

Elizabeth Line still on track for opening in first half of 2022

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The Elizabeth line is on track to open in the first half of this year, Transport for London (TfL) has confirmed.

It has said it is coming to the end of its first phase of its trial operations on the Elizabeth line – ahead of large-scale exercises across the new railway.

The hope is the line will reduce journey times, create additional capacity, improve accessibility and provide an economic boost to London and beyond. With new stations and travel links, the Elizabeth line aims to support new housing and jobs across the capital as well as Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Essex.

Progress was made towards completing the new railway over Christmas, with planned upgrades taking place and work continuing at the two state-of-the-art new stations still to be handed over to TfL. The latest Siemens signalling software for the railway was commissioned along with the updated Alstom train software installed on trains. There were also upgrades to both the control communications system and the tunnel ventilation system.

The Trial Operations phase will involve a range of organisations, including TfL and London Underground,

MTR Elizabeth line (as the operator), and Network Rail collaborating on the response to trial scenarios along with thousands of volunteers. Emergency services including the British Transport Police, London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance Service will also be involved, demonstrating how they would respond to incidents on the network and in stations. As a result, there will be times where police, fire and ambulance service vehicles may be seen near stations, testing and simulating what would happen in the event their staff were required to attend.

In the run up to opening the Elizabeth line, activity will be taking place on most days including weekends. Other exercises will include responding to train, signalling, platform screen door and track simulations.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "The Elizabeth line will transform travel across London and the South East, benefitting millions and supporting hundreds of thousands of new homes and jobs. Its brand new trains and step-free stations will help us deliver a modern, truly world-class transport system that allows us to support the growth in London's population over the coming decades. That's why I'm delighted it is on track to open in the first half of 2022, in what will be a landmark moment for the capital."

Andy Byford, Transport for London's Commissioner, said: "This is an extremely exciting year for us and for London as we get ever closer to opening the Elizabeth line and welcoming customers from Abbey Wood to Paddington. The launch of this much needed and transformational addition to the transport network will be central to the recovery for London and the UK. Customers will experience a new way of travelling – with brand new, spacious step-free stations and new connections across the capital and beyond. There will be no better symbol of London's renaissance from the pandemic."

Since May 2021, trains have been running through the tunnels to continue building up mileage and reliability ahead of the railway opening to passengers. When the Elizabeth line opens, it will operate 12 trains per hour through the central section of the railway.

Elizabeth line customers are set to have spacious stations and platforms, longer trains with walk-through air-conditioned carriages, live travel information and free Wi-Fi. Progress continues to be made to also ensure that customers can enjoy 4G mobile connectivity as soon as possible. All 41 stations will provide step-free access from street to platform.