

Network Rail completes major work on £1.5billion Midland Main Line Upgrade

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Network Rail has completed the biggest improvements to the Midland Main Line since it was built, meaning more seats, faster journeys and more reliable services for passengers travelling between the East Midlands and London.

In the latest stage of the upgrade, teams have carried out vital work to install new overhead line equipment between Bedford and Corby, as well as improvements to station platforms and major work to upgrade bridges on the route – to make way for electrification between London St Pancras International and Corby.

All of this work means there will be 50% more seats for passengers travelling at peak times between Corby and London. The new train timetable was introduced last Sunday (16 May), and East Midlands Railway launched its new all-electric service between Corby and London St Pancras International, providing a sixth train per hour.

The upgrade, along with the new timetable, also boosts the number of seats on services across the East Midlands and cuts travel time between London and Derby, Leicester, Sheffield and Nottingham.

It's hoped the improvements will take more cars off the roads, as COVID restrictions ease and passengers return to the railway. Electric trains are quieter and much better for the environment than diesel trains. They produce almost 80% less carbon, benefitting people who live and work near the railway.

Gary Walsh, Route Director for Network Rail's East Midlands route, said: "As passengers return to the railway, it's great to be welcoming them back with the biggest improvements in a generation on the Midland Main Line.

"New overhead line equipment, as well as new track, new platforms and new bridges along the route, has made way for electric trains to run between Corby and St Pancras International. The major upgrade also brings faster, more reliable services which better connect passengers between the East Midlands and London."

Will Rogers, Managing Director of East Midlands Railway, said: "We are delighted to be able to start this new and significantly improved timetable. The £1.5 billion Midland Main Line upgrade has allowed us to offer more seats, quicker journeys and more frequent journeys to our passengers across both our Regional and Intercity network.

"The timetable includes earlier and later services supporting leisure, business and tourism journeys and will help to support the region's recovery out of the pandemic."

Network Rail is reminding people that a deadly 25,000 volts runs through the overhead wires at all times. For more information on electrification, the dangers of trespassing on the railway and the tragic consequences this can have, see our 'Always On' safety campaign: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/railway-safety-campaigns/always-on/>

Photo credit: Network Rail