

Action on fares

The Strategic Rail Authority took action in September to cut fares in London and the south east of England.

The SRA's action will take effect from the 1 January. For services on long distance and regional operators, regulated fare increases will be held to inflation minus 1%, as they have been since January 1999.

Using July's retail price index of 1.6%, this will result in a small increase of just 0.6% in regulated fares.

However, for the 10 London and South East commuter operators, fares are subject to further capping under the Fares Incentive Adjustment Payment (FIAP) mechanism.

Consequently, most commuter fares in the area will on average fall by 1.4% because of poor performance in the year to July 2001.

SRA chief executive Mike Grant said: "The fare decreases in London and the South East will provide further compensation for the disruption suffered in the post-Hatfield period.

"Likewise, the minimal increases in regulated fares across the rest of the network will be a welcome accompaniment to the various special promotions run by operators during 2001.

"The SRA continues to work with the industry to bring about improvements to the network to parallel the continued growth in passenger numbers."

In London and the South East, the actual fare changes within the FIAP limits will be a matter for individual operators to decide and announce.

The caps apply to a fares "basket", or group of fares, and some flexibility is allowed in the price increases on individual fares within a basket. These can be higher than the cap each year, provided there are decreases of equal value on other fares to balance the basket.

Analysis carried out on behalf of the SRA, has shown that, from 1999-2000 to 2000-01, there was an increase of 3.09% in the average standard class fare paid per mile, against a 3% inflation rate.

From 1995-6 to 2000-01, the cumulative increase in the average standard class fare paid was 15.34% when average inflation was at 14.2%.

About 39% of the train operators' farebox revenue is regulated. Regulated fares are normally Weekly Season tickets and the Saver or, for shorter distances, the

Standard Return. For London commuter services, and in certain other large urban areas, a wider range of fares, including most tickets purchased by commuters, are regulated by means of fares "baskets".

Welcome though this action is, British railway fares were too high before privatisation and remain too high, even though there have been a range of promotions by trains operators.

Amazingly however the Department of Transport was told by consultants in August that rush-hour train fares were too low!

Inefficient fare collection by train operators and evasion is a big problem.

Rail users on the Barking-Gospel Oak line say problems have been exacerbated by attacks on train conductors.

Re-staffing stations and providing more ticket machines would have many advantages, not least improving fare collection.

Railfuture lottery winners

August: D J Barr, Harrogate £56, R Burrows, Hassocks £35, R C Vincent, King's Lynn £21, David Miles, Sheffield £14, Jenifer Adams, Stowmarket £7, Dr I Hallack, Altrincham £7.

September: Brian Hastings, Scunthorpe £72, R H Gibson, Huntingdon £45, Mrs Cuff, Stockport £27, P H Ludlow, Budleigh Salterton £18, E Stansfield, Reading £9, S Simms, Walsall £9.

October: Mrs P Hamlyn, London W8 £72, Miss P Salkeld, Morecambe £45, Edward Stansfield, Reading £27, Andrew Savage, London SW17 £18, Peter Morgan, Lingfield £9, Alan Everett, London N16 £9.

If you want to join the Railfuture lottery, send a cheque for £12 (made payable to railfuture) to Edgar Locke, 3 Langton Court, Worthing BN14 7BZ.

A new station – what might it cost?

A much-enlarged and updated version of our 1994 report *A new station - what might it cost?* with details of new standards and requirements is now available. It includes case studies from around Britain and funding mechanisms are explained. Finally, two examples are costed

to show you how to estimate the price of a new station.

Order your copy of this 32-page illustrated report from:

Phil Morris, Railfuture Sales, 113b Pembroke Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3EU.

Price £3.95 (including postage and packing).

Volunteers needed

Railfuture's new office in London is now running smoothly thanks to dedicated work from both staff and volunteers.

We still however have work to do on streamlining and improving the website and in upgrading the computerised membership system.

Two other transport campaign groups, the Campaign for Inner London Transport and the Capital Transport Campaign, along with Dial a Ride Transport, have moved into the Colourworks office complex which is run by the Bootstraps co-operative.

We are looking for three volunteers. We need a journalist to join a team writing newlines for the website. You don't need to be in the office to help if you are email contacted.

Railfuture is also looking for someone who can audit the society's accounts. Another key person is needed to maintain links between Railfuture and the many rail users groups around Britain.

If you can help, contact Kate Tudor-Pole kate@railfuture.org.uk or 020 7249 5533) or Peter Lawrence. peter.lawrence@paston.co.uk or 01603 743446

News and discussion

Railfuture has launched an email bulletin board for members, reports John Davison.

On this national board you can announce meetings, publications or initiatives by others. Over 120 messages have been posted during the first three months of the service going live. To join in our digital debates send an email message quoting the headline from this article to raillfuture-subscribe@yahoo.com.

You can log on from both your workplace and home.

Please think carefully before you post your messages.

Railwatch

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New members always welcome

Membership: £17.50 per year.

Pensioners, students and

unemployed £8.50. User

groups, community and parish

councils £17.50 or £25 to

include 10 copies of *Railwatch*

plus other relevant publications.

Other local authorities and

companies £35. Families £2

extra per member, after £17.50.

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