

Bexleyheath line welcomes passengers back after £6.6 million investment over 9 days

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Kent passengers are seeing the benefits today as Network Rail handed the railway back on time following a 9-day closure for vital engineering work to protect passengers from disruption caused by landslips.

More than 200 engineers worked around the clock at 17 sites to protect the railway between Kidbrooke and Barnehurst. Over the extended closure, they have carried out the lion's share of the £6.6 million improvement programme to this stretch of railway.

After four landslips in the last decade, Network Rail closed the line over the half term as part of a major project to protect passengers from further disruption.

The work involved removing 2,500 tonnes of mud and trees so engineers could reduce the steepness of the cutting slopes, which are prone to landslips during long periods of wet weather.

Engineers also brought in another 8,000 tonnes of material, such as gravel and concrete and built retaining walls along both sides of the cutting, stretching 650 metres. The walls are made from steel beams, driven into the ground and then finished with concrete blocks to stop any future landslips from

reaching the tracks.

Fiona Taylor, Network Rail route director, Kent, said: “I’d like to say thank you to the passengers who have had their journey’s disrupted whilst we carried out these major resilience and improvement works.

“We know there is never a good time to close the railway, so we worked during the February half-term when passenger demand is typically lower.

“The work we have carried out will significantly improve the reliability and performance of the network, giving passengers the level of service they deserve.”

David Statham, Managing Director, Southeastern, said: “Above all, our passengers on the Bexleyheath line through Barnehurst want a safe and reliable service, and so I’m pleased that this vital work undertaken by Network Rail will protect this stretch of track for the future.”

Highlights of the engineering work completed include:

- Deep cleaning of the stations, painting of booking halls and platform furniture, toilet facility improvements and clearing vegetation.
- Track maintenance to improve reliability and provide smoother rides from Blackheath Junction to Falconwood station.
- Refurbishment of Perry Street Fork Junction, where the Bexleyheath line meets the Greenwich line, to prevent faults and reduce delays.
- Signalling and power supply resilience work, including the replacement of electrical equipment to prevent future power and signalling failures.
- Canopy, platform and drainage improvements at Barnehurst, Bexleyheath, Welling, Falconwood, Eltham and Kidbrooke stations.
- Vegetation management and drainage clearance along the Bexleyheath line.

Photo credit: Network Rail