**Passengers reminded of 16 day railway closure between Rugeley Trent Valley and Walsall as electrification gathers pace**

Passengers using the Chase line between Rugeley Trent Valley and Walsall are being reminded to check before they travel this August while Network Rail continues to electrify the Chase line.

Once the line is electrified, London Midland’s passengers will benefit from a cleaner, greener, quieter and more reliable railway between Birmingham and Rugeley with more frequent services.

An increasing number of passengers use the Chase line each year and improvements are needed to accommodate this growth. To deliver the £100m+ upgrade, which forms part of the Railway Upgrade Plan, the line will be closed from Sunday 13 August until Monday 28 August 2017.

The closure has been carefully planned with London Midland. Work which will take place includes:

* Replacing and realigning the track at various locations between Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley
* Platform work at Cannock, Landywood and Bloxwich stations
* Temporary closure of Bloxwich level crossing. A diversionary route for road traffic and pedestrians will be in place
* Temporary closure of Landywood and Stoneyfields footpath crossings
* Piling to install remaining foundations for stanchions
* Installation of stanchions and gantries ahead of overhead lines being installed in 2018

**Martin Tiller, Network Rail’s project sponsor** **said**: “This work, part of our Railway Upgrade Plan, will mean passengers travelling between Rugeley and Birmingham via Walsall will have a better, more reliable railway.

“Unfortunately these upgrades cannot be done while trains are running so we have to close the line between Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley for 16 days in August. The work has been carefully planned with London Midland to get the maximum amount completed whilst causing the least disruption. I would like to thank passengers for their patience while we carry out these upgrades to deliver a better railway.”

**Amanda Milling, MP for Cannock Chase said**: "I completely understand that passengers will be very concerned about the disruption on the Chase Line in the coming weeks but they will enjoy a much better service once the electrification is complete.  The electrification of the Chase Line will see faster and more frequent trains which mean there are hundreds more seats, bringing an end to the misery passengers have faced over the last few years.  I would urge passengers to check before they travel as there will be an amended timetable with a replacement bus service."

**London Midland’s head of Route, Rob Hornsey, said:** “We would much sooner be running trains than buses in August but it will be worth it when we can run more frequent, cleaner, quieter and quicker trains to carry more people when the work is done. I’d like to thank all our passengers and neighbours for their patience and understanding while this exciting project to upgrade the Chase Line progresses.”

From **Sunday 13 August until Monday 21 August** buses will replace trains between Tame Bridge Parkway, Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley to an amended timetable

From **Tuesday 22 August until Monday 28 August**buses will replace trains between Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley to an amended timetable.

Overhead wires are currently only installed as far as Walsall which means London Midland currently runs diesel trains from Birmingham to Rugeley Trent Valley. Once the electrification work on the Chase line is complete, electric trains will be able to run along the whole of the line from Birmingham New Street to Rugeley Trent Valley.

For more information on the work visit: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/lnw/chase-line-electrification-rugeley-to-walsall/>.

For travel information visit [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/).