

Digital signalling introduced to East Coast Main Line

November 14, 2022



State-of the art digital signalling is being introduced, on the East Coast Main Line providing continuous, real-time information to the driver's cab.

Work is taking place as part of the Government funded transformational East Coast Digital Programme (ECDP), aimed at boosting reliability and allowing faster recovery from disruption, enabling a better and more punctual, service for passengers.

Over the weekend of 7 and 8 January the new system is being tested in the Wood Green-New Barnet area of North London, preparing the area for digital signalling while reducing faults involved with the current system.

Ed Akers, principal programme sponsor, Network Rail, said: "The work taking place in early January is an essential early stage towards delivering the transformation of a digitally signalled East Coast Main Line.

"This will create better journeys on a state of the art, reliable railway, whilst reducing emissions and providing further safety protection."

New lineside equipment and technology is also being installed between Welwyn Garden City and Hitchin, preparing the way for this section to become the first part of the East Coast Main Line to operate with digital signalling.

David Horne, managing director, LNER, said: “We welcome this investment in a vital project that will bring numerous benefits for our customers. It will take our railway into a digital age, helping to transform customer journeys and make rail travel even smoother, more punctual and more sustainable.”

A reduced LNER service will start and terminate at St Neots or Peterborough, with rail replacement coaches between St Neots and Bedford where passengers can connect to Thameslink services to or from London St Pancras.

Hull Trains will operate a reduced service via the Midland Main Line into London St Pancras with extended journey times.

Thameslink will operate a limited shuttle service between Peterborough and St Neots, and Great Northern will run trains between Royston, Cambridge, Ely and Kings Lynn. Rail replacement bus services will serve intermediate stations between St Neots, Royston and Finsbury Park.

For customers wishing to travel to London, there will be rail replacement bus services from selected Great Northern stations across to the Midland Main Line to connect into Thameslink services from Bedford to London St Pancras. No Great Northern services will operate on the Hertford branch between Stevenage and Alexandra Palace, with stations being served by rail replacement bus services. There will also be no services on the Moorgate branch.

Jenny Saunders, customer services director, Thameslink and Great Northern, said: “In the long term, the new digital signalling system being installed will give our customers better, more reliable journeys but in the short term, on this weekend and another in February, journeys will take much longer and probably involve a rail replacement bus.”

Image credit: Network Rail