

New stations and new authority



New stations for Leeds and Bradford to open next year

Approval for new stations at Kirkstall Forge in Leeds (artist's impression above) and Apperley Bridge in Bradford was given on 28 May 2014 by Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin. They will be part of the Leeds rail growth scheme promoted by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Kirkstall Forge will form part of a major residential and commercial development and Apperley Bridge will incorporate a park-and-ride site. The Government will provide £9.5 million of the £16 million cost and the work will start this summer and should be completed in August 2015.

Leeds West MP Rachel Reeves said: "After four years of campaigning I am thrilled for the community of Kirkstall, and people across West Leeds that we have agreement to go ahead with the development at Kirkstall Forge.

"Getting new infrastructure in place will create jobs and having a new train station will help so many people from the area commute into Leeds and Bradford for work or leisure. And with the station agreed, new housing, retail and office space will be built with jobs created on this historical site. Getting this project from drawing board to agreement has been a triumph of partnership working. I look forward to the first train stopping at Kirkstall Forge."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/two-new-rail-stations-for-west-yorkshire>

M for Metro stays but change looks likely on West Yorkshire rail

The old Metro M will continue to appear over the public transport network in West Yorkshire and individual passengers will notice no immediate changes, but a change took place on 1 April that will have profound implications for the way

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railways develop in the area and how these developments can be brought about. It was on 1 April that the first meeting of the new West Yorkshire Combined Authority took place. It has taken over the role of the regional passenger transport authority and the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority. The membership comprises the leaders of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield councils, representatives of opposition parties, the chair of the Leeds city region local enterprise partnership and, on transport matters, the City of York Council. The new authority will allocate a number of funds on a devolved basis including the West Yorkshire and York Transport Fund, the local growth fund, European structural funds and investments under the local transport plan.

www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk

New stations to be built on Coventry-Nuneaton line



The Government will contribute up to £4.75 million towards the £13.6 million cost of improvements on the railway line between Coventry and Nuneaton. Baroness Kramer also announced that new stations would be built at Coventry Arena and Bermuda Park, and platforms extended at Bedworth. Construction has already started and should be complete in May next year. The picture shows Dan Byles, MP for North Warwickshire

and Bedworth, right, who has been very supportive of the plan to upgrade the Coventry-Nuneaton line.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-stations-for-coventry-to-nuneaton-rail-line>

Seat bays welcomed in extra coaches on Great Western IC125s

First Great Western has announced an agreement with the Government to convert some first class coaches on their InterCity 125 trains, to create an extra 3,000 standard class seats a day. The extra coaches will start coming into service this summer with all the conversions being available by late summer 2015. They will include more seats in bays of four around a table. This was welcomed by Railfuture's deputy director of policy Norman Bradbury who said that it vindicated the arguments put forward by Railfuture's rolling stock design panel.

www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/About-Us/Media-Centre/2014/March/more-standard-class-seats-and-refreshed-first-class-environment

Smart cards could speed the way to an integrated transport future

The benefits of smart card ticketing for urban transport and the factors that have affected the take-up of the technology in Britain were discussed at a round-table conference, hosted by the *Guardian* and sponsored by EY, better known as Anglo-

Railfuture press releases

Since the last issue of *railaction*, press releases have been issued by Railfuture on the link between HS1 and HS2, the 20th anniversary of the Channel Tunnel, the AGM and the conference in Cambridge.

Press releases can be read at:

[Railfuture press releases](#)

Railfuture in the news

Railfuture is frequently reported in both print and broadcast media at both a national and regional level.

