

Major investment into West Coast main line railway signals

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A once in a generation investment is being made to improve railway signalling on a key section of the West Coast main line in the North West.

The £45 million Great North Rail Project investment by Network Rail will see 56 signals between Prestbury, Macclesfield and Congleton upgraded to the latest technology.

Signals are the traffic lights of the railway and are crucial for trains to run safely and on time.

Once replaced the 56 signals will be controlled from Network Rail's state of the art control centre in Manchester.

Work starts in July and will take a total of 17 months.

The major investment will improve future journeys for passengers and freight on one of Europe's busiest mixed-use rail routes.

Ian Robinson, project manager for Network Rail, said: “This once in a generation overhaul of Macclesfield’s signalling system will bring this key section of the West Coast main line up to the most modern standards. The £45m Great North Rail Project investment will future proof journeys and create a more reliable railway for passengers and freight services.

“Before our work in Macclesfield begins, we’ve invited local people to speak with us – I’d like to thank our neighbours and passengers in advance for their patience.”

Gus Dunster, executive director of operations and safety at Avanti West Coast, said: “We’re excited that Network Rail are upgrading the signalling system on a key section of our Manchester route as part of their Great North Rail Project. Once complete, the works will help to make journeys on the West Coast main line more reliable for many years to come.”

John Robson, CrossCountry regional director West Midlands and North West, said: “This investment in better technology is vital in keeping passengers and trains moving for years to come. Having more reliable services means a better customer experience and more consistency when travelling through the area.”

David Rutley, MP for Macclesfield, said: “It’s good to see this major investment being made to upgrade signalling equipment on this important railway line which will make services more reliable for passengers.

“I would encourage local people to find out more about the project and keep up to date with developments in the coming months.”

Network Rail is inviting local people to find out more at a virtual information event on Tuesday 6 July.

To register in advance email CRNW@networkrail.co.uk

While much of the work has been planned to cause the least amount of disruption to passengers as possible, the signalling upgrades will mean changes to some weekend journeys in 2022.

Details of how this work will impact passengers will be released by Network Rail and train operators nearer the time.

Power sources and electrical cabling will be also upgraded, along with two structures carrying the 25,000-volt overhead lines which power trains being replaced to improve the visibility of signals for train drivers.

For more information on how Network Rail upgrades its signalling visit:

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/looking-after-the-railway/signalling/>

Photo credit: Network Rail