

Work to install new key equipment at Greater Anglia Colchester depot nears completion

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Work at Greater Anglia's Colchester depot to install equipment for new trains is nearing completion.

Two huge 40,000-litre fuel tanks, a 14-tonne sanding tower and new toilet tanking equipment have been put in at the site near Colchester station.

The works at the depot will be used to allow the company's three-carriage bi-mode trains, powered by diesel and electricity, which run on the Marks Tey – Sudbury branch line, to be prepared for service close to the line they serve.

Andrew Goodrum, Greater Anglia's client and programme director, said: "The finished works will mean fewer empty miles are run by our trains overnight making it better for the environment, while keeping them close by to the line that they serve which all benefits our customers."

The trains currently have to go as far as Ipswich to refuel or even Norwich's Crown Point depot when refilling of the specialist sanding equipment on-board is needed – all of which take extra time and energy.

Sand is used by all of the Greater Anglia fleet to make the brakes even more effective by giving extra grip in slippery conditions.

Screen wash on the new trains will also be topped up at the depot, while the toilets – which retain their waste rather than flush it out onto the track on all of the company's trains – will be both emptied and refilled with water there too.

The three-carriage bi-mode trains, made by Swiss manufacturer Stadler, were launched on the Marks Tey-Sudbury route in 2020 as part of Greater Anglia's project to replace all of its old fleet with 191 new trains.

The bi-mode trains are much greener than the old diesel trains they replaced, with lower emissions, and modern brakes which release less brake dust into the environment.

All installation work at the depot is planned to be finished by the end of December 2022, with intensive testing taking place after the New Year, and the project is expected to be completed by March 2023.