

## In The News | 12th April 2024 | Latest Rail News

April 12, 2024



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Hitachi could begin the process of laying off staff at its County Durham factory as early as June, according to Labour's Shadow Chancellor.

An article on The Chronicle Live says the future of the huge train factory in Newton Aycliffe has been thrown into doubt amid worries about a gap in orders. And Rachel Reeves has now warned that the Japanese manufacturing giant could begin a redundancy consultation in just a couple of months' time if the

Government fails to act before then to protect the site's future.

A Hitachi spokesperson told the LDRS: "Despite the lack of certainty, we remain committed to working with all stakeholders to find a viable way forward for our state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Newton Aycliffe. Preserving regional skills and supply chain will allow us to be competitive in future procurements and support British economic growth."

The Department for Transport called the Shadow Chancellor's comments "inaccurate" and said they did not "reflect the complexity of the process". A spokesperson said: "Rail manufacturing plays an important role in growing the UK economy, supporting British jobs, and delivering better services for passengers."

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Skanska, Kier, Octavius and Story share in £490m railways framework.

An article on The Construction Index website says Network Rail has set up a framework for the delivery of capital works in the North West & Central Region for control period 7 (CP7 - 2024-29).

The North West & Central Region (NW&C) includes the West Coast Mainline, connecting London Euston through to the West Midlands, Manchester and Cumbria before joining with Scotland.

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A new strategy published this week by the Railway Industry Association (RIA) sets out a pathway to a lower cost, higher performing net zero railway by 2050, whilst also showing how making rolling stock procurement decisions now can stave off the current threat to UK rolling stock manufacturing capability.

The whole system blueprint maximises current Government infrastructure plans and sets out how a co-ordinated 'track and train' approach could deliver improved outcomes for passenger and freight users, taxpayers and the supply chain.

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The Interim Chief Executive Officer of East West Rail, Beth West, has announced she will be leaving the organisation at the end of her contract to pursue new opportunities.

She said: "When I started at EWR, it wasn't even clear if Government would back the project. We now have clear Government support, a real focus on what we're doing, why we're doing it and who we're building it for. As the company moves into a new phase, I've reflected that now is the time for me to move on, with EWR Co ready for the future whilst I'm ready for a new challenge."

The permanent Chief Executive will be announced in due course.

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