

# Engineers complete work to protect Hampshire's Eastleigh to Fareham line from landslips

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**Network Rail** engineers successfully carried out a £2.28 million project to prevent landslips in the Fareham area with the line closed for 9 days to allow the work to happen.

Work began on Friday, June 24, and **South Western Railway (SWR)** services on the line from Eastleigh to Fareham were replaced by buses right until the railway reopened on Monday, July 3.

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A major part of the project was tackling the steepness of a railway cutting near Fareham Tunnel, where the line is cut deeply into the hillside. Making the sides of the slope shallower will minimise the risk of landslips that could be caused by earth movements in extreme weather.

The complex project used 20 construction vehicles and 10 trains, as engineers excavated 5,000 tonnes of earth from the steepest side of the cutting before building an 80-metre-long retaining wall.

Hundreds of engineers worked a total of 7,500 hours during the closure, and also completed maintenance work to improve reliability, including work on track, switches and crossings, electrical, signalling and drainage.

Network Rail's Wessex route director, Mark Killick, said: "We appreciate that closing the railway for a week was disruptive, especially on the back of the recent rail strikes, but this job was absolutely vital to keeping the line open and safe in future.

"The most recent landslip on the line, at Botley in 2014, closed the route for six weeks. By doing this work in 9 days, we're not only reducing the risk of landslips but we're getting the job done in a far less disruptive way than closing the line repeatedly at weekends.

"To make the most of the access to the railway, we also completed more than 30 extra jobs, from routine inspections to important track maintenance, ensuring we handed back a more reliable line. I'd like to thank our customers and our railway neighbours for their patience while we completed this major work."

SWR's Customer Experience Director Christian Neill said: "We are very grateful to our customers for their patience during these important engineering works, which we know came immediately after the impact of RMT strike action across our network.

"However, this was the most effective and efficient way of delivering these essential improvements, which have been planned and timetabled to take place for many months. By spending time engineering a permanent solution, as well as taking the opportunity to carry out other maintenance and improvements, customers will now experience greater reliability on this section of railway."