

# In The News | 31st January 2024 | Latest Rail News

January 31, 2024



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Andy Burnham will pitch an alternative HS2 plan at a meeting with a government minister today (January 31). The Greater Manchester mayor, who is working with West Midlands mayor Andy Street, will present the proposal to the transport secretary this morning.

An article in the Manchester Evening News says the pair have convened a group of private companies which is looking at other ways of funding a new high-speed line between Birmingham and Manchester.

It comes after Rishi Sunak cancelled the Northern section of HS2 in October, blaming spiralling costs.

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Government funding of £24 million is set to be provided to boost Bradford's rail network.

An article on Insider Media Limited says Rail Minister Huw Merriman revealed the investment, with confirmation of £24 million towards a new platform at Forster Square Station to reduce delays and futureproof the station for generations to come.

The new platform is expected to ease congestion and improve access into the city for passengers, commuters and tourists.

Once complete – and subject to future funding decisions – it could result in an extra five LNER services a day, more than tripling the current provision.

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The Mayor of London has called on the UK's rail infrastructure manager to get its act together following a dip in performance on the Elizabeth Line and disruption on routes from Paddington in recent months.

An article on the City A.M website says in an interview, Sadiq Khan said he had been “unhappy with the

level of service on the Elizabeth Line in recent weeks” and that issues behind the disruption in Western Paddington were “simply not good enough.”

A Network Rail spokesperson said: “We’ve brought in a number of experts to inform our plans to overcome the challenges of operating a metro-style service on the line- most notably the additional strain on our infrastructure- and we are fully-committed to working alongside our industry partners to turn it around.”

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Westhoughton railway station is undergoing a huge transformation as part of a national electrification project, which will also see major additional upgrades to the station.

An article on The Bolton News website says Network Rail is investing £78 million to upgrade a six-mile stretch of railway between Wigan and Bolton to enable electric trains to serve the key North West towns in the future.

Following on from a meeting with ward councillor Cllr Martin Tighe, and the volunteer group Friends of Westhoughton Station, they have now secured further upgrades to the existing platform, including a full resurfacing, repainting, and inclusion of tactile paving for safety.

*Photo credit: DfT*