

Network Rail: Major track upgrade completed at Bristol East Junction

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Network Rail has completed its major upgrade of Bristol East Junction, removing a bottleneck into Bristol Temple Meads and replacing the 1960s track and components. This will allow more trains to enter and exit the station, increase capacity, reduce congestion and help make journeys more reliable.

This work was completed as planned on Friday evening with all railway lines into and out of Bristol Temple Meads reopening and train services resuming normal operations on Saturday morning.

This £132 million Department for Transport-funded project started on Saturday 10 July and over the past eight weeks Network Rail engineers have worked day and night using a total of 50 engineering trains to replace over 5km of track, install over 300 track panels and lay around 26,000 tonnes of ballast (the stones that support the track).

An additional line has been introduced which paves the way to support new suburban services in the future as part of the West of England Combined Authority's (WECA) MetroWest scheme. Once complete, this scheme will provide over 4,000 additional seats on trains every day in the area, making Bristol Temple Meads a key transport hub in the western region.

Also as part of the upgrade, an old signalling gantry has been removed and a new gantry, installed over the Christmas period last year (2020), has been brought online.

Follow up work to the remodelled junction will take place on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 September affecting trains towards Bristol Parkway on the Saturday and towards Bath Spa on the Sunday.

During this time, there will be changes to train services and passengers are reminded to check before travelling and where possible plan ahead for their journeys. For more information and for the latest timetable changes, please visit [GWR.com/Bristol](https://www.gwr.com/Bristol) or [crosscountrytrains.co.uk/Bristol](https://www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk/Bristol)

The completion of this track upgrade work is part of the wider **Bristol Rail Regeneration programme** that will see a number of improvements to the iconic Bristol Temple Meads station over the next three years, representing a major investment in sustainable transport in the region and creating a major transport hub that will serve millions of passengers each year and support business right across the region.

Mike Gallop, Network Rail's Western route director, said: "I am delighted we have completed this important upgrade work which, now finished, will bring great benefits to passengers, particularly more trains, more seats and more reliable journeys.

"This was a highly complex piece of engineering that has taken several years to plan and we would like to thank passengers and local residents for their patience and understanding over the past eight weeks while we have completed this work.

"The upgrade of Bristol East Junction is just one aspect of our wider Bristol Rail Regeneration programme of work that is transforming the station and railway in Bristol for the benefit of passengers, the city and West of England region."

Richard Rowland, GWR customer service and operations director, said: "We are very grateful to our passengers who have shown great patience and understanding during this work to create an infrastructure fit for the future of our rail services.

"This work will help us to deliver 4,000 more train seats a day into the city, on more services through Bristol; starting with the introduction of half-hourly services on the Severn Beach line later this year."

Tom Joyner, CrossCountry's managing director, said: "After years of planning it's great that Network Rail have completed these works, which will deliver so much for people using this station. We know these big projects can be an inconvenience and would like to thank everyone for their patience over the last two months.

"The improvements to the tracks into the station will help us ensure our trains arrive and depart on time, providing a quality journey experience for our long-distance customers travelling to and through Bristol. Combined with the additional works planned, Bristol Temple Meads will again be a fitting gateway to the West of England."

Photo credit: Network Rail