



Association of Train Operating Companies

ATOC's mission is to work for passenger rail operators in serving customers and supporting a prosperous railway. We do this in three main ways:

- > Running services which are mission-critical to passenger operators, such as National Rail Enquiries and the Rail Settlement Plan
- > Managing major commercial arrangements where a collective approach delivers benefits for passengers, including railcards and promotional fares
- > Striving to create a positive business environment for train companies, by building strong relationships within the rail industry, the broader business community and key policy makers.

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If you have any questions, or would like to find out more about train companies' work, please contact Andy Taylor in ATOC Public Affairs on 020 7841 8022 or email andy.taylor@atoc.org

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Published by the Association of Train Operating Companies, September 2010.

Passenger rail – the way forward

Keeping Britain moving is the pride and passion of train companies. Our goal is that rail should play an even more important and positive role in national life over the next 25 years.

Train Operators
Working Together **ATOC**

We want to work with others to:

- > continue improving passenger satisfaction so that at least 9 out of 10 customers say they are happy with their journey
- > carry twice as many passengers as today, faster and with ever better links to other types of transport
- > deliver services that are among the most reliable and safe in Europe
- > put the railways on a more sustainable financial footing through attracting more passengers and greater efficiency
- > help Britain tackle climate change by cutting carbon dioxide emissions.

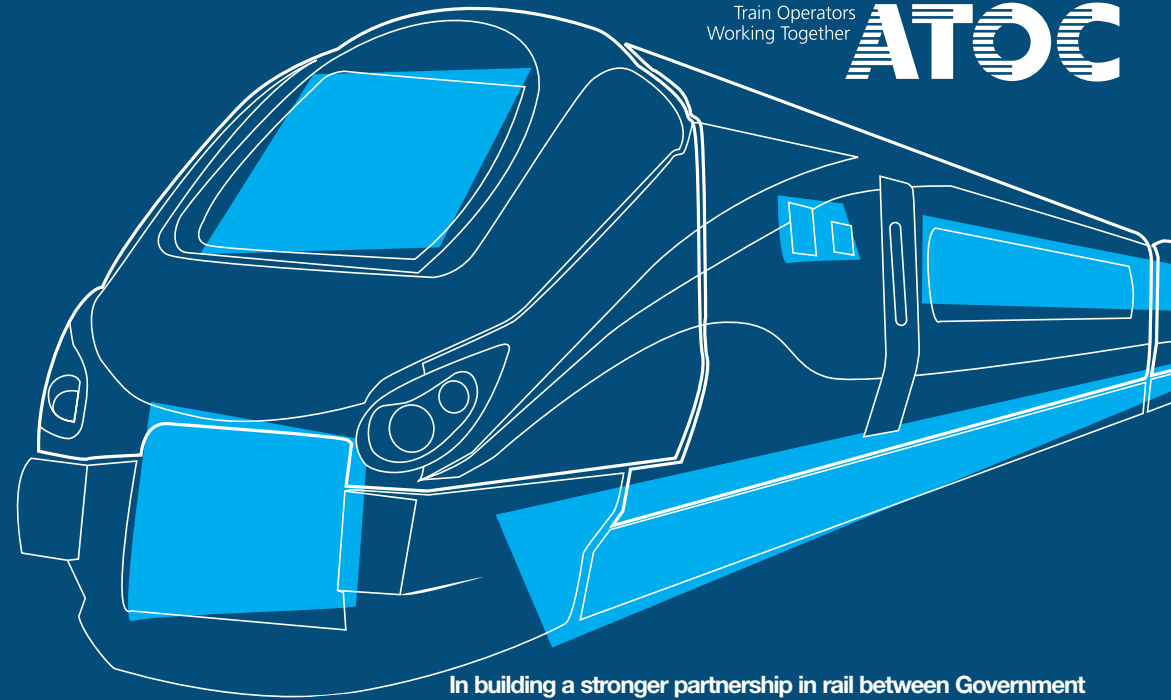
The railways have already achieved a great deal since privatisation. Train trips have boomed by 60% in the past 15 years. Train travel is ever safer*, and customer satisfaction and punctuality have never been higher.

Train companies offer a range of affordable fares. Like flying, there are some expensive fares, but in fact more than four out of five passengers travel on some kind of discounted ticket. The average fare actually paid by passengers has fallen in real terms since 2000. On average, the price paid for a single trip today is around £5**.

We want the railways to achieve greater success by becoming even more customer-focused and cost-efficient. The way forward is to make greater use of train operators' proven expertise and enterprise as part of a stronger partnership between the public and private sectors.

Government should focus more on setting strategic goals and investing in the wider benefits which rail can bring, and less on operational detail.

Train companies are ready to commit to take on more responsibility for delivering improvements which customers want, at lower cost than now.



In building a stronger partnership in rail between Government and the private sector, our commitment as train companies is to:

- > run trains ever more reliably, improve information to our customers, and make it easier for them to buy the right ticket for their journey
- > invest and innovate in providing services as part of a new approach to franchising, taking on greater responsibilities where it is effective to do so
- > drive down industry costs and so reduce the pressure on passengers and taxpayers, by working with our partners in the railways.

For its part, we need to see the Government commit to:

- > take forward its programme to reform franchising as part of a wider package of change, including steps to make sure track and train work more effectively together
- > smarter regulation which combines protection for customers on service levels and fares with greater freedom for train companies to respond to market conditions
- > sustain public investment and attract private finance, thus supporting a successful and green economy while avoiding the start-stop spending patterns of the past, which cost the nation more in the long run.

Action is needed in four areas of policy to achieve this and so deliver a better deal for passengers and taxpayers.

Franchise reform

We need longer, smarter franchises. Franchises of 15 years and more already exist: wider use would increase the incentive to private sector investment and innovation in customer improvements. Government needs to return to its earlier practice of setting out key service requirements, and then step back to allow train companies to find the best ways of meeting their commitments and attracting ever more customers.

A role for train companies over track as well as trains

We need to build on welcome moves to give operators more responsibility for stations by bringing the management of trains and track closer together. Stronger alignment between train companies and Network Rail at local level is key to bringing much-needed extra commercial discipline and customer focus in managing the rail network. Built on common incentives and transparency of income and costs, in some cases this could possibly go as far as actual integration of operations.

Targeted, sustained investment

We need to keep investing in network and train capacity as demand for rail travel is growing. With investment part-funded by Government, plans need to be reviewed in the current climate to increase the focus on schemes that are in the best interests of passengers and taxpayers. Priority should be given to projects which will generate revenue and ease overcrowding hotspots – and to reviewing the scope of other schemes where possible.

Smarter fares policy

We need a more flexible approach to regulation as part of a strategy to reduce taxpayer support for rail and improve the attraction of rail compared with other modes. Protection for customers is needed when there are few other realistic options to catching the train. But there is also a need to allow fares to reflect better the different investment needs and demand for travel in different parts of the network and at different times.