

Railfuture - London & South East Branch
Metro Division
Campaign Newsletter April 2026



Much of the Underground has poor accessibility. Putney Bridge is at least on the list for further analysis. Even the fit struggle to reach the platform

OUR INACCESSIBLE RAILWAY

Our headline article this edition relates to the accessibility of London's railway system, or rather the lack of it, specifically as it relates to the London Underground.

We have in past editions of Metro Campaign Newsletter (August 2024, October 2024, June 2025) commented on the poor level of accessibility on London's rail network generally. This includes both street to platform, and platform to train.

Within London, there are essentially two different systems when it comes to responsibility to improve stations for accessibility purposes, being the London Underground under the charge of Transport for London (TfL), and the remaining network effectively under the charge of the Department for Transport.

In this edition of our newsletter we concentrate on the London Underground.

Our concern at the lack of progress as to accessibility on the Underground has only been furthered by the recent TfL announcement that five Underground stations that had initially been rejected for step-free access are now being moved into the 'full feasibility study' category for further consideration.

Only one-third of Underground stations are currently fully accessible, and this announcement does not even begin to scratch the surface of the problem. The Mayor has himself set a target of 50 per cent accessible stations by 2030, and at current rate of work there is absolutely no prospect of meeting that modest target.

On the brighter side, we note the intention of Southeastern to implement a full 'turn up and go' service on its Metro lines, a long term aspiration of Railfuture, also the go-ahead for the opening of a new station at Beam Park, and improved peak time services on the West London Line.

Our websites: www.railfuture.org.uk | www.railfuture.org.uk/London-Metro | www.railwatch.org.uk
follow us on X/Twitter: [@Railfuture](https://twitter.com/Railfuture) | [@RailfutureLSE](https://twitter.com/RailfutureLSE) | [@Railwatch](https://twitter.com/Railwatch)

Railfuture Ltd is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 05011634.
Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only)
All other correspondence to 3 Chandos Court, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SU

CAMPAIGNING FOR STEP FREE ACCESS ON THE UNDERGROUND

With the London Underground being largely a Victorian system, it is perhaps not surprising that much of it was not built to be step-free. For many this makes the Underground inaccessible, something that is not acceptable in modern times.

The exact figures as to inaccessibility are quite shocking. A total of 94 of the 272 Underground stations have step-free access, meaning 178 do not. This means about one-third of the Underground is not accessible. Or put another way, the inaccessible part of the network is twice as large as the accessible part.

To make matters worse, some of the inaccessible stations are some of the busiest, including main line stations that lack step-free access to all Underground platforms, such as at Paddington, Marylebone, Euston, Waterloo, Liverpool Street, Charing Cross and Cannon Street, and key tourist stations such as Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus.

TfL recognises this is unacceptable, and the Mayor has set a target to have 50 per cent of stations accessible by 2030. As we move into the summer of 2026 it is quite clear that this target is not going to be met.

We raise this now as TfL has just announced that five Underground stations that had initially been rejected for step-free access are now being moved into the 'full feasibility study' category for further consideration. These stations are Barkingside, Brent Cross, Preston Road, Queensbury, and Totteridge and Whetstone.

However this is way too few, and way too slow to hit the Mayor's target.

To understand this, some context is necessary. In November 2021 TfL opened a public consultation on step free access on the Underground, which closed in February 2022. By November 2022 a report was issued following the consultation. To cut a long story short, sometime later TfL announced a number of lists including 25 stations listed for feasibility.

With the passage of further time, by April 2025 TfL stated that the situation was now as follows:

- A longlist of 30 stations had been 'prioritised for feasibility'; and
- A shortlist of 15 stations to be taken forward for further analysis would be issued by October 2025.

Not very encouraging. In September 2025, TfL did in fact issue a shortlist of 17 stations for further study, to be carried out by late 2026. The 17 stations are Becontree, Blackhorse Road, Canons Park, Dagenham East, East Putney, Edgware Road (Hammersmith & City line), Hatton Cross, Hornchurch, Kentish Town, Plaistow, Putney Bridge, Ruislip, Snaresbrook, South Harrow, Upton Park, Willesden Green and Wood Green.

As to the recently announced five Underground stations, these are stations that had been on the long list of 30 stations under consideration but had failed to make it on to the shortlist of 17 stations. That status will now be reconsidered.

