

Major changes to train services on Hounslow line in May after engineering work moved forward

April 25, 2022



Network Rail engineers changed their plans so the return of the much-loved Army vs Navy rugby match at Twickenham on Saturday 30 April can go ahead with a full train service.

It means work to install over 10km of new cables and new signalling equipment on the Hounslow Loop line – which connects London Waterloo with Chiswick, Richmond, Twickenham, Hounslow and Brentford – will happen over the Bank Holiday weekend from Sunday, 1 May, continuing until Wednesday, 4 May.

Network Rail's managing director for Wessex route, Mark Killick, said: "It's fantastic to see the Army Navy match back on after so long and I'm pleased we've been able to move our work so fans can travel to and from the game by train. It does mean that we are going to be doing our engineering work well into the working week though, and it's important that customers work out their routes to their workplaces.

"There will be replacement buses running along with the usual buses in the area, and the main line via Twickenham is going to be open throughout.

"This is part of a massive £375m scheme to improve the railway in the area and reduce the delays caused

by signalling faults. Resignalling schemes like this one, and the track work that goes with it, are one of the best ways we have of improving the reliability of our network, so it's really important we do the job and I'm grateful to our customers for their patience."

The £375m Feltham and Wokingham resignalling scheme covers more than 80 miles of railway and over 500 pieces of signalling equipment.

The programme, which will finish in 2024, is replacing 1970s signalling infrastructure – the traffic lights of the railway – with a modern equivalent that will be much more reliable.

Once all those renewals and upgrades are complete, we will move control of the signalling system from Feltham and Wokingham to the state-of-the-art Wessex Rail Operating Centre (ROC) in Basingstoke.

The programme reached the halfway stage last weekend when new signalling kit was switched on in the Ascot and Virginia Water area, with new signalling technology on the Hounslow Loop set to go live in August next year 2023, before the final phase in Wokingham is switched on in 2024.

Christian Neill, SWR's Customer Experience Director, said: "The work Network Rail is carrying out is set to significantly boost the reliability and performance of the railway, making it easier to get our customers to where they need to be.

"Closing the railway for four days is never a decision taken lightly, especially when two of those days are during the working week. Whilst it is important that to be able to keep leisure travellers and thousands of rugby fans moving on the Saturday, we're urging anyone traveling from Sunday to Wednesday to check before they travel as a range of alternative transport options are available in the area.

"We'd also like to thank anyone impacted by these works for their patience and understanding as we work to enhance our network."