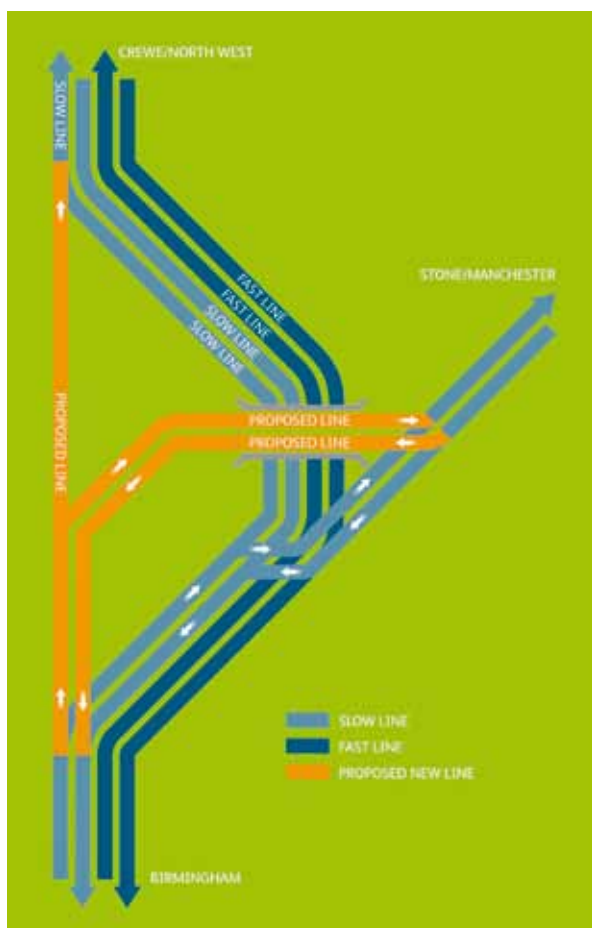
A summary of media coverage of Railfuture, locally and nationally, is available on

[Railfuture+in+the+news](#)

American accountants Ernst & Young. The experts who contributed under Chatham House rules, which restrict reporting, came from a range of transport, technology and government organisations. The report provides a summary of the subject.

www.theguardian.co.uk/public-leaders-supporter-zone-ernst-young/urban-transport-needs-smart-solutions

Go-ahead for Norton Bridge flyover on West Coast main line



Work has started on building a new flyover at Norton Bridge, north of Stafford on the West Coast main line. It should be complete in summer 2016. An initial package of track and signal work to allow faster speed between Crewe and Norton Bridge has been completed. The overall project, including six miles of new track, will allow for the separation of long-distance, local and freight traffic. Once complete, the £250 million programme will clear the way for two extra trains per hour in each direction between London and north west England, one between Manchester and Birmingham, and one extra freight train through Stafford.

www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/News-Releases/Flyover-to-boost-capacity-and-reliability-on-one-of-Europe-s-busiest-rail-routes-2036.aspx

New trains for Northern and more orders expected for London

The progress of electrification in England's north west will allow diesel trains to be freed up for use elsewhere. Two electric trains will start operating between Liverpool and Manchester through Newton-le-Willows from December, with an additional 10 being in service by the end of next year. On 2 April 2014, the Department for Transport said this will free one diesel train to provide some relief on the service from Bolton and another to reintroduce passenger services along the Todmorden curve.

A week later Transport for London set in motion the process of ordering a fleet of 30 trains for use on the West Anglia routes it will be taking over next year. The order will also include eight trains for the Gospel Oak to Barking line, which is to be electrified by the end of 2017, and a train for the Romford-Upminster line. The order could be increased if passenger growth is such that additional

Railfuture autumn conference

The next national Railfuture conference will take place on 1 November in London at the University of Westminster. The theme of the day will be "On the track to success: the challenges ahead" and an impressive range of speakers has been lined up including Baroness Kramer, Minister of State for transport, Karen Boswell of East Coast, Anne Matthews of Deltarail, Sharon Hughes of Passenger Focus, Jenni Borg from the Department for Transport and Fiona Dolman of Network Rail. The conference will also include the presentation of the 2014 Rail User Group awards. Reduced 'early bird' prices are available for bookings made before 31 August. Places can be booked at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/

services are required. The incorporation of the current West Anglia services into the London Overground is planned for May next year. As these new trains will not be available until 2017, the existing trains will be deep cleaned and refreshed in the interim.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/electric-trains-to-boost-rail-services-in-the-north-west>

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2014/april/tfl-begins-search-for-supplier-to-provide-new-trains-on-new-and-existing-london-overground-routes>

