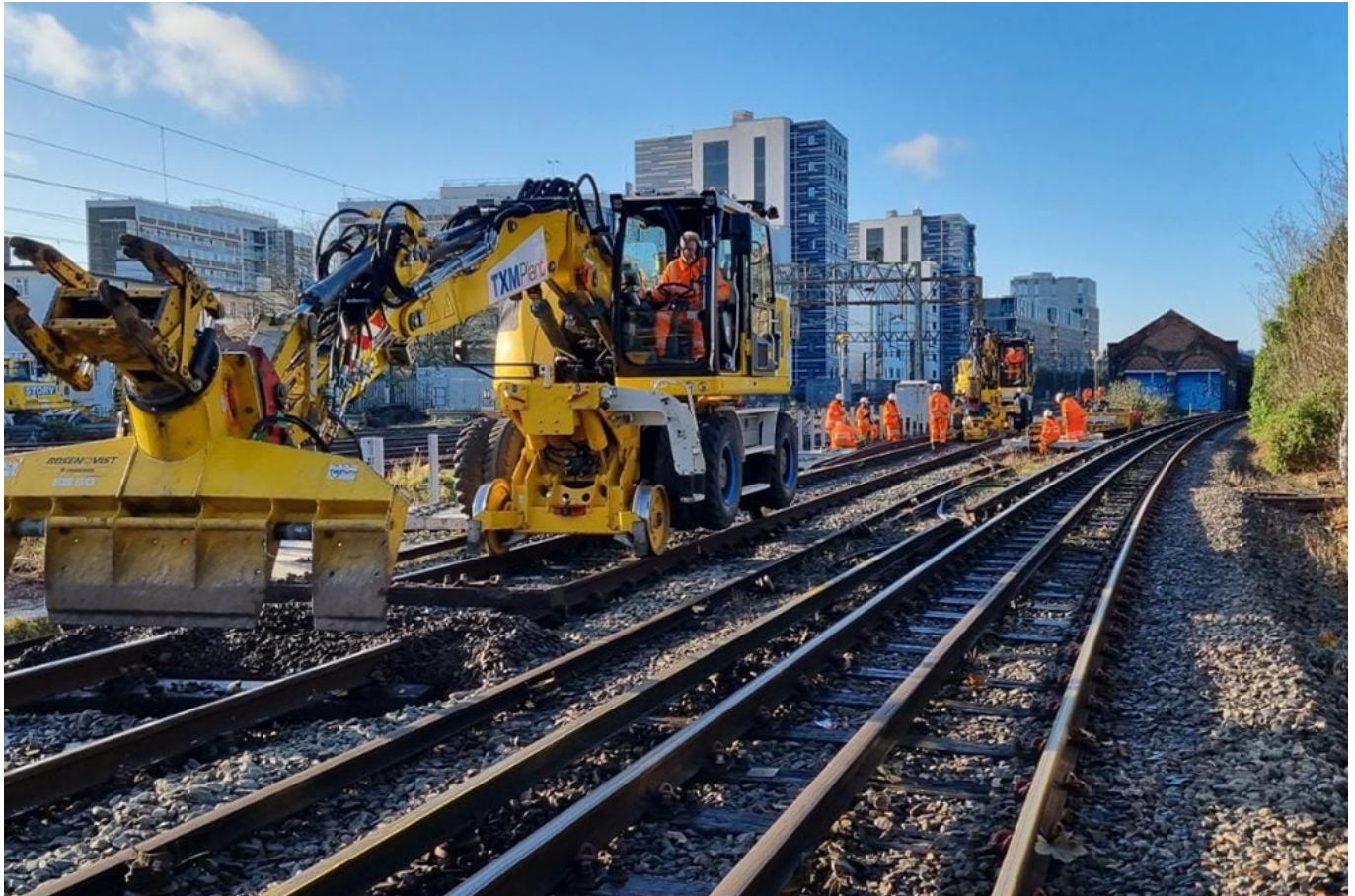


Overhaul of track and equipment on 20-mile stretch of railway

January 12, 2023



Major improvements have been carried out on the Bakerloo line and London Overground between London Euston and Watford Junction.

