

Track renewal project means smoother and faster journeys on the Cumbrian coast line

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Network Rail is investing £3m to replace 5,000 yards of ageing and worn out track on the Cumbrian coast line to provide smoother, faster and more reliable journeys for passengers.

The track will be renewed as part of the Great North Rail Project, which is delivering significant investment to the railway across the North of England.

Upgrading the railway between Silecroft and Bootle in West Cumbria will help provide better and faster journeys, and help remove a temporary speed restriction that's currently in place on older sections of the track.

Over six consecutive Sundays from 6 January until 10 February 2019, buses will replace trains between Whitehaven and Millom while the railway is closed for the work. Eight mid-week nights, when trains aren't running, will also be used to complete the upgrade.

Trudy Harrison, MP for Copeland, said: "Living opposite Bootle train station, I often see (and hear) the extensive works taking place during the night when there are no train services running. Whilst inconvenience will be inevitable, I absolutely welcome this investment.

"The old track is responsible for much of the delays and cancellations, and the necessary speed

restrictions obviously have knock-on effects.

“This is essential investment into the out of date railway that we desperately rely on, and I both commend the patience of local people and that of Network Rail.”

Stephen Kearns, route asset manager for track at Network Rail, said: “This £3m investment to modernise the Cumbrian coast line is being delivered as part of the Great North Rail Project, and will help support the economy of West Cumbria and enable better journeys for passengers for decades to come.

“The essential work has been carefully planned to cause the least disruption. We will be working mid-week nights and over six Sundays between 6 January and 10 February to upgrade 5,000 yards of rail, sleepers and railway stone. Passengers should check with National Rail Enquiries or Northern for the latest travel information.”

Chris Jackson, regional director at Northern, said: “The improvement work being carried out by Network Rail is great news for our customers in Cumbria.

“The work also coincides with the planned removal of the old Class 37 locomotives which will be replaced on the Cumbrian Coast with more Class 156 trains.

“During the improvement work we will liaise closely with Network Rail to keep disruption to our customers to an absolute minimum, and I’d like to thank those customers for their continued patience.”

Currently, due to the poor state of the track, a temporary speed restriction is in place between Silescroft and Bootle. To create smoother and faster journeys, as well as installing 5,000 yards of new rail, Network Rail engineers will also replace 8,400 tonnes of railway stone, and 7,870 steel and concrete sleepers.

Passengers should plan ahead and to check before travelling at www.nationalrail.co.uk.