created a lighter, safer underpass, while drainage improvements will help avoid the extensive flooding which has blighted the path in the past. This upgrade will significantly benefit children who rely on the underpass to walk to school every day, as well as other local residents.

However, students at Oriel High School may regret seeing construction complete – their colourful artwork has been showcased on hoardings surrounding the works. This artwork was entered into the Considerate Constructors Ivor Goodsite Hoarding Competition, a national competition that promotes awareness of site safety, receiving a runner-up commendation.

The new Three Bridges rail depot is one of two train maintenance facilities being built to serve the new fleet of state-of-the-art electric Class 700 'Desiro City' trains designed and manufactured by Siemens for the Thameslink Programme. Engineering and construction company VolkerFitzpatrick carried out the improvements to the Maidenbower Lane Underbridge on behalf of Siemens.

Siemens Rail Systems

Communications and Government Affairs, Euston House,
Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1AD

Henry Smith MP said: "I'm delighted to officially open the improved underpass. This represents a milestone in the development of the new rail depot and will really benefit local residents and students who now have a safer and more inviting walking route.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the Thameslink depot works continuing to progress over the coming months to bring better services and opportunities to those who live and work in and around Crawley."

Ruth Humphrey, Project Director Depots, at Siemens Rail Systems UK, said: "Improving the Maidenbower Lane Underbridge has been a project of discovery – engineers had to contend with foundations that stretched 19 metres into the ground, four times the height of the bridge itself.

"Despite this, VolkerFitzpatrick engineers managed to keep the underpass safely open throughout the construction and we're pleased that local residents will now benefit from a more pleasant and safer environment through which to walk."

She continued: "We will now continue to forge ahead with the new depot works, preparing the site for its completion in summer next year."

The trains Siemens are building are spacious and airy with the latest passenger information systems and features for people with restricted mobility. Train operator First Capital Connect (FCC), which runs the Bedford to Brighton Thameslink route, has been involved in the new train design which also features feedback from passengers, cleaning crews and train drivers. The trains will be introduced into service from early 2016 with a high frequency service of up to 24 trains per hour coming into effect across central London at the end of 2018.

The Government-sponsored Thameslink Programme of infrastructure works will create 8,000 jobs and transform north-south travel through London. Siemens anticipates the creation of up to 2,000 jobs across the UK in component manufacturing and assembly of parts for the new trains, as well as in the construction of the new depots and subsequent train maintenance.

ENDS

Contact for journalists:

Siemens Rail Systems

Laurie Waugh, tel: 07921 242074

Email : laurie.waugh@siemens.com

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Siemens Rail Systems Division provides expertise and technology in the full range of rail vehicles – from heavy rail to metros to trams and light-rail vehicles. In the UK, the Division employs around 750 people and maintains over 360 Siemens passenger trains for First TransPennine Express, South West Trains, Heathrow Express, Greater Anglia Franchise (Abellio), Northern Rail, London Midland and ScotRail. In addition to manufacturing the new trains for Thameslink, the company will also be supplying Eurostar with its new high speed fleet of trains.

Thameslink Programme overview

The £6.5bn Government-sponsored Thameslink Programme will create a new high capacity, high frequency service of longer trains across central London. It will also link together new routes, in particular the East Coast Mainline with the Thameslink route at St Pancras International. The first phase is finished, providing longer platforms on the Midland Mainline north Thameslink route (Bedford to St Pancras International) and new stations at Blackfriars and Farringdon so that 50% longer 12-carriage trains can now run between Bedford and Brighton. The final phase is to rebuild London Bridge and its surrounding rail track to unblock this bottleneck and usher in a new high frequency service of new 12 and 8 carriage trains of up to 24 trains per hour in each direction between London Blackfriars and St Pancras International. For more information visit www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk