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Downing Street has moved to reassure northern transport leaders the region's levelling-up project is in safe hands after reports it could be scrapped by ministers.

An article in the i newspaper says rumours swirled at the weekend that the Government could be preparing to abandon the Northern Powerhouse Rail to save money.

But Boris Johnson's spokesman quashed the rumours last night, saying they were "wrong".

HS2 has obtained approval for a scheme which will use material excavated from the Chiltern tunnels to create 127 hectares of new chalk grassland, woodland, wood pasture and wetland habitats around the tunnel's south portal.

The 'Colne Valley Western Slopes' project – which was approved under Schedule 17 of the HS2 Act by Three Rivers District Council and Buckinghamshire Council – will see the transformation of what is now an HS2 construction site into one of the largest areas of new chalk grassland in the Chiltern hills.

[Click here for more details.](#)

New flexible season tickets for trains were dismissed as "useless" after it emerged that savings on many routes were tiny or non-existent.

An article in The Times says the tickets, which went on sale yesterday, are designed to encourage part-time commuters to travel by train as lockdown restrictions are eased.

The system has been criticised by passenger groups after analysis showed that they offered very limited savings or no benefit at all on some routes.

A Department for Transport spokesman says flexible season tickets will offer most two and three-day-per-week commuters savings against buying daily tickets or traditional seasons.

Standing up against racism and discrimination in the rail industry. That is the topic of the cover feature in the latest [RailDirector](#) in an interview with Network Rail's Loraine Martins OBE.

The Director of Diversity and Inclusion spoke with the magazine shortly after Network Rail was named as one of The Times Top 50 Employers for Women.

You can read the latest edition of the magazine for free online.

[Click here for more details.](#)

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd