

RAILFUTURE POLICY STATEMENTS

Railfuture produced these official policy statements in 2014 to guide our campaigning for a bigger better railway. Our position on these key topics may have changed since then in the light of events, but they have been retained on the Railfuture website for historic interest.

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Railfuture is the only nationwide independent organisation in Great Britain promoting a better railway for both passengers and freight users. Railfuture's campaigning work is funded by our members. Join us at www.railfuture.org.uk/join/, write to Railfuture Membership, 6 Carral Close, Brant Road, Lincoln LN5 9BD or e-mail membership@railfuture.org.uk.

Railfuture's mission statement:

To be the number one advocate for the railway and rail users.

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Policy 1: THE CASE FOR RAIL

Railfuture promotes the development and use of rail and light rail to achieve the following objectives. We will seek to influence the service specification for franchise and any non-franchised rail operations for the benefit of passengers and freight customers and to encourage more modal switch from road to rail.

- 1.1 To promote and support economic growth both nationally and regionally by providing access to jobs and education, reducing business journey times and enabling profitable use of travel time.
- 1.2 To stimulate investment for regeneration and to reverse the decline of town centres due to planning errors of the past that were designed to exploit the car. Rail development has been shown to provide more benefit than investment in other modes of transport.
- 1.3 To aid social inclusion by improving personal mobility for all.
- 1.4 To improve the urban environment - which rail can do because it can carry more people and goods, in less space than roads. Rail penetrates most town and city centres and must continue to do so.
- 1.5 To reduce injury and death owing to road accidents. Rail is by any measure the safest mode of travel for like-for-like journeys.
- 1.6 To promote sustainable transport and to combat global warming through the lower carbon emissions of rail compared to other modes. Electrified railways can also use non-polluting renewable energy. Per passenger kilometre, rail produces less than half the CO₂ of car passengers and a quarter of that of air passengers while, per tonne-kilometre, rail freight produces less than one tenth that of road or air freight. Moreover, emissions from aviation at high altitude are twice as damaging.
- 1.7 To use energy more efficiently. The cost of energy is continually rising. Rail is significantly more fuel-efficient than road and air transport.
- 1.8 To reduce road congestion by achieving modal shift of passengers and freight to rail.

Policy 2: FINANCE

The railways are a significant part of our national infrastructure. They have a transformational effect, powering our economy for the long term. Therefore the railways need a stable financial base on which to operate – this is more important than ownership. To that end, Railfuture strongly supports continued investment in the rail industry, and a level playing field between the different modes of transport, by calling for the following:

- 2.1 Investment in the railway to support economic growth. It has been shown that investment in rail on a pound for pound basis generates more jobs than investment in roads (Source: research for Invensys carried out by Credo 2009).
- 2.2 Investment decision to be devolved as far as practicable – decisions with only local impact to be made locally, and major investment decisions affecting the network to be made centrally
- 2.3 Investment to be focussed on increasing capacity and resilience, and on reducing unit costs by ongoing electrification, centralised signalling and further re-integration of the rail network, for example through extension of the South West Trains/Network Rail Alliance model.
- 2.4 The benefits of cost savings to be apportioned fairly between farepayer and taxpayer to limit both fare rises and taxpayer support.
- 2.5 Investment in extra capacity to be viable, ie justified on socioeconomic grounds, so that the railway is financially sustainable.
- 2.6 Integration and coordination of public transport to release benefits of investment.
- 2.6 A more equitable finance method for Network Rail than continued borrowing from banks at commercial interest rates, which will remove the need for Network Rail to borrow more than 75% of its asset base.
- 2.7 Network Rail to be treated more like a commercial company, for example by treating the capital element of the Network Grant paid to Network Rail as a capital injection by the shareholders (the government) into a loss-making company, therefore at zero cost of capital. The value obtained from subsidy should be better managed to maximise social benefit at local level, for example by paying the revenue element of the Network Grant via the Train Operating Companies, if this can be done efficiently.
- 2.8 Index linked fare increases to use CPI, now the indicator of inflation preferred by government, not RPI.
- 2.9 Equitable investment appraisal rules between modes.
- 2.10 Changes to make the pricing structure for each mode closer to the Pay As You Go principle, eg by introducing rail smartcards and road pricing, so that the cost is more equally visible to the user at the point of use.
- 2.11 Greater awareness of the net cost of the rail network to the taxpayer. Railfuture seeks to dispel widely held misconceptions about the true cost of the rail industry which have arisen largely because government subsidies are widely publicised but the significant sums returned to the tax payer through taxation, loan guarantee fees and premium payments paid by Train Operating Companies rarely, if ever, get mentioned in the national media. Government fares policy is based upon gross costs and takes no account of sums paid back (refer to Railway Taxation briefing paper). We therefore contend that the fare payer already pays 75% or more of net costs and that above inflation fare increases can no longer be justified.