Railfuture as well as other organisations campaign to improve accessibility on the Underground as soon as possible, noting financial and practical limitations, and it is our role to point out when we see failings or can readily foresee that targets are going to be missed. That is the situation we are now in.

For the Underground to reach the Mayor's target to have 50 per cent of stations accessible by 2030, 132 station will need to be accessible by then. That means 42 stations will need to be upgraded. With only 30 stations listed for consideration that is going to be difficult. The fact that only 17 stations are undergoing further study could be described as woeful.

As always, money is the issue. However what we are campaigning for is not something unrealistic, but what is in fact the Mayor's own target, and a fairly conservative one at that. We recognise the issues involved, in particular financial pressures, but surely our Underground should be improved as a priority issue so all people can readily use it.

NEW STATION AT BEAM PARK FINALLY APPROVED

Railfuture has been calling for the opening of a new station at Beam Park for some time. In the last edition of our Campaign Newsletter (February 2026) an article appeared expressing our disappointment at that not happening. We wrote then:

'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.'

The delay was clearly being caused by the DfT, not TfL or other participants in the rail industry. However the Housing Secretary, apparently in his quest to speed up housing development in London, has now confirmed that a new Beam Park railway station will be accommodated on the network.

Beam Park is a new development on the London Fenchurch Street - Rainham (Essex) - Grays route, located between the existing Dagenham Dock and Rainham stations. There is currently a half hourly service between Fenchurch Street and Grays, and the journey time from Beam Park to Fenchurch Street will be about 20 minutes.

The station could serve a development of up to 20,000 homes, although only 1,100 homes have been completed with about 1,200 currently under construction. The opening of the new station should encourage the building of the remaining development .

The leader of Havering Council said: 'We have always said that we would do all we can to ensure Beam Park station is built.....the station is much needed for Beam Park and neighbouring Dagenham, which will enable housing and business growth in this key area....it is also a key piece of infrastructure that will support the existing community in the south of the borough. Without a station, the area will remain in a transport vacuum'.

We are pleased to see that common-sense has prevailed at last, and that the station will now be built.

MORE TRAINS ON THE SHEPHERD'S BUSH - CLAPHAM JUNCTION LINE

From 18 May 2026, the Clapham Junction - Shepherd's Bush section of the Mildmay Line will see an increase in peak time trains, with 16 additional peak-time weekday services which TfL states will increase capacity between those stations by 20% in the morning peak and 33% in the afternoon/evening peak.

There will then be a service of 7 trains per hour during peak hours. The increase is being funded by the London Olympia property developers, which has signed a five-year agreement to finance the trains. The increased services will improve links to Westfield London as well as the Central line.

It should be noted that Shepherd's Bush is only one station away from Willesden Junction (with all the connectivity that comes with it) passing close by to Old Oak Common. Railfuture has long campaigned for Southern to uplift its hourly service from Watford Junction to Clapham Junction and onwards to East Croydon. This development shows there is line capacity at least on the West London line to do this. The irony is that the new peak trains will not be using the usual London Overground platforms at Clapham Junction (platforms 1 and 2) because of a lack of capacity, but will instead be using platform 17, the very platform used by the Watford - East Croydon trains.

With the development at London Olympia, now is also a good time to restore the weekday Underground service from Earls Court to Olympia, it being difficult to reach Olympia from Central London, it necessitating changing trains, for example by getting to West Brompton and then changing to the Overground.

Our websites: www.railfuture.org.uk | www.railfuture.org.uk/London-Metro | www.railwatch.org.uk
follow us on X/Twitter: [@Railfuture](https://twitter.com/Railfuture) | [@RailfutureLSE](https://twitter.com/RailfutureLSE) | [@Railwatch](https://twitter.com/Railwatch)

Railfuture Ltd is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 05011634.
Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only)
All other correspondence to 3 Chandos Court, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SU

SOUTHEASTERN TO IMPROVE METRO SERVICES

Southeastern has announced that in December 2026 it will deliver one of the biggest improvements to Metro services in years, subject to planning and approvals.

