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Rowley Regis tunnel repairs to make railway more reliable for passengers

An historic railway tunnel in the West Midlands is being made more reliable for passengers this month.

Two million pounds is being invested in Old Hill tunnel in Rowley Regis as part of Britain's multi-billion-pound Railway Upgrade Plan.

Network Rail is strengthening and repairing the 157-year-old tunnel to ensure it is safe and reliable for years to come.

Old Hill tunnel was built in 1867 and takes 819 metres of the Stourbridge to

Snow Hill line underneath Rowley Regis.

The length of the tunnel means that to carry out the work, Network Rail will be closing the railway on six consecutive Sundays between 11 January – 15 February 2020.

Kathryn Berry, scheme project manager at Network Rail, said:

“We appreciate the patience of passengers while we carry out these vital improvements to Old Hill tunnel as part of the Railway Upgrade Plan. The work will mean fewer train delays on the Birmingham – Stourbridge line and make this Victorian-built structure fit for the 21st Century.”

There will be no train services to stations between Birmingham Snow Hill and Stourbridge Junction from 10.30pm on Saturdays through to 5am on Mondays between 11 January to 15 February 2020. Replacement bus services are being operated by West Midlands Railway.

Richard Brooks, head of customer experience for West Midlands Railway, said:

“We thank our passengers for their patience while Network Rail carries out this essential maintenance work which will ultimately help improve reliability on this important route.

“Replacement bus services will be in place on each affected Sunday calling at all stations between Birmingham Snow Hill and Stourbridge Junction. Services between Stourbridge Town and Stourbridge Junction will run as normal.

“Trains between Stourbridge and Worcestershire will operate to an amended timetable and passengers are advised to check their journeys before travelling.”

Passengers planning to travel on the affected weekends are being urged to check www.nationalrail.co.uk to ensure they have the smoothest journey possible.

Notes to Editors

The work involves repairs to brickwork, strengthening the structure of the tunnel, waterproofing work where required, and repairing the lining of the tunnel.

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco

and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit www.abellio.com

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