Policy 3: FARES

Railfuture will continue to campaign for better value and appropriate tickets for passengers (including smart ticketing) through a wide range of point of sale outlets.

- 3.1 Encourage better fare deals for off-peak passengers to spread loading and encourage more modal switch from cars. These deals to be available through all, or most points of sale and not limited to internet access only (restricting and denying access to those without the facility or ability).
- 3.2 Removal of RPI+ annual increases. Moving to CPI+ and eventually lower or no increases as industry efficiency increases.
- 3.3 Removal of additional Flex in annual regulated fare increases – except for specific issues that have been the subject of consultation with relevant stakeholders in advance.
- 3.4 Encourage and support the provision of both national and local rail cards (and/or their smart card equivalents).
- 3.5 Seek the introduction of ‘carnet’ or part time season tickets/smart cards for those regular passengers that travel less than 5 days a week.
- 3.6 We will argue for better information on ticketing validity and restrictions in general and, in particular, at point of sale.
- 3.7 If a ticket is invalid for a service due to misunderstanding or other issues, its cost should be taken into account in the purchase of a valid ticket.
- 3.8 Compensation for service disruption should be generally available for all ticket types and advertised clearly.
- 3.9 Seek better and fairer revenue protection – ongoing pressure on ticketless travel, but providing the full range of tickets from ticket offices and train staff.

Policy 4: LIGHT RAIL

Railfuture welcomes the document 'Green Light for Light Rail' published by the Department for Transport in September 2011. We have always considered there was a good case for light rail and that the wider benefits to urban transport it can provide had not been fully acknowledged: We support the introduction of light rail systems or tramways, particularly where they complement existing rail services, as an environmentally sound electrified transport system.

- 4.1 Trams perform best on corridors where passenger traffic is heavy, and buses have difficulty coping with overall demand:
 - (1) Trams can individually carry much larger numbers of passengers than buses
 - (2) They can share street running with other traffic, or run on separate central or roadside reservations, inaccessible to other road vehicles
 - (3) Unlike buses, they are pollution-free at point of use, smooth-running and more energy-efficient. Their silent passage and predictable course for pedestrians to observe safely make them more acceptable in narrow shopping streets
 - (4) Their introduction in run-down urban areas invariably re-generates the area when combined with other facelifting measures, and attracts a modal switch from motorists who would not make the switch to buses instead.
 - (5) Their operation lends itself more readily to gaining signalled priority over other traffic at intersections than buses.
- 4.2 *Railfuture* prefers retention of existing railways, suitably electrified and controlled with modern management systems, over conversions to light rail. However, *Railfuture* supports light rail schemes that replace withdrawn, under-used, or infrequent conventional rail services where a major benefit can be demonstrated by upgrading lightly used lines and using street running to better penetrate town centres (such as in Croydon), pass by or terminate at a more important central railway station, or serve areas not reachable by conventional rail.
- 4.4 *Railfuture* does not generally support replacement of busy commuter lines with trams purely for economic reasons or for very small re-routing gains, especially where major railway investment could be justified instead.
- 4.5 There is scope for trams to share tracks with railway services in some areas where both have a role to serve different local traffic public transport needs, as on the Newcastle Metro. The technology to permit light rail vehicles to use the National Rail network should be developed to enable smaller towns to promote light rail schemes using existing rail routes and some street running sections to better penetrate town centres, thus enabling the rail network to broaden its catchment area following the German Karlsruhe model. Except on street running sections, new light rail routes should be built to a generous structure gauge to permit later upgrading for dual operation of conventional rail services for freight and Metro-style passenger trains.
- 4.6 *Railfuture* supports bus priority and busway schemes on existing roads or new routes that provide better public transport services to complement existing rail and bus services, where rail or light rail schemes are not viable. *Railfuture* campaigns against the conversion of rail routes to busways, which causes a major loss of network benefits. Light rail is much more effective than busways in achieving modal switch by persuading motorists to leave their cars at home, creates less pollution and is three times more energy efficient.

Policy 5: HIGH SPEED RAIL

Railfuture has actively campaigned for further UK High-Speed lines (300 km/h) to follow HS1 for many years prior to the Government's acceptance of high speed rail through the formation of HS2 Ltd.

Rail usage in the UK is expanding fast and the network needs new capacity. Enhancements on existing lines are highly disruptive to current train services and new high speed lines can offer much greater extra capacity for the money invested, with much less disruption.

