



BRITAIN'S LEADING PRO-RAIL CAMPAIGNING GROUP FOR PASSENGERS AND FREIGHT

[www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)

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## **PRESS RELEASE - 18 FEBRUARY 2000**

### **RAILFUTURE CALLS ON ASLEF TO THINK OF THE PASSENGERS**

*Railfuture*, the national campaign for better rail services, urges Aslef to call off its set of one-day strikes set to disrupt Connex services over the coming weeks.

*Railfuture's* spokesperson said: "Obviously a strike only takes place when the situation becomes desperate, but action like this totally undermines any positive view of rail travel, and undermines the efforts of pressure groups such as the *Railfuture*. We think that Connex's 200,000 daily passengers will find it hard to sympathise with Aslef.

"*Railfuture* urges Aslef to think again for the passengers' sakes and work with Connex to resolve this dispute as soon as possible. We don't want to add further fuel to the fire of the road lobby. We hope that passengers won't give up using Connex services to use their cars instead."

Connex is one of the three train companies whose franchises are currently being renegotiated (1). This action by Aslef, and the reasons behind it, will not reflect favourably on Connex at this critical time. South West Trains and Thameslink are both on the Strategic Rail Authority's shortlist for the South Central franchise, so Connex ought to get its act together if it wants to be a serious player.

According to the latest edition of *Rail Professional* magazine, an industry spokesperson commented recently: "Connex seem to be doing everything possible to put themselves in a position where they cannot possibly get the franchise". Also, one day of strikes costs it £1m in lost income - so its small annual profits are being badly dented at a time when the company needs to prove itself as a sound investment.

*Railfuture's* spokesperson sums up: "Previously, both of Connex's services were actually improving on punctuality and reliability (2), and the recent sSRA passenger survey found that over 70% of passengers are satisfied with their rail journey. Let's see the rail industry working together to improve on this, rather than making the situation worse."

- (1) The first round of franchises being reviewed by the sSRA (Shadow Strategic Rail Authority) are those of Connex, GNER and Chiltern Railways.
- (2) ...according to the last set of league tables, where they were placed in category C, the third out of five categories (where the majority of train operators reside). The SRA hopes to have replaced all of the current seven-year franchises (the majority of rail passenger franchises) by the end of 2001.

## **NOTE FOR EDITORS (Revised 2015)**

***Railfuture* is the campaigning name of the Railway Development Society Ltd (a not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 5011634. Reg. Office: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattlingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND**

*Railfuture* is Britain's only completely independent voice on railway development. We are not affiliated to or sponsored by any political party, trade union, or private industry. We are funded almost entirely by our members.

*Railfuture*'s President is Christian Wolmar, the well-known writer on rail issues. Its Vice Presidents include several retired train company chief executives, transport experts, MPs and MEPs from all main political parties and the former Secretary of State for Transport Lord Adonis. A full list of *Railfuture* vice presidents can be found on our web-site: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/vice+presidents>.

*Railfuture* campaigns for Britain's railways to play a larger role for passengers and freight, calling for an enhanced and expanded network, including high-speed rail, along with light rail.

Rail is a vital part of an integrated efficient transport system serving a modern, vibrant, environmentally sustainable economy. We are pro-rail but not anti-road. *Railfuture* maintains that investment in rail travel and rail freight is vital to the future of the UK economy and environment.

**Anyone supporting our aims can join online: [www.railfuture.org.uk/join](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join)**

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