Rail planners need to wake up to town's population boom



A concerted attempt has been launched to improve rail services at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, because the town's 20,000 population is expected to double over the next 20 years. A Gainsborough Rail Action Plan has been issued by the Friends of Brigg and Lincoln Lines and the Gainsborough Rail and Bus Users Group. Both Gainsborough stations are in a poor condition and although Gainsborough Lea Road has services through the week, Gainsborough Central, which is much better located for both residents and visitors, has trains only on Saturdays. The plan includes a range of measures that could be carried out over the next two years, some as part of the on-going improvement programme for the line between Peterborough and Doncaster via Lincoln, the Great Northern/Great Eastern joint line. The plan will also be used during the consultation process that will lead to the letting of the next Northern Rail franchise in 2016. The action plan and an online petition to express support for it are on the following link: <http://grap.eavb.co.uk>

Network Rail criticised over safety at level crossings

Network Rail was criticised in the national press after its response to the recommendations of the House of Commons transport committee on safety at level crossings was published. The transport committee accused Network Rail of behaving with "callous disregard" toward the families of level crossing accident victims. In a *Daily Telegraph* report, the father of a girl killed at Elsenham crossing in Essex in 2005 said the NR response was "mealy mouthed". The committee also queried the resources available to the Rail Regulator to supervise Network Rail's signalling work. It made detailed recommendations on a number of other points including driver training and public education.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmtran/680/68002.htm

Government response on safety at level crossings

Following the report by the House of Commons transport committee on safety at level crossings, the Department for Transport published its response on 13 May 2014. The DfT said a ring-fenced fund of £109 million for continuing risk reduction at level crossings has been provided for the five-year period to March 2019 with the aim of reducing risks by 25%. The DfT said the Office of Rail Regulation has enhanced its level crossings team to ensure Network Rail is

Railfuture photo competition

Railfuture is running a competition to find photographs illustrating the future of rail that can be used on postcards and greeting cards to recruit new members and other promotions. Entries should depict an aspect of rail development or reopening that is needed, or in progress with a caption explaining why it is needed and the relevance to Railfuture. Entries, which should be submitted by 30 September, will be judged by a panel of Railfuture vice presidents and the results announced at the autumn conference. For further information see:

www.railfuture.org.uk/article1481-Photo-competition

held to account to deliver on its commitments. A review of ORR's level crossing guidance is also under way. The Government pledged to continue to work with Network Rail and ORR to ensure that any risks are reduced as far as reasonably practicable.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmtran/274/27402.htm>

Consultation on closing East Coast main line level crossings

Network Rail has opened a consultation on closing level crossings between London and Doncaster on the East Coast main line. Responses to the plan can be made during July online or at a series of public presentations in the areas affected. This stage of the consultation, which will be followed by more detailed consideration, is open until 31 August 2014.

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/improvements/east-coast-main-line/ecml-level-crossings/>

<http://www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/news-releases/have-your-say-east-coast-main-line-level-crossings-20be.aspx>



25% cut in charges for freight trains using Channel Tunnel

Eurotunnel's charges for rail freight are being reduced by 25% compared to 2013 and will not increase until at least 2018. In addition an incentive scheme for new services is being enhanced. This change is a response to a legal investigation opened by the European Commission against the French and UK governments. The change was welcomed by the Rail Freight Group. The picture above shows the launch at Barking in east London of an intermodal freight service using High Speed One and the Channel Tunnel in 2011.

www.rfg.org.uk/news/cross-channel-rail-freight-boost-eurotunnel-reduces-charges-0

Transport police plan to cut crime by 4% in the next year

The British Transport Police Authority has published the targets to be met by British Transport Police over the coming year. These include the following

Eurostar passenger survey

The Railfuture International Group is carrying out a survey of passenger experience with Eurostar for journeys in the 12 months from July 2014. The questionnaire can be downloaded from:

www.railfuture.org.uk/International

Railfuture 2015 AGM in Blackpool

Next year's AGM of RDS Ltd, the official name of Railfuture, will take place on Saturday 16 May at the Savoy Hotel, Blackpool. Hold the date and wait for further information.

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

that directly affect passenger services: reducing crime by 4% on last year's figures, reducing police-related delays by 6%, providing clearance after non-suspicious deaths in 90 minutes and ensuring tracks with four lines are partially reopened within 45 minutes. Under newly appointed Chief Constable Paul Crowther, BTP is now organised in three divisions, replacing the previous eight areas.