Network Rail engineers worked over seven days in the run up to Christmas to overhaul track and equipment on a 20-mile stretch of railway and upgrade five stations in north London.

North Wembley, South Kenton, Kenton, Headstone Lane and Carpenders Park saw a combination of roof repairs, canopy renovations, guttering clearance, platform resurfacing and the installation of tactile paving to improve safety for blind and partially sighted people.

On the track itself the investment saw:

- 6,000 modern concrete sleepers installed in place of wooden ones dating back to the 1950s
- 1.6km of railway drainage upgrades between Harlesden and Kenton to prevent future flooding
- 10km of new cabling for signals – traffic lights for trains
- Upgrades to the power supply for Underground and Overground trains
- Demolition of a derelict, railway-locked electricity substation in danger of collapse

The track work will bring improved journey reliability while the spruced-up stations will make travelling a more pleasurable and safer experience for passengers.

The full closure meant maintenance teams could carry out multiple complex projects at once which would otherwise have taken years of weekend or overnight working.

For instance, 7-8 years of midweek overnight shifts would have been needed to get the sleepers replaced.

For the 10km of new signalling cable, it's estimated 10 years of work was condensed into the seven-day-closure, saving both time and taxpayers' money.

James Dean, Network Rail's West Coast South route director, said: "We're really grateful to passengers for their patience while we closed the railway just before Christmas so we could carry out these essential projects.

"It enabled us to bring sections of track right into the 21st century with new equipment which is much more reliable and robust. We were also able to transform five stations making them cleaner and brighter – I hope people enjoy using them much more as a result. Next month we'll be returning to carry out even more work to improve the Bakerloo line and London Overground for the future."

Rory O'Neill, TfL's general manager for London Overground, said: "We would like to thank customers for their patience while Network Rail made these vital infrastructure improvements designed to increase train reliability and customer comfort. Our goal is always to provide our customers with the safest and most reliable service possible, and these Network Rail improvements will help to ensure we can do just that."

Between Saturday 11 and Sunday 19 February the same stretch of railway will be closed for similar essential improvements to remaining stations, track and line side equipment, including 5,000 more sleepers being replaced.

The scale of the work means the Bakerloo line between Queen's Park and Harrow & Wealdstone and the London Overground between Euston and Watford Junction will once again be closed.

Over the nine-day closure, Transport for London passengers affected by the upgrades can complete their journeys by using alternative rail lines, existing or temporary bus routes*.

Passengers are being advised to plan ahead by checking www.nationalrail.co.uk, www.tfl.gov.uk or the [Transport for London \(TfL\) Go app](#).

Once complete these improvements will help tackle flooding and reduce the number of power and signal

failures which often lead to train cancellations, helping provide confidence when using London Overground and Bakerloo line services.

* Bakerloo line and London Overground customers are encouraged to use existing bus services to connect to alternative rail routes, including the nearby Metropolitan or Jubilee lines.

Temporary bus routes 718, 719 and 720 will be available during the closure periods.

These will run between Watford Junction and Harrow & Wealdstone, and between Harrow & Wealdstone and Queen's Park, and will cost the same as a standard bus fare. TfL's Hopper fare gives customers unlimited bus journeys for £1.65, made within one hour of touching in.

Customers for central London should use London Northwestern Railway services from Watford Junction, Bushey, Harrow & Wealdstone or Wembley Central, which will operate as normal.

There will be fewer services running on the rest of the Bakerloo line between Elephant & Castle and Queen's Park during the closure periods as there will be no access to one of TfL's depots meaning fewer trains are available. Service frequency on the remainder of the line is available on TfL Go and tfl.gov.uk/bakerloo-overground.

Photo credit: Network Rail