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November 20, 2020



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Northern leaders have agreed an initial preferred way forward for a new railway network that will transform the region's economy.

Following a Transport for the North meeting, elected mayors, council and business leaders have recommended the Government commits to Northern Powerhouse Rail – a network of new and significantly upgraded rail lines.

The network spans from Liverpool to Hull, Sheffield and the North East, and would begin construction in 2024/25. It also links fully with HS2, with shared track, stations and junctions in parts.

This initial preferred way forward will now be sent to Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps, with further decisions set for January and work continuing with the DfT on an updated business case to be submitted in spring 2021.

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The Daily Telegraph features an article saying lazy civil servants are responsible for a £5 billion rise in the cost of HS2, a report by Parliament's spending watchdog warns.

The National Audit Office said a proposed £5 billion saving in April 2017 never materialised because bureaucrats in charge of the project "did not put enough effort into developing the actions necessary to realise them".

The article features comments from Danielle Boxall, of the Taxpayers' Alliance, who says "Bureaucrats in charge of delivering HS2 have embarked on a wasteful spending binge".

A Department of Transport spokesman said "we reset the HS2 programme, introducing a revised budget with significant reforms, to ensure this vital project is delivered in a more disciplined manner".

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The first of the fully refurbished, high specification fleet has arrived, marking a significant milestone in the delivery of a modern railway for the Isle of Wight.

The delivery, which marks a major step towards a modern Island Line, has been in the works since September 2019, following the announcement of £26 million of funding.

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Finally, and nominations have opened for next year's Women in Rail Awards, which will take place in May at the historic Roundhouse in Camden.

This year, the evening will be hosted by Ms Naga Munchetty, journalist, broadcaster and television presenter.

The Women in Rail Awards aim to showcase and reward individuals and companies who have made a significant contribution to improving gender balance, equality, diversity and inclusion in the UK railway industry.

[Click here for more details.](#)

*Photo credit: South Western Railway*

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