<http://www.btp.police.uk/pdf/BTPA-National-and-Area-Policing-Plan-2013-14.pdf>

Government guidance for airport consultative committees

The Department for Transport has issued guidelines for airport consultative committees for both airport managers and also those who may be committee members or involved in other ways. The guidance could also be of interest to railway campaigners with an airport in their area.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/airport-consultative-committees-guidelines

A new approach makes life easier for passengers at Corby



A train at Corby with the destination board Melton Mowbray. Picture by Jim Wade

the nearby college who will no longer have to walk round the car park. Local Railfuture members are pleased at the development and are looking forward to ensure that the planned electrification and other developments build on the benefits that the reintroduction of the railway has provided to their town.

www.corby.gov.uk/press-release/corby-train-station-one-step-closer-your-door

The fifth anniversary of the reopening of Corby station coincided with the opening of a new pedestrian approach route from the town centre. The new steps, which incorporate a ramp for bikes, will take about 300 yards off the route used by residents and students at

Health and safety improvement plan for rail workers

A programme to improve occupational health and wellbeing within the railway industry between 2014 and 2019, was launched on 28 April by the Office of Rail Regulation. This highlights progress over recent years and recognises the need for greater consistency across the industry. As well as the formal programme, ORR has published a summary leaflet setting out the key areas of its approach on the subject.

http://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/12031/occup-health-prog-2014-19.pdf

Five-year plan to make HS1 even more successful and reliable

The Office of Rail Regulation has approved a five-year plan for High Speed 1 setting out long-term investment and a reduction of charges to expand

£100 million to improve access to stations

A £100 million fund will be available to carry out work to improve access for disabled people at 42 stations across the network in the five-year period up to 2019. This continues, although at a lower rate, a programme that has seen step-free routes established at over 150 stations since 2006, in addition to those where smaller access improvements have been carried out and the major station rebuilding projects for which accessibility should be built into the design. The 42 stations have been selected from 278 nominated. Detailed plans and costings have to be established by Network Rail.

www.gov.uk/government/news/government-funding-to-make-stations-accessible-to-all

passenger and freight services by over 10% between 2015 and 2020. The plan builds on the current high level of performance. In 2013-14 only 0.13% of trains were delayed by issues caused by HS1's infrastructure. The full plan can be seen on the following link:

http://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/12102/hs1-periodic-review-2014-approval.pdf

MPs to investigate Network Rail's £38 billion investment

The House of Commons transport committee has launched an inquiry into the impact and deliverability of the £38 billion to be invested by Network Rail over the next five years and identify priorities for investment after 2019. This follows the committee's *Rail 2020* report published at the beginning of 2013.

www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/transport-committee/news/investment-in-the-railway---tor/

Rail freight at highest level since privatisation

Freight Rail Usage statistics published by the ORR on 22 May 2014 showed the largest amount of freight carried on Britain's railways in 2013-14, since rail freight was privatised in 1996. During the year 22.7 billion net tonne kilometres was moved, a 5.8% rise over the previous year. While coal still represents 35% of goods carried, the largest increases were in the categories of other (including domestic automotive, biomass and mail) that grew by 30.8%, and construction, up by 23.3%.

<http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/statistical-releases>

http://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/12189/freight-rail-usage-2013-14-q4.pdf

Review of fares targets flexible working and ticketing

As part of its review of rail fares and ticketing, the Department for Transport commissioned research on flexible working and the impact on various options for commuter tickets. *The scope for flexible working in future* by IFF Research has now been published.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-fares-and-ticketing-review-flexible-working-research

Reopenings and more investment feature in new vision for rail



**Northern Ireland
Executive**

www.northernireland.gov.uk

A Railway Investment Prioritisation Strategy has been published by the Northern Ireland Department for Regional Development following a consultation on priorities for rail transport over the next 20 years. In

addition to enhancements to the existing network, station improvements and new rolling stock, the strategy includes a number of possible new lines. These include between Bleach Green and Antrim, between Antrim and Castledawson, towards Dungannon and Armagh and a link to Belfast International Airport. In common with other parts of the UK, Northern Ireland has seen a significant growth in rail use, with an increase of over 1.5 million passengers in the year to March 2014.

