



# Railfuture - London & South East Branch Metro Division Campaign Newsletter August 2025

*A new fleet of 54 trains built by CAF are coming to the DLR, but when? Thirty-three of them will replace existing trains, and the rest will be used to provide additional capacity. The new fleet will be fixed formation units with 5 walk-through carriages equivalent to the length of three-car trains. On-board facilities include real-time information screens, air conditioning and mobile device charging points. The first 'B23' train arrived at the Beckton depot in January 2023 but testing has proved challenging - see article on following page.*

## DLR EXTENSION TO THAMESMEAD : NEARING REALITY

Positive news is emerging regarding the extension of the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) from Gallions Reach/ Beckton, under the Thames, to Thamesmead.

Railfuture has been an avid supporter of the extension of the DLR to Thamesmead ever since the extension was first formally proposed by Transport for London back in 2019.

Thamesmead was built on wetlands on the south side of the River Thames in East London, developed from the 1960s to meet the demand for social housing, and now has a population in excess of 30,000. Being situated on former marsh land on the south bank, it has always been remote by London standards. It is cut-off to the north by the River Thames, and is situated in the centre of a 15-mile gap between the Blackwall/ Silvertown Tunnels and the Dartford Tunnel/Bridge. Being a purpose built development some distance away from existing public transport infrastructure, it is also somewhat isolated to the west, south and east.

Since it opened in 1987, the DLR has been an undoubted success, having been extended four times already. The latest extension will comprise about 3 miles of new line, from Gallions Reach (on the Beckton branch) under the Thames and into the centre of Thamesmead, with provision for possible extension.

So what is new? The Spending Review announced on 11 June 2025 recognised the potential growth and housing benefits of the DLR extension to Thamesmead and Central Government has confirmed it's committed to working with TfL to explore options.

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A letter from the DfT to the London Mayor was issued which stated:

‘HMG recognises the potential housing and economic growth that could be stimulated by extending the DLR to Thamesmead via Beckton, and acknowledges the substantial work undertaken on the programme to date. HMG will continue to work closely with the Greater London Authority and TfL so they can finalise a full business case and funding plan by Autumn 2025.’

Once the extension opens, trains are expected to run every 8-10 minutes to/from Thamesmead to the City at Bank DLR station. A consultation on the extension was open to mid-August, TfL seeking feedback on the next stages of design and development for the project. Railfuture and indeed some of its members have responded.

### BRIEF HISTORY OF DLR EXTENSIONS

It is worth reflecting just how successful the DLR has been. When it opened in 1987 the system comprised two routes, from Tower Gateway and from Stratford to Island Gardens. Its total length was just 7.5 miles. Extensions however rapidly followed:

- Extension to the City (Bank DLR) and also to the Royal Docks (1991 - 1994)
- Extension to Greenwich and Lewisham (1996 - 1999)
- Extensions to London City Airport and Woolwich (2004 - 2009)
- Extension to Stratford International (2011)

Its total length today is 24 miles covering 45 stations, with annual ridership of 98.9 million (2023/24) according to DfT figures.

When it opened, the trains comprised basic 2 car units. TfL ordered new trains in 2019, expected to be in service from December 2025 (but see below). These will comprise 54 five-car trains to replace the oldest existing units. The new trains all have charging points and air-conditioning. The train design increases internal capacity by 10% which, with service improvements, will bring about a 65% increase in capacity from Stratford to Lewisham, and a doubling of capacity between Canning Town and Beckton or Woolwich Arsenal.

### DELAYED NEW TRAIN FLEET MEANS FEWER DLR TRAINS THIS AUTUMN/ WINTER

And now for the bad news. Testing issues have resulted in yet further delay in the introduction of the new ‘B23’ DLR trains. As a consequence there will be fewer DLR trains running from late July until the end of the year until the new trains arrive. The delay has been blamed on unspecified testing processes which have raised issues that require more time than anticipated to resolve. TfL had been reducing the mileage on those existing trains that are due for retirement. Without the new trains arriving, some service reductions have proved necessary. The key changes from Monday 21st July 2025 have been:

- Beckton to Canning Town/Stratford International services do not run (but Tower Gateway to Beckton services continue as normal)
- Peak hour services between Stratford and Lewisham do not run (but services between Canary Wharf and Stratford will run every 5 minutes in the peaks (6.5 minutes off peak) and Bank to Lewisham services will continue as normal).

