



Picture: NETWORK RAIL

A landmark project was completed in London in January as part of the £5.5 billion Thameslink scheme.

Within sight of St Paul's Cathedral, a 350-tonne bridge was installed to carry the railway over Queen Victoria Street. The strengthened bridge enables Network Rail to move the tracks from the west to the east side of Blackfriars station.

The bridge was fabricated next to the station and slid into place in a 100-hour operation with help from an 800-tonne mobile crane and hydraulic rams.

"Sliding this 350-tonne bridge into place is a critical part of turning Blackfriars into a landmark of which London can be proud," said

## Capital connections

Lindsay Vamplew, Network Rail project director for Blackfriars. "This project is important for the future vitality of London.

"This is an important milestone in the life of not just this project, but Network Rail's Thameslink programme. Not only was the work highly complicated, but it was very challenging given the location and conditions."

When the Blackfriars project is completed in 2012 the new station will span the river with entrances on either side. Major Thameslink project work is also under way at Farringdon

and London Bridge and the overall project will be complete in 2016. The following year, north-south Thameslink trains will interchange with the east-west service provided by Crossrail.

Work has started on Crossrail, but this year will also see the completion of yet another cross-London service, the £1 billion East London line.

New Overground trains have already been spotted on trial on the route from West Croydon to Dalston Junction, ready for the official opening in May. The project, begun under London Mayor Ken Livingstone, is now being promoted by current Mayor Boris Johnson. There will be extensions in the south to Clapham Junction and in the north to Highbury & Islington.

You can download information from [www.railwatch.org.uk](http://www.railwatch.org.uk) and [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)