

BLOG.

HIGH SPEED RAIL



Railsafe Group at Beaulieu Park, Dec 2023



RAILSAFE GROUP | JANUARY 2024



As part of the world's future transport strategy, the evolution of high-speed rail is something we must all plan for; especially when it comes to satisfying the growing demand for safety, reliability, and innovation across the UK rail infrastructure...

For example, the HS2 rail project is a planned high-speed railway line, which is supported by a network of passenger train services across Great Britain. Currently under construction, HS2 will operate from the West Midlands to London via Birmingham and become Britain's second purpose-built high-speed rail line.

Due for completion between 2029 and 2033, this ongoing project has focused its attention on the need for rigorous planning and transparency given the considerable escalation in costs since it got the green light from the Government seven years ago. In fact, it is currently considered one of the most expensive rail projects in the world!

With the Birmingham to London route anticipated to open in 2029, HS2 Ltd is set to tender around £5 billion-worth of contracts this year to oversee the building of the tracks, power, signalling, overhead lines, and a new network control centre. These will be constructed to the highest standards to help create a new benchmark for speed and punctuality, ensuring passengers can rely on the service, even in the face of extreme weather.



The contracts will also cover a new telecom system that will allow travellers to experience uninterrupted phone calls and streaming along the entire route, including inside the tunnels.

Our team at Railsafe Group anticipate that with new technologies and designed-in features to futureproof and safeguard HS lines, the market will require an extensive knowledge and training upgrade so that all personnel can mitigate risks and help to integrate HS services into the existing rail network.

A commitment to sharing best practices and learning legacies will also be pivotal to future developments, as we continue to assess the impact of HS1, which has been fully operational from the Channel Tunnel to St Pancras International since 2007 and now requires asset renewal.

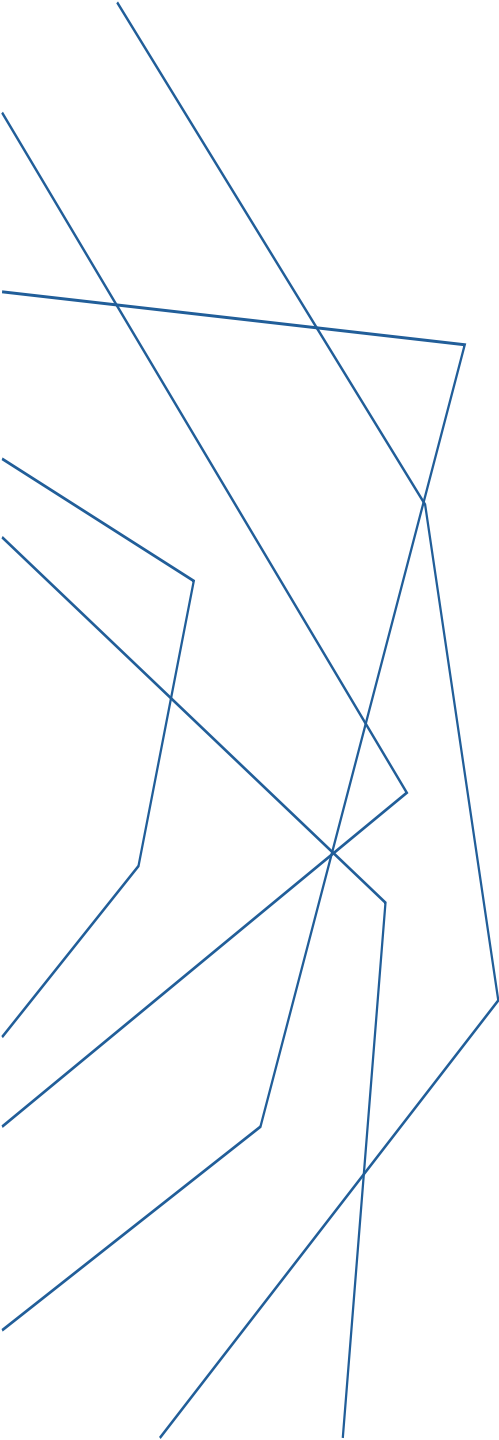
The Government's commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 is also set to impact the development of high-speed rail, given the prominence placed on the rail electrification programme on the existing network as an alternative to diesel fuel.



Going forwards, we believe that project managers and rail professionals will need to combine greener thinking with the best critical attention to detail, as we are noting that today's major rail networks are now being considered in industry-wide regeneration projects. In 2023 alone, Railsafe Group supplied worksite management in Kent, Anglia, and Western, and also completed a civils project at Thorpe le Soken. We were actively engaged in the 11kv upgrade at Harley Road and various other locations, assisting maintenance with diverse track renewals, and supporting key clients with core Safety Critical teams.

As the year closed, we supported one of Anglia's largest projects with site supervision at Beaulieu Park. Working in partnership with J Murphy & Sons, Beaulieu Park is the first railway station to be built on the Great Eastern Main Line for over a 100-years, alongside new road infrastructure and up to 14,000 new homes.

Now in the second phase, construction is taking shape on three platforms with a central loop line, and new tracks to enable stopping services while allowing fast trains to pass through unimpeded. Beaulieu Park Station is set to open by the end of 2025, and everyone at Railsafe Group is thrilled to help deliver such a landmark project that's been in the making for the last 20 years!



As the high-speed rail industry continues to evolve, Railsafe Group anticipates new opportunities for highly skilled track teams, safety critical staff, civils, and trades as well as white collar employees.

In fact, upskilling will be non-negotiable in 2024, and encourage a renewed emphasis on best-in-class training and education so that we can continue to deliver the very best services, planning management and personal development across the entire UK rail infrastructure.



Thanks for reading!



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