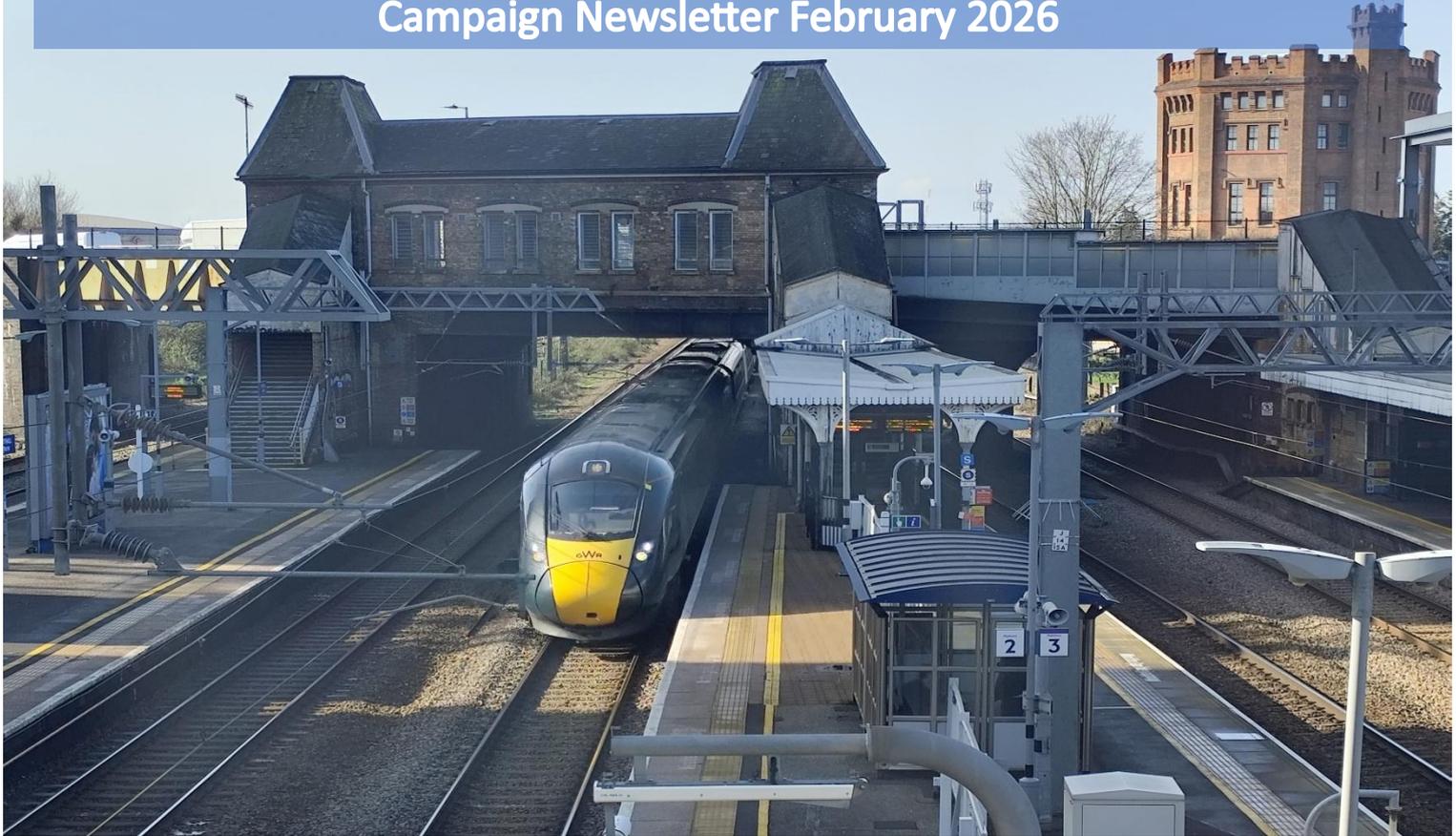


Railfuture - London & South East Branch

Metro Division

Campaign Newsletter February 2026



More trains will be stopping at Southall.....but not this GWR train passing on the up express line. The old GWR booking office may soon be demolished.

LONDON'S EVER RISING RAIL FARES

As readers will no doubt be aware, fares on the Underground, Overground and Elizabeth Line are going up again from 1 March 2026, this time by around six to seven percent.