### GOODBYE c2c

On 20 July 2025, c2c was the latest train operating company to be effectively nationalised and brought into public ownership under DFTO. Railfuture members were at Fenchurch Street Station to see its last moments.

c2c had existing as a brand since 2000, just 4 years after privatisation from British Rail. Originally the operator was Prism Limited, however it was bought out by National Express in 2000. In 2017 it was again bought out, this time by Trenitalia, the Italian state railway company. So what goes around comes around, and what many still call the London, Tilbury and Southend railway is back in public ownership.

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## LONDON METRO AND EASTERN DIVISIONS MERGE

On 10 July 2025, the London Metro Division and the Eastern Division of the London & South East branch merged to form a new 'London Metro & Eastern Division' ('Metro' for short). The boundaries of the branch have not changed. Howard Thomas, who had run the Eastern Division as convenor for many years, has become a committee member of the enlarged Metro Division. The merger is a consequence of the successful rejuvenation of the London Metro Division. For a considerable time when Metro was in abeyance, Eastern Division looked after East London as well as its core area of South Essex. With London Metro Division now taking care of Greater London services (including the Overground and the Underground), much of the Eastern Division area had already been absorbed back into Metro. The merger is therefore the completion of an existing process.

To all members of the Eastern Division, welcome to the enlarged Metro Division. There are a number of advantages of the merger, in particular Metro has a rolling programme of in-person meetings (six per year) held in a convenient Central London location (Alan Baxter Gallery, Farringdon), just a few minutes' walk from Farringdon station.

Metro also issues a bi-monthly Campaign Newsletter (you are reading it), that will now include former Eastern Division concerns. The enlarged Metro will have greater resources, and we intend to increase our efforts in reaching those in South Essex, taking steps to communicate with rail user groups and community rail partnerships in that area.

The enlarged Metro area now includes all former c2c service areas (e.g., Southend and Shoeburyness), the East Anglia Main Line as far as Witham and the Braintree branch, West Anglia Main Line as far as to Bishop's Stortford (as well as the Stansted Express to Liverpool Street), the Shenfield to Southend Victoria line and the Southminster branch.

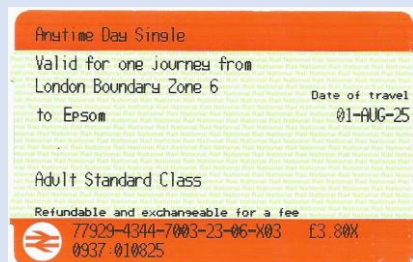
## BOUNDARY ZONE TICKETS (by Charlie King)

In 2023 when the Rail Delivery Group, at the Government's behest, held a consultation on the proposed closure of station booking offices, Railfuture strongly objected to the proposals.

Among many issues, one of the main objections was the insufficient range of tickets available at Ticket Machines (ATMs) located at stations. One ticket in particular not found on ATM's at the time was the London Boundary Zone Ticket. Although these were available on London Overground ATMs, they were not available on National Rail ATMs but only from their station booking offices.

Boundary Zone Tickets are not well known by passengers, but should be better understood as they can be of considerable convenience to London based passengers travelling outside of Greater London. Having campaigned on this issue, Railfuture was happy to see Boundary Zone Tickets gradually become available on the ATM's of nearly all train operator companies, except on Intercity routes and Southeastern High Speed services.

The importance of Boundary Zone Tickets is that if you have a London Travelcard, a Freedom Pass or a Plus 60 Oyster, and you are travelling from within London to outside London, your pass will only give you free travel to the London boundary station, and you will need a further ticket for the rest of the journey. If the further ticket you buy is a Boundary Zone Ticket, it may provide some advantages. You will be able to continue your journey outside of London without having to get off the train you are on, and can take a train even if it does not actually stop at the boundary station. This is because Travelcards and the like are considered zonal tickets. If you wish to make a journey beyond the zones without a boundary ticket you will have to identify the actual boundary station that applies to your travel, and buy a ticket from there or have pre-bought such a ticket. You may even be required to catch a train that stops at that particular boundary station.



