

## In The News | 7th October 2022 | Latest Rail News

October 7, 2022



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InTheNews: The latest rail news on Friday, 7th October 2022

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Rail firm Avanti West Coast has been warned it needs to “drastically improve services” after its contract to run the London to Glasgow line was extended by just six months.

An article on the BBC website says the decision means it will continue to run services until next April, the Department for Transport said.

Avanti has come under fire after cutting the number of trains between London and Manchester by a third in August.

In response, Graham Sutherland, FirstGroup chief executive officer, said: “The agreement allows our team at Avanti West Coast to sustain their focus on delivering their robust plan to restore services to the levels that passengers rightly expect.”

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The rail industry is reminding passengers to only travel if absolutely necessary tomorrow, as the publication of the reduced timetable confirms around 20 per cent of rail services will be in operation amid further strike action by members of the RMT union.

Network Rail said that thousands of specially trained and fully qualified back-up staff will once again step in during the walkouts to keep vital services running for those who need them, as they have done for all previous strike days.

But disruption is unavoidable, and passengers are asked to only travel if absolutely necessary.

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The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has raised concerns about the amount of renewals and efficiency works that Network Rail has to carry out by the end of March 2024 in light of challenging current conditions.

An article on the New Civil Engineer says ORR’s Annual efficiency and finance assessment of Network Rail 2021-22 reveals that these are tied to concerns about Network Rail’s management of financial risks for Control Period 6 (CP6), which runs from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024.

The report says that increased financial pressures, largely from unanticipated cost increases, have spurred Network Rail to increase its CP6 efficiency target from £3.5 billion to £4 billion, with this increase largely coming through workforce reform initiatives.

Network Rail reported £840 million spent on efficiency improvements in 2021-22, which is ahead of the £830 million promised in its delivery plan.

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Hoping to harness the power of artificial intelligence in its next phase of construction, HS2 Ltd has opened applications for tech start-ups to join its successful Innovation Accelerator programme.

The initiative, now looking to build its fifth cohort, is seeking five candidates to help utilise ground-breaking AI technology, to help drive smooth delivery of design changes across the construction phase of the HS2 programme.

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*Photo credit: HS2 Ltd*