Most train fares in the capital will increase by 10p or 20p - journeys that involve zone 7 will increase by 40p while those in zones 8 and 9 will go up by 50p. In zone 1 (i.e. central London) peak-hours fares will rise by 6.9 per cent from £2.90 to £3.10, while an off-peak fare will rise by 7.1 per cent from £2.80 to £3.

However there is some good news. The cost of travelcards will not be increasing this year. In addition, the daily cap and the weekly cap on the cost of multiple journeys is also frozen, the first time this has happened in over a decade. The reason for this relates to the freeze on regulated fares on the national rail system. Travelcards are combined tickets for national and TfL services, so the freeze on national fares has resulted in a freeze on travelcards, as well as a freeze on the pay-as-you-go cap.

In March 2025, fares increased by 4.6 percent which was well above inflation at the time, so taking two years together London's rail fares have risen sharply and remain some of the highest in Europe for a comparable city. Nationally regulated rail fares have been frozen this year, however London has seen ever-increasing fares.

The Metro Division is very concerned at this trend - rail fares are already too high and constant annual fare increases that are well above inflation have made rail travel in London unaffordable to many and is contrary to the stated aim of getting more people to use public transport. Government funding has much to do with rail fares in London, and in our view London needs a new deal with central government to ensure the nation's capital has reasonable fares and that rail travel is available to everyone.

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SOUTHALL, HANWELL AND ACTON MAIN LINE TO GET MORE TRAINS IN THE MORNING PEAK

Passengers at Southall, Hanwell and Acton Main Line stations have long complained about the lack of morning peak trains to London, and the resulting overcrowding on those services that do stop.

This situation is being eased as more Elizabeth Line peak time services are to stop at those stations from 18 May 2026. These will be the trains from Heathrow Terminal 5 to central London. The changes are as follows:

Acton Main Line - an increase from 6 to 8 trains stopping
Hanwell - an increase from 6 to 8 trains stopping
Southall - an increase from 8 to 10 trains stopping

Passenger numbers from each of these stations has nearly tripled in just a few years, the Elizabeth Line again proving that frequent services attract more passengers. Southall, for example, now has annual entry and exits of over 7.6 million.

LIVERPOOL STREET STATION REDEVELOPMENT PLANS GIVEN GO AHEAD

The somewhat controversial plans of Network Rail to redevelop Liverpool Street station have been given the go-ahead by planning authorities at the City of London.

Network Rail has justified the development on the grounds that it will deliver a fully accessible, modernised station capable of handling the dramatic growth in passenger numbers that it envisages. Amongst other things, the plans include more access points, lifts and escalators, step-free access to every platform including the Underground, and a larger more open concourse.

Railfuture is following this redevelopment closely as Liverpool Street Station has many accessibility issues which urgently need to be addressed. The redevelopment promises to bring many improvements, so we will remain vigilant to ensure that the promised improvements are indeed incorporated into final plans and are ultimately delivered.

SOCIAL EVENTS – RAILWAY WALKS PROGRAMME

Railfuture (Metro Division) and the Railway & Canal Historical Society (London Group) are collaborating in a series of walks led by RCHS under the title 'London Railways Termini Walks'. The series comprises ten walks (five in 2026 and five in 2027), each starting at a London station before continuing by short train ride to walking points. We will delve into the past, present and future of the station and nearby locations, discuss associated historical railway companies, and consider the past and present, as well as the aspirations and campaigns of Railfuture looking forward.

A summary of the walks programme is as follows:

Walk 1	15 April 2026	'Waterloo and all things LSWR'
Walk 2	16 June 2026	'Victoria and all things (i) LB&SCR and (ii) LCDR (Part 1)'
Walk 3	September 2026*	'Blackfriars and all things LCDR (Part 2 - City Line)'
Walk 4	October 2026*	'London Bridge and all things (i) SER and (ii) LB&SCR (Part 2)'
Walk 5	November 2026*	'Paddington and all things GWR'
Walk 6	April 2027*	'Marylebone and all things Great Central and Metropolitan'
Walk 7	May 2027*	'Euston and all things LNWR'
Walk 8	June 2027*	'St. Pancras and all things Midland Railway'
Walk 9	September 2027*	'Kings Cross and all things GNR and LNER'
Walk 10	November 2027*	'Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street & all things GER/ LT&SR'

The first walk is 'Waterloo and all things LSWR' and will take place on Wednesday 15 April 2026 starting 11am and will last about 5 hours. Members of Railfuture are invited to participate in all walks in the series (places permitting). Anyone with an interest in the walk on 15 April should email richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk for further details as soon as possible as places are limited.

