

Work complete to cut delays between Southampton and Bournemouth

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Work has finished to improve track quality and drainage between Southampton and Bournemouth.

Network Rail says 100 engineers worked on multiple locations along the 42km route, in a project that is part of £3m worth of improvements, between 1 November and 5 November.

It said the work will reduce delay for customers.

The work included engineers using a rail vacuum cleaner at Hinton Admiral to suck up the old ballast. Using a large crane and battling high winds, the team also installed a new electric substation at Lymington, which will help to improve power supply in the area once it is fully functional.

Other improvements included:

- An upgrade to track circuits at Totton, Beaulieu Road, Brockenhurst and Christchurch
- The replacement of wheeltimbers over the Avon and Stour rivers on either side of Christchurch station
- An improvement to drainage in the Totton and Ashurst areas to help to prevent delays caused by flooding.

With work complete, Network Rail has been able to remove a temporary speed restriction and prevent others, so trains can run at their normal speed.

Network Rail Wessex route director, Mark Killick, said: "This critical improvement work will make journeys better for customers as the track and signals will be more reliable.

"Through it all, our customers and people who live by the railway have been really understanding and patient. We know people would prefer to have been on trains than buses, but by doing the work over five days – rather than across multiple weekends – we can complete the work much more quickly.

"I want to thank our customers for their patience and by working closely with SWR and CrossCountry, we were able to carry out the work with the least amount of disruption and inconvenience."

Customer experience director at South Western Railway, Alan Penlington, said: "The work Network Rail have completed will make a big difference to the customer experience in the area. New signalling, improved drainage and the removal of speed restrictions will mean greater punctuality and resilience on the line for years to come.

"Closing the railway for five days is never a decision taken lightly, and I'd like to thank customers for their patience and understanding during these essential works."