

Network Rail to fix track issues and improve level crossings in Norfolk and Suffolk

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Engineers are preparing for a package of works later in the spring that will help drive down delays on the lines that run between Norwich – Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth and Sheringham.

The works will involve five consecutive days of bus replacement between Norwich and Lowestoft from Saturday 22 April to Wednesday 26 April.

The Norwich – Great Yarmouth line will also be affected on Saturday 22 April and Sunday 23 April, meaning that buses will replace trains right across the Wherry Lines on this weekend.

Major work is set to take place on the two lines, including:

- Replacing half a mile of ballast between the Sheringham branch line junction and Brundall station. The ballast, which is the stones that support the track, has been badly affected by a previous flood and the heatwave last summer. This has caused issues with the track which can mean trains have to slow down, especially in hot weather. The new ballast will safeguard the reliability of the track and improve the ride quality for passengers.
- Replacing more than half a mile of worn-out track at Cantley. Track replacement is essential for minimising faults that can cause delays.
- Re-surfacing level crossings around Somerleyton. This will make the crossings easier and safer to use for local people, and help to minimise risk to the railway.

Follow-up work will then take place on part of the Norwich-Lowestoft line on Sunday 30 April and during the morning of Sunday 21 May, when buses will replace trains.

On the Sheringham branch line, engineers are gearing up to upgrade two level crossings. After the work is complete, the crossings will have automatic barriers so that users don't have to phone the signaller to request access. This will help to boost both safety and performance. No trains will be able to run on Sunday 16 April and Sunday 23 April to allow part of the project to be carried out, so there will be bus replacement between Sheringham / Cromer and Norwich on these days.

During the period of the works on the three branch lines, level crossing closures will affect vehicle users, pedestrians and cyclists. Network Rail is liaising with local communities about the impact of the closures and putting alternative arrangements in place.

Mark Walker, Network Rail Anglia route infrastructure engineer, said: "This work really needs doing to keep trains running whatever the weather. In addition, our level crossing improvements will help people to continue using our crossings safely and easily into the future. I'd like to thank everyone for bearing with us through the disruption and I can reassure them that we'll be making the most of the time to deliver a high-performing railway."

Jamie Burles, Greater Anglia managing director, said: "This package of engineering work is designed to ensure we keep on providing a high-quality service for customers on the Bittern and Wherry Lines. These routes are entirely served by new trains and Network Rail's upgrade work will help us to maintain the excellent punctuality levels currently being delivered and further enhance rail travel for passengers in the region.

"Rail replacement buses will run while the work takes place, so customers can still complete their journey. We would advise people to check before they travel.

"We would like to thank customers for their patience and understanding while these works take place."

Full size bicycles and e-scooters cannot be carried on rail replacement buses.

Passengers are advised to check before they travel at www.greateranglia.co.uk or www.nationalrail.co.uk

Photo credit: Network Rail