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-drd-200514-kennedy-publishes-vision>

Encouraging rail use in Scotland and lessons for rest of Britain

Passenger Focus published *Integrated Transport in Scotland*, a report of research commissioned by Transport Scotland. Published on 12 June 2014, it

Parcels initiative at stations

Doddle shops, at which online purchases can be collected or returned, are to open at stations after a successful pilot at Milton Keynes Central. Doddle is a stand-alone company formed by Network Rail and Lloyd Dorfman, the entrepreneur who founded Travelex. The shops will be staffed and open well into the evening. The first group of stations where the service will open include London Waterloo, Brighton, Bromley South, Chelmsford and Cannon Street.

www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/News-Releases/-2m-Doddle-joint-venture-rolls-out-across-uk-20c6.aspx

looked at passenger experiences from four stations in Scotland, Paisley, Perth, Dunbar and Aviemore. It found that passenger perceptions, particularly of infrequent and rare rail users, of the difficulty of using public transport rather than a car can be overcome by measures to improve the integration of transport. Case studies within the report are relevant elsewhere and so could be valuable to rail campaigners throughout Britain.

<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/transport-integration-in-scotland>

Improvements now and in the future for Merseyside



The May timetable changes saw a doubling of the number of First TransPennine Express services between Liverpool and Manchester and the start of a regular hourly direct service from Liverpool to Newcastle. This coincided with the presentation to Merseytravel of a draft long-term rail strategy for the Liverpool

city region for the next 30 years. The following priorities were listed:

- Improving national passenger and freight connections
- Enabling growth on the Merseyrail network
- Increasing capacity in Liverpool city centre
- Improving connectivity on the City Line
- Facilitating a high quality service on the Cheshire Lines
- Connecting services through the Halton Curve
- Improving connections from Ellesmere Port and Chester, including with the HS2 hub at Crewe
- Serving new developments on the Ormskirk-Preston line
- Connecting to Skelmersdale and new developments in Wigan
- Enhancing the Borderlines Line between Bidston and Wrexham.

It is reported that up to 30 sites for new stations are being considered.

<http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/media-centre/news/pages/the-merseytravel-view...-a-new-dawn-for-rail-in-the-liverpool-city-region.aspx>

Railfuture provides practical support for Haverhill reopening

Campaigners are calling for the reinstatement of rail services between Cambridge and Colchester via Haverhill. As Cambridgeshire and Suffolk County Councils are studying transport options along the A1307 corridor, an area identified as a key for economic growth, Railfuture East Anglia has agreed to pay for leaflets supporting a rail link to be distributed in the area.

www.railfuture.org.uk/article1483-Haverhill-campaign

<http://railhaverhill.org.uk>

Britain agrees to cooperate with China to boost rail

During the visit to Britain of the Chinese premier in May, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed, paving the way for cooperation between Britain and China on railway design, research, construction, supply and maintenance. The media concentrated on the possibility of Chinese investment in High Speed Two.

www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-china-sign-memorandum-of-understanding-on-rail

Britain near the top in European report on rail 'satisfaction'

The European Commission has published Europeans' satisfaction with rail travel, based on research carried out in the autumn of 2013, which studied

Passenger satisfaction holds steady

Passenger satisfaction remained constant in overall terms in the report of the 2014 spring *National Rail Passenger Survey*, published by Passenger Focus. 82% of those surveyed were satisfied with their last journey, the same as the previous year. However this encompasses some considerable variations, with satisfaction ranked by rail company, ranging from 72% to 96%. Given the weather-associated disruption in many parts of the country, Andrew Smith of Passenger Focus said that better communications may have ensured passengers' satisfaction with some train companies in dealing with delays has been maintained. The survey was of 27,000 passengers between February and mid-April this year. The full report, a summary and a breakdown of the figures by train company and route, can be downloaded from the following link:

www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news/articles/overall-satisfaction-steady-individual-passenger-experience-remains-varied

a number of aspects of passenger satisfaction both at stations and on trains across all European Union countries with rail services. The findings for Britain, which are in line with those found in the regular surveys carried out by Passenger Focus, are sufficient to put the country at or near the top of the national rankings on most measures. However the level of low satisfaction is such to dispel any complacency.

