

Trial running of trains gets underway on the Elizabeth line

May 12, 2021



The Crossrail project has reached the next important milestone with the trial running of four trains an hour underway as part of the major railway trials taking place throughout this year. Tottenham Court Road Elizabeth line station has also become the third of the new central London stations to be handed over to TfL.

This is ahead of the Elizabeth line opening and is a crucial moment in the project with the railway set to open in the first half of 2022.

The Trial Running programme involves integrated trials of the railway to demonstrate that the Elizabeth line is safe and reliable, and that it meets the capacity and performance requirements needed to move to the final stage before opening the railway. This final stage before the Elizabeth line opens to passengers is known as Trial Operations, which ensures the safety and reliability of the railway for public use, and will involve a wide range of exercises such as evacuations of trains and stations later this year.

Crossrail will steadily ramp up the numbers of trains running in the 42km of tunnels that have been built below London and on the existing rail network to allow the railway and the supporting systems to be

operated as close as possible to an operational timetable. Ahead of Trial Running commencing, the Great Western Main Line and Great Eastern Main Line were fully integrated with the Elizabeth line central section to form an operational railway ready for trains to run across the route.

Throughout the Trial Running programme, operations and maintenance staff and train drivers will play an integral role with the Romford Route Control Centre (RCC), the hub where they will signal all trains in the tunnel. Maintenance teams will be available to keep the railway running, as well as responding to any operational incidents across the network.

Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, said: "Safely delivering the Elizabeth line as soon as possible is one of my top priorities, so I'm really pleased that Trial Running is now underway. The whole Crossrail team are doing all they can to get the railway open and ensure London and the wider South East can enjoy its many benefits sooner rather than later."

Transport Minister Baroness Vere, said: "It is encouraging that Crossrail has achieved this crucial milestone on the journey towards the completion of the project. Huge efforts have been made to get the project to this point and it's vital those efforts continue as we work towards the full opening of the Elizabeth line."

Andy Byford, London's Transport Commissioner, said: "Reaching this crucial project milestone of running trains through the tunnels is a real testament to the teams who have worked so hard to get the railway ready for trials to ensure we can operate safely and reliably. I have also recently visited Tottenham Court Road Elizabeth line station to see the progress there, it is a fantastic new station and will be a key interchange with the Tube.

"There is still much to do, but I know everyone is pulling together and when we open the Elizabeth line it will make a real difference to those travelling across London; increasing capacity, transforming accessibility and providing a huge economic boost."

Mark Wild, Crossrail Chief Executive, said: "We have now started the Trial Running of trains on the Elizabeth line and this is an incredibly significant moment. It marks the moment when our focus shifts to commissioning of the new railway and it puts us firmly on the path to Trial Operations and ultimately the opening of the Elizabeth line.

"I want to thank everyone who has worked so hard over many years to get us to this point. There have been real challenges along the way but the start of Trial Running is an important milestone for the Elizabeth line and for London."

Crossrail is also making good progress with the new central section stations and has recently transferred Tottenham Court Road Elizabeth line station to TfL, which means the station can be fully integrated with the operational network ahead of the Elizabeth line opening.

Tottenham Court Road Elizabeth line station has been constructed by Laing O'Rourke and is the third of the new Elizabeth line stations to be transferred to TfL, following Farringdon in March and Custom House last year. The London Underground and TfL teams will now begin their readiness activities to prepare the station for Trial Operations beginning later this year. Laing O'Rourke will

continue progressive demobilisation from the site.

Declan McGeeney, Director of UK Infrastructure, Laing O'Rourke, said: "I am immensely proud of our team for what they have achieved and how they have overcome the challenges of the past 12 months to get to completion. Their commitment to the project has been absolute and they have worked in close partnership with Crossrail and London Underground to create what is a truly impressive new station that will improve the journeys of millions of people for many decades to come."

Tottenham Court Road is set to become one of London's busiest stations, offering an interchange between Northern, Central and Elizabeth line services. The station will have step-free access throughout, a new public plaza and new entrances outside Centre Point on Oxford Street and at Dean Street in Soho. Woolwich, Liverpool Street and Paddington will be the next Elizabeth line stations to transfer to TfL.

Photo credit: Crossrail