

In The News | 17th April 2023 | Latest Rail News

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Train operator TransPennine Express (TPE) needs a “fresh start” after nearly a quarter of trains were cancelled between February and March, mayors in the north of England have said.

An article from ITV said Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham and Liverpool City Region Mayor Steve Rotherham have joined the Labour mayors of West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, and North of Tyne to ask the

Government not to renew FirstGroup's contract to run the service when their deal expires on 28 May.

In a joint letter to transport secretary, Mark Harper, the mayors said a new FirstGroup contract would be "rewarding failure and be a betrayal of passengers in the north".

The Rail Delivery Group says it has put forward a "fair revised offer" to the RMT union which it says makes important clarifications and reassurances, in particular around job terms and conditions for employees.

Last month the union suspended strikes scheduled for March 30 and April 1 following positive talks between the organisations with a view to securing a new offer on pay, job security and working conditions.

A spokesperson for the Rail Delivery Group said: "Our hope is that the RMT executive will put this proposal to its full train operating company membership and allow them a say on the deal, so we can end this dispute and work together to deliver a strong future for Britain's railway and all those who work on it."

[Read the full story here.](#)

Plans for a new rail link which will slash journey times across west and north-west London are taking shape, London Mayor Sadiq Khan has confirmed.

An article in the Times Series said the West London Orbital rail project could be opened in the early 2030s – and would cut some journey times by two thirds.

The proposed London Overground service would run from Hounslow through to Acton, Old Oak Common and Neasden, with branches stretching both to West Hampstead and to Hendon.

In response to a written question by Labour's London Assembly, Mr Khan has confirmed that engineering consultants are in the process of being selected to work on a detailed design for the scheme.

Finally, South Western Railway (SWR) has introduced new, more energy-efficient vending machines with 'living walls', as part of a world-leading, innovative new trial.

The operator has partnered with Christchurch-based Decorum Vending, who have worked with Regency Design and phs Greenleaf to design the world's first living walls that can be attached to the sides of vending machines.

The living walls – which are small, self-sufficient, vertical gardens – have been developed to thrive in all locations, whether sunlight, shady or covered, and if the trial at Bournemouth is successful, will be making an appearance on machines at other locations on the SWR network.