[* indicates exact date yet to be announced]

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INDRA TO REPLACE CUBIC AS OPERATOR OF OYSTER

The change of Oyster Card operator from Cubic to Indra is now imminent following a recent court case that had challenged TfL's decision to change operator. Cubic has operated Oyster card since its launch in 2003.

Oyster is over 20 years old and as such uses out-dated technology which limits its usefulness. Indra are being charged with the responsibility of modernising Oyster so it operates as a modern contactless system, in particular by providing account-based ticketing. This should enable Oyster to utilise wider applications (such as smartphones) and be able to calculate fares on an after travel basis so that the system can ensure, for example, that passengers always pay the best price.

Shashi Verma, Director of Technology Strategy and Revenue at TfL, said: 'Millions of journeys are made on our public transport system every day, and it is vital that customers can trust the ticketing system to ensure they are charged the correct fare. We look forward to working with Indra group on the next evolution of our Oyster and contactless ticketing system.'

The contract scope is wide, and will see Indra handle the operation, maintenance, development, enhancement and expansion of TfL's Oyster revenue collection system.

BEAM PARK STATION DECISION DELAYED AGAIN

The decision as to building a new station at Beam Park in the London Borough of Havering between Rainham and Dagenham Dock stations has been delayed yet again.

In 2021 the Department for Transport declined to approve the station, questioning its financial viability, and it remains unbuilt despite the large scale housing development in the locality.

The Mayor had previously suggested a decision would be made before the end of 2025. No decision was forthcoming, and the Mayor has now announced that a decision is not expected until later this year, as that work is still on-going on preparing a revised business case to open the station.

The revised business case needs to reflect travel patterns in the post-Covid world, so will necessitate a new demand and revenue study as well as further work on costs. The Mayor has indicated that costs have risen since initial funding was allocated in 2020.

Some members of the London Assembly have expressed their concern as to the continuing delays, in particular Keith Prince AM who notes that the station is essential to unlocking the building of thousands of affordable homes at Beam Park.

Havering Council has already approved the necessary planning permission for the station in the expectation that once a decision is made, work on building the station can start without further delay.

The Metro Division strongly supports the opening of a new station at Beam Park, its opening being long overdue.

NATIONALISATION OF PASSENGER SERVICES CONTINUES

The nationalisation of passenger rail services which affect our region continues at pace.

- On 1 February 2026, the passenger services of West Midlands Railway (which includes London Northwestern Railway) was nationalised and brought within DfT Operator Limited.
- On 31 May 2026 the passenger services of Govia Thameslink Railway (which includes Thameslink, Great Northern, Southern and Gatwick Express) will also be nationalised.

Great Western Railway and Chiltern Railway will follow, expected later in 2026 although the precise dates at the time of going to press are yet to be announced. At that point all local rail services in London will be in public ownership.

SOUTH EAST RAIL ACTION

For more news around the LSE branch, including new battery trains now operating on the Greenford branch, go to 'South East Rail Action' on the Railfuture website (www.railfuture.org.uk/display4300)

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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, primarily because their focus is on train services to London. These include:

- Marylebone Travellers' Association
- Sevenoaks Rail Travellers' Association
- 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

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 31 March 2026, and will be held in Chesham Town Hall starting at 7.30pm.

Watford Rail Users Group

Next meeting is a combined AGM and Open Meeting, scheduled for Monday 22 June 2026 intended to be held in the Training Room at Watford Junction Station. The AGM will commence at 6pm and the Open Meeting at 6.30pm. Individuals are asked to state their intention to attend by emailing wrug2@hotmail.co.uk beforehand.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2026

Due to availability issues at our venue (Front Basement Room, Alan Baxter Gallery, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon) some changes have been made to our meeting schedule for 2026. Our meetings will continue to be held once every two months (in January, March, May, July, September and November) on Thursdays, however they will no longer be set for the third Thursday of the relevant month. Actual meeting dates are as follows:

- Thursday 12 March 2026
- Thursday 21 May 2026
- Thursday 23 July 2026
- Thursday 17 September 2026
- Thursday 12 November 2026

Please join us at our Thursday 12 March meeting when we will be discussing our campaign priorities for 2026.

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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)
- Improvement to capacity issue on the Brighton Main Line and changes to the Gatwick Express

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

JOIN US (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.

The Metro Division of Railfuture is dedicated to improving services in London - if these services effect you - join us.

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? Are you a commuter or leisure traveller?

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

Use this link to our membership page: <https://railfuture.org.uk/join>

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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