

## In The News | 4th June 2021 | Latest Rail News

June 4, 2021



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Rail journeys last year dropped to their lowest level since records began in the 1870s, figures show.

The article features in several of the newspapers, including The Daily Telegraph, that says trips plummeted to just 388 million last year compared to more than 1.7 billion in 2019, according to the Office for Rail and Roads.

Fare revenue fell to £1.9 billion in 2020 down from £10.4 billion the year before.

The lowest number of rail journeys during the pandemic was between last April and June, just after the first lockdown was announced, when only 35 million were made.

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The viability of London's flagship HS2 station is at risk after Boris Johnson refused to give Sadiq Khan a long-term bailout for the capital's transport authority.

That's according to an article in The Daily Telegraph, that says Transport for London, chaired by the Mayor of London, risks being forced to mothball a series of public transport upgrades after TfL was only given a six-month grant to keep it afloat.

One project at risk is the West London Orbital railway that connects a £1.7 billion HS2 rail interchange at Old Oak Common with the rest of the capital, according to a report entitled "Delivering the Mayor's Transport Strategy 2020/21". Published ahead of the TfL board meeting next week.

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HS2 has launched the search for small innovative firms and start-ups to become part of the third cohort to join its Innovation Accelerator programme, in partnership with Connected Places Catapult and Bruntwood SciTech.

The company delivering Britain's new high speed rail network is looking for five SMEs to develop new thinking, technology and processes in how data and digital technologies can be harnessed to help the project achieve one of its strategic aims of shrinking its carbon footprint.

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Network Rail's £7.5m project to refurbish and repaint the North Queensferry approach span to the world famous Forth Bridge is now underway.

The project, which commenced in February 2021, has now progressed with the grit blasting work to remove layers of old paint from the North Queensferry approach to the 130-year-old structure.

Engineers from main contractor Balfour Beatty, who are working in a bespoke encapsulated zone, will then repaint the spans using the iconic Forth Bridge red colour – a job that will not be required again for up to three decades after completion.

*Photo credit: Office of Rail and Road*