Southeastern intends to offer:

- A 'turn up and go' minimum of 4 trains per hour across all Metro routes on Monday to Saturday (except Bromley North), with more frequent services on some lines;
- All day, half-hourly Greenwich and Sidcup line rounders Monday to Saturday, offering an all-day direct link from the Sidcup Line to Abbey Wood for the Elizabeth line;
- Two trains per hour all day, seven days per week, between Charing Cross and the Bexleyheath line, improving the current service level of one train per hour off-peak and on Saturday;
- Orpington to Victoria services (via Herne Hill) increased from 2 to 4 tph on Saturdays;
- Cannon Street services from the Bexleyheath line are redirected to Charing Cross on Sundays in response to customer demand;
- Reintroduction of a Sunday service on the Bromley North branch with 2 trains per hour.

The improvements include a 'rounder' service that links the Sidcup line and the Greenwich line providing an all-day direct link from the Sidcup area to the Elizabeth Line at Abbey Wood. Confirmation and further details concerning the December 2026 changes will be provided around September 2026.

We applaud Southeastern which in contrast to many other operators is seeking to expand its services. A Metro style 4 trains per hour has long been an aspiration of Railfuture, and it is pleasing to see Southeastern aiming to achieve that milestone.

Southeastern are also improving their Kent services, details of which will be found in 'South East Rail Action' June 2026 edition.

SOCIAL EVENTS – RAILWAY WALKS PROGRAMME

On 15 April 2026 Railfuture and the Railway & Canal Historical Society conducted their first joint walk (Waterloo and all things LSWR) in the multi-walk programme headed 'London Railways Termini Walks'.

The second walk is 'Victoria and all things London, Brighton and South Coast Railway' to be conducted on Tuesday 16 June 2026 starting at 11am at Victoria station. The Waterloo Walk was over-subscribed and ran a reserve list, and it is inevitable that the Victoria Walk will do likewise. To attend you must pre-book, email Richard Bowry on richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk to book or for further details.

OUR THANKS TO PHIL HUTCHINSON OF GTR

We would like to thank Phil Hutchinson, Head of Strategic Planning at Govia Thameslink Railway, for being the main speaker at the LSE Branch annual general meeting held on 18 April 2026. Phil has been in the UK rail industry for over 25 years and started at GTR on its first day back in 2014.

Phil gave the meeting a two-part presentation, the first headed 'Current Demand, Revenue and Outlook' and the second headed 'The Future of the Railway'. He also explained GTR's approach to timetable planning, both in the short and longer term. Further details on our AGM and Phil's presentation will appear in the June edition of 'South East Rail Action'.

'SOUTH EAST RAIL ACTION'

For more news around the London & South East branch, see our quarterly magazine 'South East Rail Action' on the Railfuture website.

Our websites: www.railfuture.org.uk | www.railfuture.org.uk/London-Metro | www.railwatch.org.uk
follow us on X/Twitter: [@Railfuture](https://twitter.com/Railfuture) | [@RailfutureLSE](https://twitter.com/RailfutureLSE) | [@Railwatch](https://twitter.com/Railwatch)

Railfuture Ltd is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 05011634.
Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only)
All other correspondence to 3 Chandos Court, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SU

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?

RAIL USER GROUP: MEETINGS

Chesham & District Transport Users Group

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 12 May 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 21 May 2026
- Thursday 23 July 2026
- Thursday 17 September 2026
- Thursday 12 November 2026

Please join us at our Thursday 21 May meeting when we will be discussing our campaign priorities for 2026.

Our websites: www.railfuture.org.uk | www.railfuture.org.uk/London-Metro | www.railwatch.org.uk
follow us on X/Twitter: [@Railfuture](https://twitter.com/Railfuture) | [@RailfutureLSE](https://twitter.com/RailfutureLSE) | [@Railwatch](https://twitter.com/Railwatch)

Railfuture Ltd is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 05011634.
Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only)
All other correspondence to 3 Chandos Court, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SU

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:

- Turn up and go services throughout London of at least 4 trains per hour
- Introducing a passenger service on the West Orbital Route
- Extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Thamesmead
- Extension of the Bakerloo Line from Elephant & Castle to Lewisham
- 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

Our websites: www.railfuture.org.uk | www.railfuture.org.uk/London-Metro | www.railwatch.org.uk

follow us on X/Twitter: [@Railfuture](https://twitter.com/Railfuture) | [@RailfutureLSE](https://twitter.com/RailfutureLSE) | [@Railwatch](https://twitter.com/Railwatch)

Railfuture Ltd is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 05011634.
Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only)
All other correspondence to 3 Chandos Court, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SU