

Week-long upgrade of Portsmouth's railway getting underway

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Network Rail engineers are about to kickstart improvements to Portsmouth's railway and the landmark Landport Viaduct.

Between Monday 18 and Sunday 24 January, the line from Portsmouth & Southsea to Portsmouth Harbour will close, with the closure extending to Cosham and Bedhampton on Sunday 24 January for a number of other improvements, including track renewals.

The main focus of the work will be vital maintenance on a Victorian viaduct at Portsmouth & Southsea station. Landport Viaduct, which dates back to 1876 and supports the station's two platforms for trains to Portsmouth Harbour, will be strengthened to ensure it can support train services for years to come.

Engineers will also refurbish and replace track between Fratton and Portsmouth & Southsea; renew timber supports on railway bridges at Portsmouth Harbour and at Portcreek Junction near Hilsea; improve drainage at Fratton station and upgrade Fratton Train Care depot.

Critical workers who have to travel on South Western Railway, Great Western Railway and Southern

services to and from Portsmouth stations are advised to plan ahead. Trains will start and finish their journeys earlier, some will call at additional stations or be diverted, while others will be replaced by buses.

Mark Killick, Network Rail Wessex route director, said: “We know any planned changes to train services can be disruptive, but the vital work will provide a more reliable railway in Portsmouth. By closing the railway for seven days, we will save many more weekends of potential disruption.

“We’re proud to be the custodians of some very old Victorian structures, and one of the challenges we face is running a frequent and busy train service over the top of them, while keeping them in top condition.

“We appreciate our passengers’ patience while we do the work, and ask that if anyone has to travel between 18 and 24 January to plan ahead and check the latest travel advice before beginning their journeys.”

Alan Penlington, South Western Railway’s customer experience director, said: “Following on from the work at the start of the year, the bridge maintenance projects taking place in Portsmouth are vital for improving performance and reliability along this important stretch of railway.

“I realise these works will mean disruption for our customers who need to travel; however, replacement buses will be in operation and this week long closure will allow engineers the necessary time to strengthen Landport Viaduct for years to come. I’d like to thank customers for their patience.”

Photo credit: Network Rail