

# Network Rail boost reliability of vital freight line with essential repairs to Aire Bridge, North Yorkshire

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Network Rail has begun essential work on a £2.1million project to repair Aire Bridge in North Yorkshire. The track over the bridge is used exclusively by freight services travelling to and from Drax Power Station, which supplies around 11 percent of the UK's renewable electricity, and needs to be replaced so that services can continue to use the line reliably for years to come.

Network Rail engineers will remove the existing track and replace it with new sleepers and ballast – beams and stones which improve drainage and support the track – and new rails. Structural repairs will also be carried out and a waterproofing layer will be added to reduce the amount of maintenance work needed in the future.

To carry out this work safely, the bridge will be closed every Saturday night between Sunday 11 July and Sunday 17 October, with most of the work taking place during a nine-day closure from Friday 27 August to Sunday 5 September. Hirst Road level crossing, between Carlton and Hirst Courtney, will also be closed on these dates to allow Network Rail vehicles to access the area. A signed diversionary route will be in place.

Richard Owens, Infrastructure Director for Network Rail's North and East route, said: "This essential repair work will boost reliability along this vital freight route so that companies that rely on freight, such as Drax, can continue to supply their customers across the UK.

"I know that closures are not ideal, so I'm glad that we've been able to bring forward a planned track renewal to within this closure to minimise disruption to the local community and freight operators."

During the nine-day closure, Network Rail will also renew a section of track at Hensall, near Snaith to improve reliability along the line. This will maximise the amount of work done within one closure to minimise disruption to lineside neighbours, freight operating companies and the communities that they serve.

Mark Gibbens, Head of Logistics at Drax, said: "This work is vital to safeguard the future of this important infrastructure. Network Rail have worked closely with Drax to minimise the disruption this work will have on the power station and we don't anticipate any unplanned disruption to supplies."