

Bridge being upgraded for electrification

January 21, 2022



A major electrification upgrade is to be carried out between Wigan and Bolton.

As part of the Great North Rail Project, Network Rail is going ahead with a £2.3 million investment to build a new railway bridge high enough for 25,000-volt overhead cables to pass underneath.

The bridge has a pivotal role in ensuring a £78 million electrification scheme, taking place along 13 miles of railway, can go ahead.

The infrastructure owner says that this will ensure older diesel trains can be replaced by cleaner and longer electric rolling stock.

The ambition is that by 2025, electric trains will provide passengers with greener, more comfortable, and more reliable journeys.

Seventeen structures – like Chew Bridge in Westhoughton – need to be overhauled to make way for the overhead lines.

The bridge between Wigan and Bolton will be removed on Sunday 22 January, and a new steel structure

will be installed on Sunday 19 February.

Replacement buses will be in place on those dates between Wigan North Western and Bolton.

Anyone planning to travel is urged to check www.nationalrail.co.uk in advance to see how their journey is affected.

William Brandon, scheme project manager at Network Rail, said: "This vital work on the bridge is one of the first pieces of the jigsaw needed to deliver the Wigan-Bolton electrification project. It makes room for new cables needed for the introduction of greener, cleaner and more reliable electric trains planned between Wigan North Western and Bolton in the future.

"The project does mean the railway will have to close over the two Sundays. I thank passengers and local people in advance for their patience while we carry out this vital work."

Bolton Council approved plans to build the new bridge in Westhoughton in May 2021.

The new deck will be made up of steel beams to better withstand heavy farm machinery and road vehicles.

The bridge will also be finished with materials of a similar colour to the existing bridge in keeping with what was there before.