

# Network Rail to tackle East Suffolk's Line deteriorating embankment

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Network Rail is gearing up to stabilise and widen a mile-long embankment on the Ipswich-Lowestoft line to the north of Martlesham.

Engineers will be working over 13 consecutive days from Saturday 25 March to Thursday 6 April.

Buses will replace trains between Ipswich and Saxmundham throughout this time, apart from on 30 March and 1 April, when industrial action means there will be no service anywhere on the East Suffolk Line and no rail replacement buses.

The engineering work is needed because the top of the embankment is slipping away. This means that important signalling equipment and signage is gradually falling down the bank, potentially affecting the future safe and reliable running of the line.

There is also currently no walkway for railway workers along the embankment, meaning that access to carry out essential maintenance is severely limited. The widening work will provide enough space for a new walkway.

Finally, the track that carries trains towards Ipswich on this part of the line is due for replacement but this cannot happen until the embankment beneath is stabilised.

The upcoming embankment work follows a series of weekends from December-February when track replacement has been taking place on different stretches of the East Suffolk Line between Westerfield and Woodbridge stations.

Network Rail is thanking passengers and lineside neighbours for their patience while a total of nearly 3 miles of track was replaced, which will help to minimise faults and delays on Greater Anglia services.

Some of the old track was laid around 100 years ago and had joints in between different sections, meaning that passing trains made the unmistakable clickety-clack sound. The new, modern rail is continuously welded, reducing noise for the local community. Engineers have also completely replaced the ballast and sleepers which support the rails.

While the track replacement was taking place, engineers took the opportunity to improve the surfaces on three level crossings around Woodbridge, which were old and uneven. They are now easier and safer to use for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. The main work to improve the surfaces of two further crossings will be carried out on 25 and 26 March.

Mark Walker, Network Rail Anglia route infrastructure engineer, said: "I want to thank everyone for their patience during the recent weekend closures, and I'm sorry that passengers will now face an extended stretch of bus replacement. However, the major work on this steep, high embankment is a vital part of making the East Suffolk Line fit for the future. It will help us avoid sudden disruption or closures, and pave the way for more much-needed track replacement."

Jamie Burles, Greater Anglia managing director, said: "This improvement work will help make trains even more punctual along the East Suffolk Line. Our new trains are already providing a very good service on the route and this engineering work will help ensure we can continue to deliver high standards of performance on a consistent basis and provide a more comfortable journey for passengers.

"A rail replacement bus service will run between Ipswich and Saxmundham so customers can complete their journeys. We would advise everyone to check before they travel and allow more time for their journey. We would like to thank customers for their patience while this work is carried out."

The car park at Saxmundham will be closed during the works because it is being used for rail replacement buses.

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

During these works and the upcoming strike action, passengers are advised to check before they travel at [greateranglia.co.uk](https://greateranglia.co.uk) or [nationalrail.co.uk](https://nationalrail.co.uk)

Train services are also affected the day after a strike.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*