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_382a_en.pdf

Profits reinvested as Network Rail publishes its annual report



Network Rail published its annual report for 2013/14 on 12 June 2014. This showed almost £7 billion of investment. From a revenue of £6.33 billion, there was a profit after tax of £1.26 billion which was used for reinvestment. The report contains a number

of statistics that may be useful to rail campaigners including the fact that passenger numbers have doubled since 1995 and that a million more trains ran last year than 10 years ago. In addition to the major projects on network and stations, over the past five years over 2,000 miles of track have been renewed, improvements made to over 500 stations and almost 200 lifts have been installed at stations.

www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/annual-report-and-accounts/2014/

Public inquiry into delayed Edinburgh trams project

When the trams in Edinburgh started running between the airport and York Place at the end of May it engendered both celebration and relief as it was about two years behind schedule, £300 million over budget and did not go to Leith as originally intended. The First Minister has set up a non-statutory inquiry into the failings of the project and appointed a judge, Lord Hardie, to lead it. This procedure, which is possible because of the cooperation of Edinburgh City Council, should lead to the inquiry being completed more quickly. The report may well include recommendations that will be relevant to projects elsewhere.

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/First-Minister-appoints-judge-for-Edinburgh-Trams-Inquiry-d8f.aspx>

Rail companies agree to extend Forces railcard to reservists



On Armed Forces Day, 28 June 2014, Prime Minister David Cameron announced that the HM Forces railcard would also be available to active reservists following an agreement between the rail companies and the Ministry of Defence. The card was used to make 1.7 million rail journeys last year.

www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-to-announce-train-companies-offer-of-discounted-travel-for-reservists

Second public consultation on Crossrail 2

A consultation has been launched by Transport for London, the Mayor of London and Network Rail on Crossrail 2, a proposed line which would link existing lines in Hertfordshire and Surrey through central London. This follows an earlier public consultation in which the principle of such a regional line was given overwhelming support, and seeks views on alternative alignments through Hackney and Chelsea and also a new extension to New Southgate. The consultation, to be followed by route protection measures, is open until 25 July 2014.

<http://crossrail2.co.uk>



How the HS2 station at Birmingham Curzon Street could look with Midland Metro trams inside the station building

HS2

Better safeguards for rural environment and wildlife urged

Parliament's environmental audit committee published a report, *HS2 and the environment*, on 7 April 2014. It warned that better safeguards need to be implemented if harmful environmental impacts of HS2 are to be minimised. Parliament, as the planning authority for the project through the hybrid bill process, should ensure that everything possible is done to prevent damage to ancient woodlands and sites of special scientific interest, and that full compensation is paid if loss is unavoidable. To this end a ring-fenced budget for environmental work and compensation is proposed.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/phase-i-of-hs2/>

New compensation scheme for householders along the route

On 9 April 2014, Patrick McLoughlin announced the Government's response to the consultation carried out at the end of 2013 into compensation for owner occupiers living along the route of HS2 Phase 1. An express purchase scheme, with the option of rent back, for houses on or very close to the line was introduced immediately. Other measures for those living further away, within 120 metres and 300 metres, as well as a need to sell that will replace the current exceptional needs provisions, will be introduced some time later this year after a further consultation, and others after the passage of the hybrid legislation. HS2 Ltd will develop a residents' charter to help the public affected know their rights and appoint an independent Residents' Commissioner to ensure that the charter is followed and provide a voice for residents.

www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hs2-phase-one-property

Six MPs chosen for lengthy official scrutiny of HS2 legislation

The High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Bill, which provides the authorisation to build the first phase of HS2, had its second reading in the House of Commons on 28 April 2014. It was passed by a large majority with

Revised route safeguarding order for HS2

Revised safeguarding directions were issued to local authorities on 26 June 2014 along the route of High Speed Two between London and the West Midlands to take into account changes that have been made since autumn 2013. This will both protect the route from other development and have an impact on the compensation arrangements for property owners along the route.

www.gov.uk/government/speeches/safeguarding-directions

452 MPs voting in favour of the principle and 41 voting against. Next there will be a detailed consideration by a committee of the 1,925 objections, known as petitions, that have been made by individuals and organisations directly affected by the proposals in the Bill. This will be the lengthiest part of the process and provision has been made for it to continue until the 2015-16 session of Parliament after the next election. The MPs on the committee, none of whom represent an area close to the proposed line to avoid conflicts of interest, are Robert Syms (Poole), Sir Peter Bottomley (Worthing West), Henry Bellingham (North West Norfolk), Mike Thornton (Eastleigh), Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South East) and Ian Mearns (Gateshead). It is expected that many of the objections will be withdrawn when assurances or agreements are given. Progress on the Bill and a full list of the petitions to be considered by the committee are on the following link:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/highspeedraillondonwestmidlands.html>

