

London Metro Division

Campaign Newsletter June 2025



RAILFUTURE SUPPORTS LIVERPOOL STREET STATION REDEVELOPMENT

Our newsletter this month concentrates on the redevelopment of Liverpool Street station. It is now the busiest railway station in the UK, recent data recently released recording 94.5 million entries and exits over a one year period. According to Network Rail, its annual passenger numbers are forecast to grow to 158 million by 2041.

That Liverpool Street station is in need of redevelopment is not in serious doubt. The nature of that redevelopment has, however, been somewhat controversial. The initial plans included building over part of the Victorian station roof, as well as the adjacent hotel, in a development that in our view did not respect the heritage of the station.

So Network Rail went back to the drawing board, and earlier this year revealed substantially amended plans which, it claims, creates a more modern, user-friendly station with enhanced accessibility and amenities, whilst respect heritage. The plans to build over the train shed and hotel have, for example, now gone.

Metro Division has examined these new plans and invited Network Rail to a meeting of the Division to explain them. We were pleased to welcome Lisa Barrett (Business Development Manager - Anglia Route) of Network Rail to our May 2025 meeting, when she ran through the revised plans, and answered many of our queries through a Q and A session.

Much of the criticism of the earlier plans arose from a perceived disrespect to the station heritage. Network Rail have produced in their revised plans new images as to how key parts of the development will now look. In response, we have produced photographs of how the same places look right now, as a means of assessing the changes. These are found on the following page. Our assessment of the overall project, having weighed the impact with the benefits that will accrue, then follows.

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A view of the redeveloped station from Bishopsgate, showing the hotel in the foreground with the new office building that will go over the station concourse.



A present day view. The Bishopsgate entrance is somewhat hidden on the right, between the hotel and office block. Much is in shade, due to high rise offices behind the photographer.



How the new concourse will look. The roof over the concourse will be removed, but the train shed over the platforms remains.



A similar view today. The compact nature of the concourse is apparent.



The shops on the mezzanine level will go, opening up space with views of the platforms and train shed.



The current view cannot be replicated precisely, as shops hinder the view. This is in fact inside a fast food outlet.

In a newsletter of this size it is impossible to describe in full detail the proposed development or the changes that have been made under the revised plans. Perhaps unsurprisingly Network Rail claim the changes will be transformative.

In summary, our review suggests the revised plans to redevelop Liverpool Street station will include the following benefits:

- A larger concourse;
- Improved waiting area on the concourse;
- Eight new lifts to make platforms and the London Underground more accessible;
- An increase in the number of escalators from 4 to 8 to enable easier access from street level;
- More ticket barriers to reduce queuing;
- New toilets, including family facilities on all levels;
- New entrance from Exchange Square, and improved more visible entrances from Liverpool Street and Bishopsgate;
- New exit at the eastern end of the platforms;
- Improved signage and interchange with buses;
- More cycle storage with direct access to platforms;
- Respect maintained regarding the existing War memorials and making them more visible;
- A greater variety of cafes, restaurants and shops.

Network Rail say the plans will ensure that the station is future-proofed, able to accommodate over 200 million people in the decades ahead.

All of this, of course, comes at a cost, running into hundreds of millions of pounds. It seems the station development is not a priority for government, and so the only way the improvements are likely to be forthcoming will be through investment from the private sector. That is proposed to comprise an office block development above the concourse of the station. According to the plans, there will be a garden on the office roof, about half of which will be open to the public.

The Metro Division has closely examined the revised development plans. Our priority is the improvement of the passenger experience at the station whilst respecting heritage. Our view is that the revised plans achieve that objective.

At present Liverpool Street Station is inadequate for the 21st century. Accessibility is a major issue, with many parts of the station not accessible to passengers with mobility impairments, including those using wheelchairs, strollers, or carrying heavy luggage. There are limited station entrances, and the concourse is below street level. The concourse space is itself limited, so that the station struggles to handle peak-time congestion at ticket barriers. There is some but inadequate access to the Circle, Metropolitan and Hammersmith & City Lines, and no lift access at all to the Central Line or the west bound Circle, Metropolitan and Hammersmith & City platform.

Accessibility so everyone can use our transport system should be an absolute given, not an option, and the station is currently woefully inadequate in that regard. The redevelopment is an opportunity to put this right, and whereas no development is perfect or likely to please everyone, the revised proposals will in our view be a major improvement to the station, in particular regarding accessibility.

A consultation is open until 7 July 2025 (see <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail-dates#Consultations> and the Metro Division encourages rail users and the wider public to respond. Our view is that the proposed redevelopment should be supported, and indeed we are campaigning to that effect.

