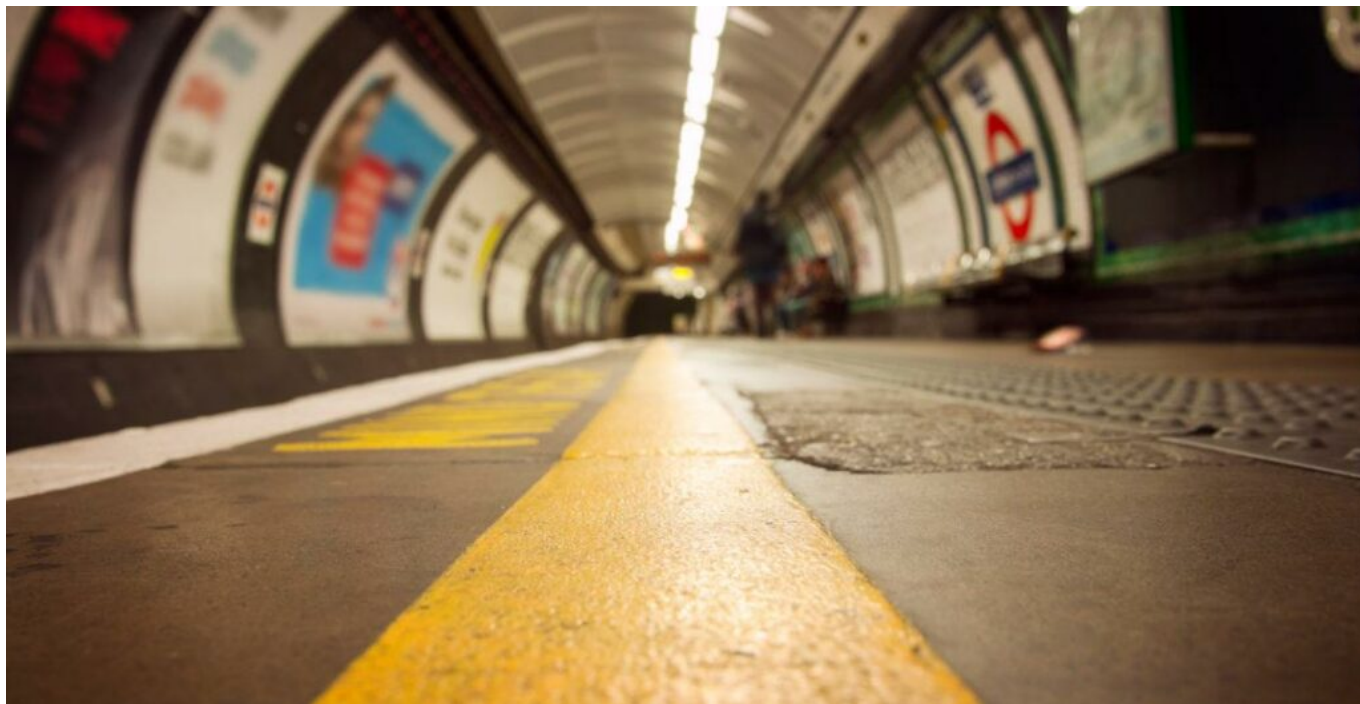


# Railfuture calls on scrapping of London Travelcard to be put on hold

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Railfuture is calling on TfL and the London Mayor to put their plans for stopping sale of the London Travelcard on indefinite hold – at least until the flaws in the contactless system have been sorted out.

“There needs to be a replacement solution for those who struggle to use contactless.” said Neil Middleton, a Railfuture Director specialising in fares and ticketing. “If they go ahead with this, they’re going to shoot themselves in the foot – passenger numbers will go down because of the unsuitability and complexity for contactless for many. Whilst we understand Mr Khan’s desire for more income, we can’t see this actually happening – he may get more revenue per passenger, but we think so many less passengers will travel that he (really TfL), National Rail and London’s Visitor economy will all lose.

“Contactless is appealing to many; I myself do use it from time to time and in the right circumstance it is better value (and more convenient) than a Travelcard. But a family of 4 travelling from my local station to London for a weekend out could see their fare rise from £26.30 to £76.40 [note 1]. The reality of that situation is that TfL’s income would really be zero, as that family will decide to go elsewhere. Yes, that family can mitigate much of the increase – eg by spending £30 and waiting for up to a month for a Child Zip Oyster, but no one’s going to do that unless they go to London regularly.”

Ian Brown, CBE, Railfuture’s Policy Director went on to comment “Contactless isn’t yet fit for purpose – it’s still for individuals, not groups, such as families, nor does it yet support Railcards. Also it’s exclusionary – not everyone has debit/credit cards (or any spending power on a card) and if you are not “fully digital” checking spend, getting refunds etc becomes difficult to impossible.”

Chris Page, Railfuture Chair said “TfL really needs to pause this idea of abolishing the Travelcard now. Contactless isn’t yet fit for purpose as an alternative, but it could be in time. That development work needs to happen first”.

“This proposal is another example of the creeping digitalisation of London’s Transport network. For many, that’s a distinct plus, but for some it is a real challenge. London Travelwatch’s paper on Digital Exclusion comments ‘1.5 million Londoners are being left behind by a digital-first approach to transport’. It’s essential that these Londoners, and others in the same situation throughout the UK are looked after properly.”

Neil went on to comment “I think this will be a political decision. We urge all Travelcard users to write to their MP to ask for them to lobby for retention to be negotiated between HM Treasury (as owners of the National Rail revenue stream), the Department for Transport and TfL. And if you live in London, write to your London Assembly member as well. Our website has useful resources to help understand the impact on individuals and families – the consultation is open until 23 May.”

[You can read Railfuture’s full briefing paper by clicking here.](#)

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