Franchising

Thameslink franchise goes to Go-Ahead and SNCF alliance

The first major competition in the current franchising round was completed on 23 May 2014 with the announcement that the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise would be operated by Govia Thameslink Railway, a company formed by the Go-Ahead Group and SNCF subsidiary Keolis. The takeover of the combined services, which will be the largest in the country in terms of passenger numbers, will be in two stages with Govia running the Thameslink and Great Northern trains (currently First Capital Connect)



A mock-up of the Thameslink trains to be built by Siemens

from 14 September 2014. The Southern services and Gatwick Express will join the new franchise when that franchise comes to an end on 26 July 2015. The latter hand-over should cause few problems as Govia operates these services already.

In addition, some stations and services currently part of the Southeastern network will transfer in December 2014. The seven-year franchise period will see the completion of Network Rail's Thameslink programme and the introduction of a fleet of new trains, already ordered, on the extended route. New trains are also to be provided for the Gatwick Express service and the 40-year-old coaches on the line from Moorgate to Hertfordshire will be replaced. The Thameslink name will be reintroduced and the Southern and Gatwick Express ones retained. As a result of the

extent of changes to services and infrastructure, the franchise will be in the form of a management contract, with Govia being paid a fee while the fare revenue is passed to the Government. Railfuture at both a national and local level will be renewing discussions with the new management.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-rail-franchising-deal-set-to-transform-passenger-services-across-london-and-south-east>

<http://www.govia.info/news/govia-awarded-tsgn-franchise/>

Discounted tickets increase in popularity

The Rail Delivery Group, representing the major train and rail freight operators, has issued figures on the growth in rail use. While these reflect other sets of statistics, some have been used to highlight issues in ways that could be useful to rail campaigners. For example the average Briton now makes 24 rail journeys a year compared to 15 in 1998. Last year almost 50p in every £1 spent on fares was for discounted tickets compared with 36p, 10 years ago. This explains their conclusion in a comparison of utility prices that while electricity has more than doubled, expenditure on rail fares has gone up by only 5% since 1998. *GB rail: dataset on financial and operational performance 1997/8-2012/13*, which was prepared by KPMG, can be downloaded from the following link:

www.raildeliverygroup.com/media-centre/press-releases/britains-rail-trael-habits-revealed

Revised list of dates for Government's rail franchise renewals

In April 2014, the Department for Transport published an updated schedule showing the dates of current franchises and when new ones are expected to start. This listing includes only those that are the responsibility of DfT and excludes London Overground, Merseyrail and ScotRail.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-franchise-schedule

Franchise extension given to Abellio Greater Anglia

A direct award franchise extension has been made for Abellio Greater Anglia to continue operating until July 2016, in an announcement that was made on 16 April 2014, three months ahead of the deadline. During the extension period it was agreed that there would be improvements to the coaches on the main line trains between London and Norwich and also increased frequency of some services including that between Cambridge and Stansted Airport and a number of other lines.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/better-services-for-passengers-on-the-greater-anglia-franchise>

Consultation on specification for Great Western franchise

The Department for Transport launched a consultation on 8 May 2014 on the specification for the Great Western franchise for a five-year period from September 2015. This will be in the form of a direct award rather than a full new franchise. This will cover the period in which planned major projects, including electrification of the main lines, Crossrail and the introduction of inter-city express trains, will be completed or well under way. The consultation closed on 26 June.

