

Elizabeth line services through central London expected to commence in summer 2021

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Crossrail Ltd today issued its latest update on progress to complete the Elizabeth line and confirmed that it plans to open the central section between Paddington and Abbey Wood in summer 2021.

This latest forecast is based on the current progress with completing software development for the signalling and train systems along with safety assurance for the railway so that intensive operational testing can begin in 2020.

Following the opening of the central section, full services across the Elizabeth line route from Reading and Heathrow in the west to Abbey Wood and Shenfield in the east will commence by mid-2022. This will connect the eastern and western sections straight through central London. Already on 15 December 2019, Transport for London started running the stopping services between Paddington mainline and Reading ahead of the service becoming part of the Elizabeth line.

Mark Wild, Chief Executive, Crossrail Ltd, said: "I know that Londoners are deeply frustrated by the delays to the Elizabeth line and we are doing everything we can to get this railway finished and open. We continue to make good progress with the central section now reaching substantial completion and we are increasingly confident that Bond Street station will be ready to open with the rest of the railway. We have a comprehensive plan to complete the Elizabeth line and the milestones we must hit during 2020, including the testing of the signalling and train systems and safety assurance, but there are no shortcuts

to delivery of this hugely complex railway.

“Our latest assessment is that Elizabeth line services through central London will commence in summer 2021 but we are aiming to open the railway as soon as we can. This forecast assumes a period of time will be required to undertake intensive operational testing. The key focus for everyone on the Crossrail project is commencing intensive testing of the Elizabeth line as soon as we can in 2020, to enable passenger service as early as possible in 2021.”

Crossrail Ltd’s detailed cost forecasts continue to show that the project will be delivered within the additional funding range announced in November 2019. This indicated a range of between £400 million to £650 million more than the revised funding agreed by the Mayor, Government and Transport for London in December 2018.