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DISABLED PASSENGER RIGHTS (TURN UP AND GO)

'Turn Up And Go' refers to disabled people's right to travel on the public transport system on the same terms as any other passenger, without having to book assistance in advance. This has been described as the fundamental right to spontaneous travel.

The Equality Act 2010, states that public transport providers must make reasonable adjustments to enable accessibility, like boarding assistance, upon receiving advanced passenger request.

However that is only part of the picture. Turn Up and Go rights on the railway (the right to spontaneous travel) means passengers should be able to access rail travel without pre-booking assistance. Although the law has some ambiguity, it seems this is a legal right for disabled and indeed anyone with mobility issues, so they can board a train without prior notice.

Accordingly train operators must have station staff available to provide assistance as and when needed, including getting on and off trains, as well as navigating the station. Such assistance should be provided when reasonably practicable, considering staff availability as well the passenger needs.

There have been a number of recently reported incidents in London where station staff have reportedly refused to give Turn Up And Go assistance, or considerably delayed it, on the grounds that other duties make providing it not reasonably practicable. This cannot be accepted. Our railways must be accessible to all, and Turn Up And Go is an essential aspect of that right.

THE NATIONALISATION OF PASSENGER SERVICES IN FULL SWING

Within the space of just five months (mid-May to mid-October 2025), three train operating companies serving London are being nationalised. This is of course part of the Labour Government's scheme to create Great British Railways (GBR), a publicly-owned body that will oversee railway infrastructure and most train services going forward.

South Western Railway became the first train operator to have its services nationalised under the Government's plans, which took place on 25 May 2025. Next in line is c2c, which runs services from London Fenchurch Street to Southend and Shoeburyness. Its services will be nationalised on 20 July 2025. That will be shortly followed by Greater Anglia, whose services will be nationalised on 12 October 2025.

Upon nationalisation the operations will be run by a new public sector operator, being a subsidiary of a public corporation, DfT Operator, being the Government's holding company that previously took over the franchises of LNER, Northern, Southeastern, and TransPennine Express under a separate process.



A Greater Anglia service at Liverpool Street station on 10 June 2025. Although Class 720 EMUs will of course continue, the 'Greater Anglia' logo seen on the side of this train will soon be a thing of the past. Spokespeople for both South Western Railway and Greater Anglia have said nothing material will change as a consequence of the nationalisation of their services, presumably in an effort to re-assure passengers of continuing services. However we suspect the average passenger will want a great deal of change, and indeed the whole purpose of the nationalisation of passenger services is to improve passenger services. Let us see whether Great British Railways can deliver. The time is approaching to translate these words into real positive action.

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LONDON 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
- 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

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 NEWS

Chesham & District Transport Users Group

We recently attended a committee meeting of the Chesham & District Transport Users Group to better understand their needs. The Group covers all forms of public transport, not just rail, and so is particularly active. The meeting was joined by representatives of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, who expressed concerns as to accessibility on all forms of public transport, including taxis. Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 5 August and will be held in Chesham Town Hall starting at 7.30pm.

Watford Rail Users Group and Abbey Flyer Users' Group

We recently attended the AGM and following open joint meeting of the Watford Rail Users Group and the Abbey Flyer Users' Group. The guest speaker was Geoff Grant of West Midlands Trains/ LNWR who gave an update on its services and improvements, including its new Class 730/2 EMUs. Watford RUG continue their campaign for the redevelopment of Watford Junction station, which is well overdue. Abbey Flyer Users' Group are campaigning for the raised platform ramp at St. Albans Abbey station to be moved into a more appropriate position, and for an increase in the number of passenger services.

Tonbridge Line Commuters

Our chair also attended the AGM of the Tonbridge Line Commuters (TLC) held recently on-line. Following the AGM, very informative presentations were given by guest speakers William Knighton of Network Rail, George Patterson of Southeastern, Paul Codd of Southern (GTR) and Michael Jennings of Arriva.

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LONDON METRO DIVISION – WHAT WE DO

Chair: Richard Bowry
Vice Chair: Charlie King

The London Metro Division covers Greater London and services on all London Overground and Underground lines. We campaign for a bigger better railway within our area.

We are active every month

Meetings: We hold meetings in London in January, March, May, July, September and November. Our venue is the **basement room of the Alan Baxter Gallery, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon**. Meetings start at 7pm.

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

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

Our current campaigns include:

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

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

MEETINGS DATES FOR 2025

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 10 July 2025.

Note this is the second Thursday of the month, not our usual third Thursday. This is a one-off, necessitated by the availability of our venue. The dates of our following meetings are:

- Thursday 18 September 2025
- Thursday 20 November 2025.

JOIN US

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.

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

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

Eastern
Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire
Kent
London Metropolitan
Surrey
Sussex and Coastway

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