

Major improvements on scenic Esk Valley line as Network Rail upgrades 1940's track

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Network Rail is upgrading sections of track on the Esk Valley line, which date back to the 1940's, to bring smoother journeys for passengers travelling between Middlesbrough and Whitby.

Between Friday 12 and Sunday 21 February, teams will be lifting and replacing over 1.5 miles of track on sections of the line in Comondale, Castleton Moor and Danby.

The ballast – stones which support the track – and the wooden sleepers will also be replaced as part of the £2.7million project.

Some of the track was installed in the mid-1940's and upgrading it will bring smoother, more reliable journeys for passengers. It will also reduce the amount of maintenance work which is required along the route.

This follows improvements to the track which were carried out between Lealholm and Danby stations in September.

For this work to take place safely, there will be changes to train services from 20:00 on Friday 12 February until Sunday 21 February:

- Northern trains will continue to run between Middlesbrough and Nunthorpe, but the line between Nunthorpe and Whitby will be closed.
- A bus replacement service will run between Middlesbrough and Whitby, calling at drop off points near all stations on the route.
- A faster, direct bus replacement service will also run between Middlesbrough and Whitby.

Network Rail and Northern are advising passengers who must travel on the Esk Valley line to check their journeys via National Rail Enquiries and allow plenty of time. Posters are also up at the affected stations, showing where the bus pick-up and drop off points are.

Matt Rice, Route Director for Network Rail's North and East route, said: "These improvements to the existing track that has served the scenic Esk Valley line well for over half a century are vital so that safe and reliable services can continue to link communities along the route between Whitby and Middlesbrough for years to come.

"The work also means passengers can enjoy travelling on the line, and connect to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, for future generations.

"We want to thank people for continuing to follow the latest Government guidance. A regular bus replacement service means those who must travel are still able to while the work is carried out."

Kerry Peters, Regional Director at Northern, said: "The work being carried out by Network Rail is absolutely key in helping us deliver punctual and reliable services between Middlesbrough and Whitby – one of the region's most popular routes.

"We're working closely with Network Rail to keep disruption to a minimum and will be operating a regular rail replacement bus service to keep those who need to make essential journeys on the move.

"In the meantime, I'd like to thank our customers in advance for their patience and understanding while the work is completed."

Photo credit: Network Rail