High-speed rail generates much less pollution than road and air transport. Using rail reduces road congestion and the reallocation of landing slots from short haul air services to long-haul reduces the pressure for airport expansion.

- 5.1 Railfuture supports an expanding network of both classic and high speed railways. These are the best way to meet the demand for longer distance travel both within the UK and to the near European continent.
- 5.2 Railfuture urges the Government to prepare a long-term programme to build a network of high speed rail lines, starting with HS2, so that unit costs of construction can be reduced.
- 5.3 Railfuture urges all local Government authorities to support the a national high speed rail network and to direct their economic development, land use planning, tourism and transport policies towards making the best use of the both existing and new high speed rail networks These measures should increase the growth of existing expanding businesses which will stimulate the development of new products and services to meet future needs and create economic growth.
- 5.4 High speed rail networks should follow the best commercial practice. Stations on high speed lines should be through stations, and not terminal stations, so as to facilitate cross-city connectivity. They should offer efficient cross platform interchange between 'classic' trains and high speed trains. Where the existing city centre station poses capacity challenges, a new city centre station should be built to serve both existing and high speed services.
- 5.5 Railfuture is not convinced that speeds greater than 320km/h are necessary for the shorter distances in the UK as this could result in higher pollution and greater energy costs passed on to passengers as higher fares.
- 5.6 Railfuture recommends that out-of-town 'parkway' stations, at locations where access other than by car is difficult, should not be built on high speed lines as they not only generate increased car traffic but attract far less rail traffic than city centre stations and very few have proved successful in other countries.
- 5.7 Railfuture recommends that where commercially beneficial, trains running on the high speed routes should be able to access large towns and cities off the high speed route with appropriate connections between the high speed and 'classic' lines to facilitate new service opportunities, and to provide valuable diversions when either the classic lines or high speed lines are blocked.
- 5.8 Railfuture calls for the investment in the classic rail network to increase rather than reduce as a result of building high speed lines as a result of growing demand for rail travel.

Policy 6: ELECTRIFICATION

Railfuture has long campaigned for extensions to the electrified rail network and warmly welcomes the Government's decisions in 2013-14 to electrify many lines across the UK.

- 6.1 Electrification is essential to reduce the cost of delivering rail services and to attract more passengers and freight to rail. *Railfuture* call for a rolling programme of electrification continuing from Control Period 5 into Control Period 6 and beyond, for the following reasons:
- (1) External factors make a rolling programme of electrification compelling. Chief among these is the rising price of oil, and the difficulty of securing reliable future supplies, plus the need to reduce carbon emissions, which the Government is pledged to do. Other benefits include improved energy efficiency and the ability to utilise renewable energy resources.
 - (2) Economic benefits of electric trains compared to diesels include lower purchase cost, longer life, less maintenance needs, reduced operating costs, and lighter trains with resultant reduced track wear.
 - (3) Electric trains have much better acceleration than diesels, easily climb gradients where diesel trains cannot match them, are quieter, non-polluting at point of use, perform more reliably, and are more attractive to passengers, producing what used to be commonly known as "the sparks effect". Because of faster performance it is typical to replace diesel trains for a given service with a lesser number of electric trains.
 - (4) Electrification will release diesel units in short supply needed elsewhere to deal with overcrowding.
- 6.2 Priority for inclusion in the rolling programme should be given to strategic routes which enable through passenger and freight services between existing or already approved electrified networks (for example Sheffield to Moorthorpe, which would link MML electrification to the ECML at Leeds and Doncaster), and infill schemes which eliminate isolated diesel operations, releasing the maximum number of diesel vehicles per mile of track electrified (for example Hurst Green to Uckfield).
- 6.3 *Railfuture* does not support extensive operation of diesel trains over electrified tracks for long distances, or for an entire journey where only a short section remains unelectrified. We support the use of hybrid trains such as IEP (which are heavier and more expensive to purchase and maintain than pure electric or diesel trains) to maintain through services, but only as a stop-gap; the unelectrified section should be electrified as soon as possible through the rolling programme and the hybrid trains cascaded to services over another unelectrified gap. There may be services where a change of locomotive traction from electric to diesel is feasible, as currently used on Scottish sleeper services.
- 6.4 Rolling stock procurement and electrification plans are linked. A rolling programme of electrification provides more certainty in planning rolling stock acquisition and reduces purchase costs by giving manufacturers continuity. Many diesel units are nearly life expired or will need refurbishment to comply with RVA regulations and provide the environment now expected by passengers. It is increasingly difficult to acquire new diesel trains as European emission regulations become more stringent, ROSCOs lack certainty of a market for the life of the train, and manufacturers reduce their production-lines as other European railways increasingly order electric trains only. However *Railfuture* believes that a relatively small number of new diesel units should be ordered to meet the growth in demand which is currently outstripping the release of diesel trains from newly electrified services.