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/great-western-specification-for-the-future-franchise

New trains and new operator Serco for Caledonian Sleeper

Transport Scotland announced on 28 May 2014 that Serco had been awarded the new 15-year franchise for the Caledonian Sleeper, which has been separated from the main ScotRail franchise. A new fleet of trains to be built by CAF, incorporating a club car, en-suite berths and pod flatbeds, will be introduced by summer 2018 at a cost of over £100 million, of which £60 million will be a capital grant from the Scottish Government.

www.transportscotland.gov.uk/news/exciting-new-sleeper-contract-unveiled

www.serco.com/media/pressreleases/

SercoSelectedforNewCaledonianSleeperrailfranchise.asp

London Overground operator will run West Anglia services

It is of little surprise that Transport for London will appoint LOROL, the current operator of London Overground trains, to run the services in north and east London for which it is taking responsibility from May next year. The lines affected are between Liverpool Street and Chingford, Enfield Town and Cheshunt (via Seven Sisters). This will be an interim arrangement for 17 months until a new concession for the whole Overground service is made after a full bidding process.

www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2014/may/tfl-appoints-london-overground-operator-to-run-additional-services

Railfuture responses

Railfuture responds to a variety of consultations. In recent months these have included:

- Southeastern December 2014 timetable consultation to SouthEastern
- Inquiry into tourism to the Welsh Government
- Great Western franchise consultation to the Department for Transport

[Railfuture submissions](#)

Web links

Readers of *railaction* should be able to click on the web links in this document to be taken straight to the relevant website.

However this is not yet an exact science. One problem is that organisations update their websites and change the page references.

We do our best to keep abreast of these changes, but it is not always possible.

Virgin's two-years-plus contract extension for West Coast

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced on 19 June 2014 that Virgin would continue to run services on the West Coast main line under a direct award contract for a further two years and nine months. Among the service improvements included in the contract are the provision of more standard class seating by the conversion of one first-class coach in each of 21 trains, free wi-fi at stations and, subject to agreement with the Office of Rail Regulation, the reintroduction of some direct services between London and both Blackpool and Shrewsbury from December. Virgin will work with Network Rail and others on measures to reduce journey times between Scotland and London, with a specific mention being made of remodelling Carstairs Junction. Virgin has agreed to increase its premium payments to the Government by £57 million per year. The contract will last until April 2017 when a new long-term franchise should start.

www.gov.uk/government/speeches/rail-franchising-intercity-west-coast

Prospectuses for Northern and TransPennine franchises

The Department for Transport published the initial prospectus for each of the Northern and TransPennine franchises which are expected to be awarded by February 2017. At the same time, on 9 June 2014, it launched a wider public consultation on the future improvement of rail services across northern England that will close on 18 August 2014. Both the consultation document and the prospectuses are available from the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-consults-on-the-future-of-rail-services-in-the-north>

National Express pledges new trains for c2c in 15-year deal

The new Essex Thameside franchise between Southend and London Fenchurch Street has been awarded to the current operator c2c which is part of National Express. The 15-year contract makes provision for increasing the fleet with 17 new trains, an extensive programme of station improvements including making all stations step free, wi-fi on trains and stations and achieving new punctuality targets of 90% of trains getting to their destination within a minute of the timetable by December 2018. One item in this contract that is novel is the requirement for passengers with smart tickets to receive compensation for delays automatically.

www.gov.uk/government/news/passengers-in-london-and-essex-set-for-host-of-benefits-under-new-rail-deal

Your views welcome

Now that it has reached its sixth issue, I would be grateful for opinions on *railaction* both regarding general matters such as its length and style, and on any more specific concerns. While not all suggestions will be able to be taken up, all will be very welcome, including leads for future issues.

Email: john.stanford@railwatch.org.uk

What's on

5 August - Chesham & District Transport Users Group meeting, Chesham

5 August - Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passengers Association meeting, Newtown

8 and 27 August - Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line events, Ribbleshead

11 August - Bexhill Rail Action Group meeting, Hastings

16 August - Railfuture Kent division meeting, Tunbridge Wells

4 September - Railfuture Sussex & Coastway division meeting, Worthing

5 September - RCTS "The InterCity Story 1962-2012", Bristol

6-7 September - Railfuture Lincolnshire, stand at model railway show, Grantham

8 September - Bexhill Rail Action Group meeting, Collington

17 September - Friends of the Barton Line meeting, Cleethorpes

17 September - Railfuture North East meeting, Newcastle upon Tyne

11 October - East Suffolk Travellers Association meeting, Leiston

A list of events of interest to rail campaigners can be found on the Railfuture website:

[Railfuture events](#)

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