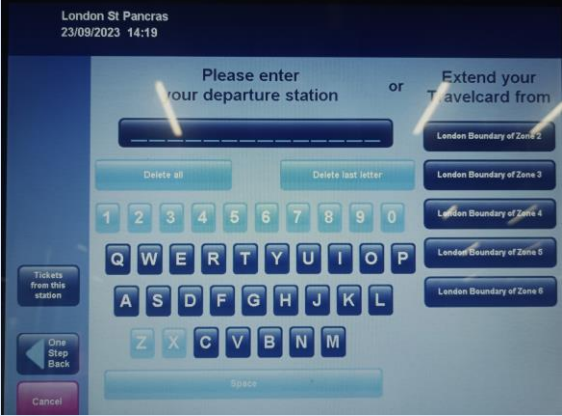
A key advantage of a Boundary Zone Ticket is that it can be valid on multiple routes where they exist. For example, if you want to travel from Clapham Junction to Dorking you could travel via Sutton or via Worcester Park. If you don't have a boundary ticket you will have to specify on your out of London ticket either Ewell East or Ewell West and you will only be able to use the route you have chosen. Another example is with a Boundary Zone Ticket to Southend which entitles you to travel to Southend on either main route, i.e., on Greater Anglia (as was) via Shenfield or c2c (as was) via Benfleet. Again, if you don't have a boundary ticket you will have to specify the boundary station and you will be confined to that route.

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The cost of Boundary Zone Tickets are generally the same as tickets from the boundary station, however they may be cheaper where multiple routes are available, as the ticket price may be averaged, and as result can be a little cheaper (but may also be a little more expensive) than a ticket bought from a specific boundary station the passenger may be using. It is always worth checking which gives the better value.

Since the Booking Office consultation closed, all train operating companies serving London now offer Boundary Zone Tickets on their ATMs (except East Midlands and Virgin). We regard this as a Railfuture success. The Boundary Zone tickets can usually be found under “*Tickets from another station*” although some train operators (TOCs) have ATMs that are more complicated and require a bit more perseverance.

TOC	Finding Ticket on ATM	Notes
Southeastern	Ticket from another station	
Southern	Ticket from another station	
South Western	Ticket from another station	
Great Western	Ticket from another station	
Chiltern	Ticket on Home Page	
LNWR	Ticket from another station	
Virgin	Not on ATM	
EMR	Not on ATM	
Thameslink	Ticket from another station	
LNER	Ticket on Home Page	
Great Northern	Ticket from another station	
Greater Anglia	Ticket from another station	
c2c	Ticket a few pages in	Buy tickets then delete the origin station and type in Boundary
TfL Overground	Ticket a few pages in	Buy tickets, then from other stations
Elizabeth Line	Home Page	But called a Travelcard Extension
Underground	Only allows an Oyster or Travelcard extension within the zones on TFL	
DLR	Only allows an Oyster or Travelcard extension within the zones on TFL	

As all rail passenger know, there are many aspects of ticketing on our railways that are problematic and Railfuture campaigns tirelessly on behalf of the rail user to make ticketing less complex and fares, well, more fair.

### PICCADILLY LINE TRAIN DELAYS

Introduction of the new desperately needed Piccadilly trains (they replace 1973 stock) has unfortunately been further delayed. They were supposed to be in passenger service during 2024, but were delayed to 2025. Now it’s been announced that the new trains will not be in passenger service until the second half of 2026. One of the new trains is in London for testing, however the testing has proved somewhat more complex than expected. A further programme of rigorous testing has had to be rescheduled before full scale production can begin. The new trains are eagerly awaited, as for the first time on the a Deep Tube line, they will provide air-conditioning. Accessibility is also improved with wider all-double doorways helping customers get on and off more easily, walk-through carriages and enhanced digital display screens for customer information.