Policy 7: NEW RAILWAYS AND STATIONS

Railway route miles and numbers of stations in the United Kingdom (source: DfT, HRA) are as follows:

Network (2013)	Route miles	Stations/stops
National Rail	9846	2532
Heritage Railways	553	438
London Underground	250	270
Northern Ireland Railways	211	22
Light rail systems	182	340
Glasgow underground	6.5	15
Totals	11048.5	3617

379 new stations and 530 miles of new railway have been built or restored for passenger use on the national network since 1965 (source: Railfuture). Many of these are the result of active campaigning by *Railfuture*, often over many years.

- 7.1 Railfuture supports the provision of new railways (including HS2) and stations to match the changing demographic pattern in Britain and to improve access to the railway for the growing numbers of people now using rail.
- 7.2 Railfuture will focus its campaigns on new and reopened lines and stations which most support economic growth and which therefore have a good chance of success within the following existing legal and political framework:
 - (1) New railways and stations are expensive to build, and significant economic benefits are required to justify the cost of construction or operation. A business case is required, normally with a benefit to cost ratio of at least 2:1.
 - (2) Stations and rail routes are owned by Network Rail, which also manages 19 major stations, while the remainder are managed by the Train Operating Companies (TOCs) leasing them. The drive for new stations, however, normally comes from devolved government, PTEs, local authorities, or from TOCs or developers.
 - (3) Funding is limited, but apart from that provided by the industry or developers, the Local Sustainable Transport Fund can provide some help. Local Economic Partnerships also have funds for capital projects, like new stations, which bring economic benefits for their areas.
 - (4) New railways generally require a Transport & Works Act Order, approved by the Secretary of State, adding to the complexity and timescale of projects.
- 7.3 Whilst good progress has been made with new stations, sponsoring new railways is generally beyond the capability of most local authorities or developers. Railfuture believes that an agency to sponsor new railway lines is required.
- 7.4 Railfuture believes that local authorities should protect remaining line formations or station sites, which are potentially of value in future reopening schemes for which a business case has yet to be established, through the planning system.

Policy 8: FREIGHT

Railfuture by its very nature promotes the use of rail as a cost effective and environmentally sound means of freight transport. We press for specific policies as follows:

- 8.1 Promoting the maximum use of rail (and where appropriate water transport) for bulk and long-distance freight transit to reduce reliance on HGVs.
- 8.2 Championing alternative, sustainable approaches to freight traffic movement, not only for bulk and long-distance but also where appropriate over intermediate and short distances and for “less than trainload” traffics (including mail and express parcels).
- 8.3 Promoting modal transfer of unit loads from road haulage on to rail, inter-modal and rail and water, for bulky or non-perishable goods.
- 8.4 Gathering and spreading information on combined distribution process and innovative supply-chain logistics that offers significant reduction in lorry miles.
- 8.5 Lobbying for changes to the town planning process so that new industrial and warehousing developments are located where rail access can be provided, and existing barriers to the development of new rail freight interchanges are removed.
- 8.6 Working to ensure that all primary railway routes with significant freight volumes or growth potential are maintained fit-for-purpose and that secondary and feeder lines meet a definable maintenance standard, to allow for future flexibility and development.
- 8.7 Advocating improved network capacity, resilience, capability and access to the system 24/7, at a reasonable cost.
- 8.8 Recommending that incremental output, small-scale and route modernisation improvement programmes are developed, with minimal disruption to the freight operating companies.
- 8.9 Endorsing public funding grant mechanisms which provide for track access and capital works programmes.
- 8.10 Highlighting to bodies such as enforcement agencies and local councils, safety and road maintenance issues associated with lorries and road transport generally.
- 8.11 Lobbying for a tariff structure that maximises the use of the Channel Tunnel for rail freight.

Policy 9: SERVICE

Railfuture's priority for passenger travel is to increase the railway's market share against other motorised transport modes, primarily the motor car. It is vital that the *passenger experience* is as good as it can possibly be for passengers to feel that fares and parking charges are good value.

Rail journeys must be fast and services must be frequent and operate from early morning to late night (stranded passengers are unlikely to return to the railway). There is a compromise between journey times and the number of stops. However, increasing line speed should be a priority rather than disadvantaging passengers in order to remain competitive with the car.

