

# Network Rail: Once in a generation access to the key cross border route

June 5, 2023



In the last three months, Network Rail has invested more than £2 million to improve safety and performance on the West Coast Main Line.

Work to remodel Carstairs junction offered once in a generation access to the key cross border route and Network Rail delivered a wide range of work at multiple locations on the line.

Focused on improving safety and performance, the extended track access allowed work to be carried out that otherwise, would not have been viable or efficient if restricted to only Saturday nights.

Activity included the renewal of overhead lines and track, vegetation management and extensive inspection work on structures to monitor safety and performance and to inform future maintenance and investment planning.

Projects such as the installation of a new £16m access bridge at Ravenscraig and the remodelling of Platform 1 at Glasgow Central – planned to coincide with the line closure – delivered significant efficiencies and cost savings. Without the extended track access, it was projected that the platform

renewal could have taken more than four years.

Beyond the major projects, a significant volume of work was progressed to support inspection and operational maintenance on the cross-border route. A total of 356 square kilometres of vegetation was cleared between Gretna and Lockerbie, 40 overhead line wire runs stretching almost 2.5km in length were completed and repairs and maintenance was undertaken on more than 2km of drainage .

Network Rail inspected the stability of 200 lineside embankments and 'hot weather preparation' was carried out ahead of the summer months. Daytime inspections of 68km of track were also carried out to identify and remove defects.

In addition, 200 tonnes of redundant material was cleared from the lineside area and around access points on the route.

The equivalent to nine months of Saturday night-only work on the line was delivered within the 21-day access window within the Carstairs Junction remodelling programme.

Liam Sumpter, Scotland's Railway Route Director said: "The extended track access afforded by the project at Carstairs Junction allowed us to undertake work that would not have been viable or efficient if restricted to only Saturday nights.

"Getting onto the West Coast Main Line in daylight enabled us to carry out detailed inspections of structures and line-side assets. This informed immediate maintenance work and provided valuable insights to help inform future investment planning.

"Had we used normal access arrangements this work would have stretched over many months and would have been considerably more costly. Instead, we have delivered more for less in a way that has reduced disruption for lineside neighbours and for our passengers."

*Photo credit: Network Rail*