## METRO DIVISION: AFFILIATED RAIL USER GROUPS

Railfuture affiliated Rail User Groups within our area comprise:

- Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users' Group
- Chesham & District Transport Users Group
- Chingford Line Users' Association
- East Surrey Transport Committee
- Hadley Wood Rail User Group
- Watford Rail Users Group

We maintain regular contacts with our Metro located affiliated rail user groups, attending some of their meetings and assessing how we may aid their campaigns. Many of them also attend our regular Metro Division meetings in Farringdon. A number of rail user groups located outside our area maintain contact with us, primary because their focus is on train services to London. These include Sevenoaks Rail Travellers' Association and Tonbridge Line Commuters.

**Call to Affiliated Groups:** Should any of our affiliated rail users group wish to discuss rail issues with us, please contact our chairman at [richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk)

**Not Affiliated?** Please contact us and lets chat how we can work together. About half of all rail user groups in the UK are affiliated to Railfuture. Why not join us?

### **Interested in Rail User Groups?**

Take a look at Railfuture's monthly magazine, 'Rail User Express' dedicated to rail user groups.

<https://railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Express>

## RAIL USER GROUP: MEETINGS

### Chesham & District Transport Users Group

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 30 September 2025, and will be held in Chesham Town Hall starting at 7.30pm.

### Watford Rail Users Group and Abbey Flyer Users' Group

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday 20 October and will be held in the Training Room at Watford Junction Station commencing at 6:30pm (please give prior notice of intention to attend).

## METRO'S NEXT MEETING

### ITS CHILTERN RAILWAYS

Save the date: Thursday 18 September 2025 at the front basement room of the Alan Baxter Gallery, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, EC1M 6EL (just a 5 minute walk from Farringdon station).

We are pleased to announce that our next meeting will take a presentation format, with the presentation to be given by Joshua van Haaren, Stakeholder Manager of Chiltern Railways.

He will likely be discussing matters such as rolling stock replacement, stock seating, additional long distance services and Metro area services (stops at West or South Ruislip on longer distance services to connect with the Central line have been suggested), ticketing issues (Project Oval), boundary zone tickets from ATM's, and possibility or otherwise of linking London and West Midlands on smart cards/bank cards, and of course whatever questions you may have!

Although an open meeting, if you are attending could you please notify us (email [richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk)).

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## METRO DIVISION – WHAT WE DO

Chair: Richard Bowry

Vice Chair: Charlie King

Committee Member: Howard Thomas

Metro Division covers Greater London, the London Overground, the Underground, the Docklands Light Railway, all former c2c service areas (e.g., Southend and Shoeburyness), the East Anglia Main Line as far as Witham and the Braintree branch, the former Greater Anglia services from Liverpool St and Shenfield to Southend Victoria and the Southminster branch, the West Anglia Main Line from London to Bishop's Stortford and the London - Stansted Express.

### **We are active every month**

Meetings: We hold meetings in London in January, March, May, July, September and November.

Our venue is the **front basement room of the Alan Baxter Gallery, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon**, starting at 7pm.

Newsletter: The Metro Campaign Newsletter is issued in February, April, June, August, October and December.

Campaigning: Much of our campaign work involves discussions with governmental authorities, politicians, rail authorities and rail operators.

Our current campaigns include:

- Extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Thamesmead
- Introducing a passenger service on the West Orbital Route
- Extension of the Bakerloo Line from Elephant & Castle to Lewisham
- Turn up and go services throughout London of at least 4 trains per hour
- KenEx tram (tram link between Grays, Essex, and Ebbsfleet International, Kent)

Contact: To contact us on any matter concerning Metro Division please email [richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk)

## MEETINGS DATES FOR 2025

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 18 September 2025, being a guest presentation given by Chiltern Railways.....don't miss it!

Our final meeting of the year will be on Thursday 20 November 2025.

**JOIN US** ([www.railfuture.org.uk/join](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join))

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services. We are a voluntary group representing rail users, with around 20,000 affiliated and individual members.

Are you an individual with concerns about your railway?

Are you a Rail User Group looking for support from Railfuture and connections with other affiliated groups?

Join the UK's leading independent railway campaign group today.

**Metro is a division of the London and South East Branch of Railfuture - the Divisions comprise:**

Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire

Kent

London Metropolitan and Eastern (Metro)

Surrey

Sussex and Coastway

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