

Warning

Do you realise the fate of Britain's railways is in your hands?

The Transport Committee of the House of Commons has raised serious questions over the Government's privatisation plans. When the Railways Bill is examined by the House, rail users will be relying on YOU to bear these vital points in mind and ensure that the Bill is amended:

1. There is a need for a national rail authority to plan for strategic investment.

2. Promised details of proposed train path allocation and track charges for freight and passenger operators must be made public as soon as possible. The level of track charges will ultimately decide whether privatisation is a success or a failure.

3. Consumer representation for passengers needs to be improved, made more democratic (involving rail user groups) and should cover ALL trains, including those run by private operators.

4. BR should be allowed to compete for any franchises. It must not be relegated to the status of "last resort". There must be a national timetable available to passengers. Good connections, through off-peak ticketing, cross-validity of all tickets and national railcards must all be guaranteed in any new regime.

5. Freight must have access to the network at MARGINAL COST as suggested in the transport committee's interim report Page viii, 12 (e).

6. There should be increased public funding to allow for an ever-improving standard of service. Public funds should also be made available for strategic investment in major capital projects like Thameslink 2000 and the upgrading of the West Coast Main Line.

7. The Secretary of State has given assurances about consultation over rail closures but, with an already truncated network caused by ill-considered cutbacks, there should be a guarantee of NO further line closures. On the contrary, reopenings and NEW lines must be an essential part of future policy.

In this age of environmental awareness, the public demands improving and expanding rail services.