

Work to relieve long-standing bottleneck on the Hope Valley railway line

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The first pieces of track have been installed to relieve a long-standing bottleneck on the Hope Valley railway line.

Engineers working at Bamford on the Hope Valley line, laid the first 340 metres of track for a new ‘passing loop’ that will allow slower trains to switch to the new track, while faster trains continue past at a higher speed.

The work is part of the Hope Valley Railway Upgrade, which will alleviate several bottlenecks along the route between Manchester and Sheffield and provide upgrades to stations.

Rail Minister, Huw Merriman said: “These vital improvements will transform journeys on the historic Hope Valley line, making services faster and more reliable for passengers in the North.

“Backed by £137 million Government funding, the upgrades will boost connections between two thriving Northern cities while ensuring our stations are inclusive and accessible for all.”

340 metres of track have been installed between Bamford and Hathersage stations to create the start and end points of the new passing loop. The line through the Hope Valley was closed during the installation of the track, with engineers working around the clock using machinery including heavy lift excavators, a dozer and a tamper.

Graeme Whitehead, Senior Sponsor for Network Rail said: "Installing the first pieces of track for this important passing loop is a major milestone for the Hope Valley Railway Upgrade.

"The upgrade of this popular route will help to alleviate historic bottlenecks, bringing faster and more reliable travel to local passengers and long-distance travellers."

Chris Nutton, Major Projects Director for TransPennine Express said: "The work at Bamford was a key step in the Hope Valley Route Upgrade.

"I would like to thank customers for their cooperation whilst the important work took place."

Since the start of the year, more than 700 metres of new track has been installed in Dore & Totley, also as part of the Hope Valley Railway Upgrade. Work to extend a bridge has also been completed to facilitate the second line of track through Dore & Totley station, along with a new platform and accessible footbridge.

The Hope Valley Railway Upgrade will bring benefits to passengers from the area and for those travelling through on longer journeys. The upgrade will mean more reliable trains and more accessible stations.

Photo credit: Network Rail