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InTheNews: The latest rail news on Wednesday, 19th January 2022

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.

Andy Byford, Transport for London's Commissioner, said: "The launch of this much needed and transformational addition to the transport network will be central to the recovery for London and the UK."

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Metro mayors and other critics of the £96 billion Integrated Rail Plan have today been branded 'irrational' by the Transport Secretary.

Grant Shapps makes the accusation in an article for The Yorkshire Post in direct response to mounting criticism over the decision to downgrade Northern Powerhouse Rail, scrap proposals for a new station in Bradford and not build the eastern leg of HS2 in full to Leeds.

Options have been discussed with the under secretary of state for transport Wendy Morton and Lichfield MP Michael Fabricant for a passenger rail service between Lichfield and Burton, stopping at the National Memorial Arboretum.

The two MPs met with West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) Executive Director, Malcolm Holmes, to talk through the concept.

The National Memorial Arboretum hosts over 300,000 visitors and holds 250 events, including nationally

significant veterans' events and services of remembrance, every year.

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Direct Rail Services (DRS) and Tesco have signed a deal which will extend their partnership.

The rail division of Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS) has signed a new three-year agreement with Tesco. It will mean that DRS will continue to supply, and expand, rail operations across the country in their established partnership.

Recently the company launched Tesco's first refrigerated rail freight service, using the Class 88 locomotives, taking at least 17,000 containers off the road each year, saving 7.3 million road miles.

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Photo credit: Transport for London