

Rail upgrades power ahead in the East Midlands this December

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This December, Network Rail is investing in the East Midlands' railway to bring better stations, more reliable journeys and to power ahead with the Midland Main Line electrification scheme.

On Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 December, the brand-new second footbridge will be lifted in at St Albans station to make it easier for passengers to move around during busy times.

Over the next two weekends (3, 4, 10 and 11 December), engineers will also be making progress on the multi-million-pound Midland Main Line electrification scheme, which will see the train-powering overhead line equipment upgraded south of Bedford.

Gary Walsh, East Midlands route director for Network Rail said: "Over the next two weekends, we'll be powering ahead with improvements across the East Midlands to deliver a better railway for passengers and improve St Albans station.

"We've worked with our train operating colleagues to keep as many people moving as we can by using road replacements and diversions, so passengers should check before travelling and allow extra time for

their journey.”

Major work is also taking place to lower the tracks through Main Street bridge in Market Harborough to clear the way for overhead electric wires to be installed in the future. The programme supports the Government’s ambitions for decarbonisation and will ultimately deliver a more reliable, greener railway.

This will mean changes to services between Luton and London St Pancras across both weekends, as well as replacement buses between Leicester and Kettering via Market Harborough on 10 and 11 December.

Jenny Saunders, customer services director for Thameslink and Great Northern said: “Network Rail’s investment along this important route will bring a range of benefits for our customers, and we’ve worked closely together to minimise the short-term inconvenience over these weekends. Replacement buses will be operating to help people complete their journeys, so please plan ahead and allow plenty of extra time.”

The RMT has also announced strike action across eight dates in December and January, which is likely to cause significant disruption. Passengers can find the latest updates by visiting networkrail.co.uk/industrial-action.

Neil Grabham, customer services director for EMR said: “We are asking any customers planning to travel to or from London over the next few weekends to plan ahead and allow plenty of time to complete their journeys.

“Strike action will also affect EMR services on Saturday 3 December, we will be running a significantly reduced train service on all of our routes. More details can be found on the EMR website.

“We would like to thank our passengers for their patience whilst Network Rail make progress on the electrification of the Midland Main Line and strike action is taking place.”