The trains must be comfortable to travel in; both trains and stations must be a pleasant and safe environment with adequate facilities:

- 9.1 Visible station staff at all main stations and key interchanges for the duration of services. We will argue for a station presence where practical, on the TfL/London Overground model. Toilets to remain open the entire time that a station is staffed
- 9.2 Sufficient ticket vending machines (TVMs) so that queuing time is less than five minutes. Fast and intelligent interfaces to reduce time lost navigating; multi-lingual displays to help people who lack English fluency to reduce the time spent at the TVM
- 9.3 Cover from the rain for all passenger movement areas once inside the main station premises. Passengers should not get wet when transferring between trains or from buses and taxis
- 9.4 Retail outlets open for as many hours as possible, enabled by multi-skilled staff
- 9.5 Comprehensive recorded CCTV coverage on trains and all passenger areas at stations
- 9.6 Capacity on trains so that passengers standing is the exception not the norm, with sensible use made of all available seats in the train (first class declassified/ discounted as appropriate). We will seek to influence new design and upgrade of rolling stock to improve the journey experience for all passengers.
- 9.7 Capacity at stations to allow movement without unnecessary queuing (sufficient barriers, wide footbridges and platforms etc). There is little point speeding up services if it takes 10 minutes to leave the station because there are 1,000 people trying to do so.
- 9.8 The railway must not be 'off limits' or an ordeal for people with limited mobility. We will argue for expansion of the 'Access for All' programme to cover more stations, with standards covering all disabilities, not just those visible.
- 9.9 When stations are upgraded to cope with extra passengers, such as lengthening platforms to allow longer trains to call, facilities must be expanded to cope with more people waiting at the same time: increased waiting shelters/seating, more toilets etc.
- 9.10 Adequate litter bins on trains and at stations (action to reduce terrorist incidents must not be excessive) with all staff (not just cleaners) being expected to keep facilities presentable
- 9.11 Real-time train information should be available in all passenger areas - passengers should not have to walk back to the main building to find what has happened to their train. We will seek improved service information available to passengers, especially during disruption, and improved punctuality.
- 9.12 Comprehensive up-to-date information about train services and station layout and facilities available on web-site to enable advance planning and reduce need to ask station staff
- 9.13 All reasonable means taken to provide a rail service to avoid rail replacement buses; minimise length of journey on buses; ensure bus driver knows the route in advance; cope satisfactorily with passengers who have bicycles and large luggage.

Policy 10: CONNECTIVITY

Railfuture advocates the concept of, and delivery of rail passenger services in, a coherent and integrated national rail network.

- 10.1 This network should maximise the capability and quality of being connected for the economic and social benefit of people and places - individuals, communities, businesses, and centres of learning, health and tourism/leisure facilities.
- 10.2 We promote increased use and development of the rail network as a whole in order to improve access to it, and the connectivity it affords. This will include an ever greater proportion of the population and thereby expand opportunity and prosperity, achieving better national economic, environmental and social outcomes.
- 10.3 The principal arterial routes connecting the national capitals and provincial cities are complemented by an expanding, better-connected network of other inter-urban and rural routes of no less significance for the vitality and prospects of numerous smaller town and village communities.
- 10.4 Railfuture advocates expansion of opportunities for all to travel by rail, to help secure and broaden the benefits of increased overall connectivity. This expansion can be achieved by more frequent services, capacity increases such as additional tracks in existing routes, additional lines and stations, and more and larger station car and cycle parks to encourage rail-heading by those access modes. Such expanded opportunities must embrace the needs of passengers with any kind of mobility impairment in order to equalise their ability as citizens to participate fully in wider society.
- 10.5 We promote enhanced connectivity through continued improvements both at the macro level with investments in infrastructure, and also attention to the micro level of detailed design and service provision for the travelling public, which is paramount to the quality of their journey experience.
- 10.6 Railfuture advocates improved ease of transition between station and train. This must be matched by the convenience of interchanging between trains within stations – with excellent service information and way-finding, and co-ordinated timetables.
- 10.7 We further advocate safe, attractive and convenient transition between the station itself and all modes of access to it, whether on foot, by cycle or motor-bike, bus stop/station, or station car park-and-ride/kiss-and-ride facility.
- 10.8 Connections between the station and its catchment area must be facilitated by routes which are well-signed and advertised and also as safe, attractive and convenient as reasonably practicable.
- 10.9 Connectivity for many passengers is represented by a single multi-modal ticket, including any parking charge; we therefore advocate integrated ticketing on a universal basis as symbolic of a well-connected transport network.