

Network Rail completes key improvements to maintain reliability of the North Downs line

November 21, 2023



The railway reopened on Saturday morning (18 November) following a seven-day closure during which Network Rail's team of engineers completed vital reliability upgrades to parts of the line between Guildford and Gatwick Airport station.

Over the seven-day period, **Network Rail's** engineers worked around the clock to renew the railway track on the North Downs line which links Reading and Guildford with Redhill and Gatwick Airport stations to improve reliability for Great Western Railway (GWR) customers.

During this time, a range of work was completed, including the renewal of 332m of 1970s track, as well as the rails, sleepers, and ballast (track stones) and the replacement of 16-wheel timbers over the river Wey (sections of wood that provide extra support to the rails running over the bridge).

The investment of just under £1m to this line will benefit customers for years to come as it will extend the life expectancy of the railway infrastructure and will reduce the need for speed restrictions, allowing GWR to continue running smooth and reliable services.

Mark Killick, Network Rail's Wessex route director, said: "Running a safe and reliable railway is my ultimate priority which is why this type of work is critical to keeping the North Downs line fully functional.

"Taking this decision to close the railway over the seven day period was not taken lightly, but our engineers have used the time effectively to carry out additional renewals to other parts of the track which will benefit customers for years to come.

"I'd like to thank customers and residents for their patience whilst we carried out this work."

Steven Hawker, Great Western Railway's regional station manager for the line, commented: "These works are essential to maintaining and improving the railway and we'd like to thank customers who were disrupted for their patience during the seven-day closure."