

Salisbury and Romsey line expected to reopen at the end of March following landslip

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Network Rail has announced an interim fix that will enable the railway between Salisbury and Romsey to reopen to passenger trains by the end of March.

Team of engineers have been assessing the damage after a landslip on a railway embankment close to Salisbury on 18 February. Following an extended period of above average rainfall and significant flooding of the adjacent field, the railway embankment slipped, leaving the track unsupported over approximately 20 metres. This caused the track to dip and it has not been possible to run services.

Since the incident, detailed ground investigations and topographic surveys have been carried out to understand how best to repair the line. The task has been made more challenging by significant flooding of the field at the foot of the embankment meaning heavy machinery is unable to reach the landslip to carry out the long-term fix.

Engineers have come up with an interim solution. They will use specialist equipment to install 160 metres of 13 metre deep steel sheets which will be driven into each side of the embankment. Teams will then drill under the track and tie both sides together with steel rods to support the embankment.

Once the flood water has subsided and the embankment is accessible through the field, the full repair will be delivered.

Mark Killick, route director for Network Rail Wessex, said: "This landslide is a serious challenge and has been complicated by significant flooding of the field next to the embankment.

"Our absolute priority is to safely reopen the line for passengers and I can now confirm that engineers have devised an interim solution that will see the line re-opened by the end of March. I'd like to thank passengers for their continued patience while the line is closed."

Christian Neill, Deputy Director of Customer Experience at South Western Railway, said: "We're pleased Network Rail are making progress repairing the embankment, and are working closely with them to ensure services return back to normal as quickly as possible.

"In the meantime, we're operating train services from Romsey to Southampton via Chandlers Ford and Millbrook, which connect with bus replacement services between Romsey and Salisbury via Mottisfont & Dunbridge & Dean, until the lines fully reopen.

"We thank passengers for their patience, and are sorry for the continued disruption to their journeys."