

Getting to the station

Interested parties

Local authorities

Train operators

Transport for London

Passengers

The police

Foreword

Recent years have shown passenger demand on the rail network, particularly in London, increase dramatically. At the same time public transport is being encouraged to carry more passengers as Government and local authorities seek to minimise the impact on the environment and to better manage congestion and capacity on the roads.

A vital, and often neglected, link in the chain allowing passengers to access the rail network is the station itself, and how passengers actually get to the station.

As the statutory passenger watchdog for the London area we have noted increasing concern about the level and quality of facilities for good access to stations, particularly around car parking. Bearing this in mind, and noting the lack of other literature or research to give guidance on best practice for both car parking and other forms of access to stations, London TravelWatch decided to consult widely with passenger groups, local authorities, Transport for London, train operators, the police and others in order to produce an informed view on what would constitute an ideal template for better station access.

This publication is the result of that process.

I believe that its recommendations provide an important tool to help bring forward schemes that will not only improve access to stations but also improve the facilities that passengers so clearly need.

Brian Cooke

Chairman

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Executive summary

Accessibility of railway stations in terms of walking, cycling, public transport and car is fundamental to the success or otherwise of the rail network and of Local Authority Local Transport and Implementation Plans.

Such accessibility (and particularly by car) is an increasing part of our workload in terms of correspondence from the public and from stakeholders within and without the industry.

Recommendations from the report include:

Secure car parking

1 Supporting and encouraging the adoption of car park industry standards for secure car parking by the rail industry at all places where the industry manages such an asset.

2 Clarifying lines of responsibility for rail station car park crime between the British Transport Police and other forces, and that there should be an exploration as to whether responsibility for car parks should be transferred to local police forces.

Travel planning

3 Supporting improved car parking at rail stations where this can act as a means of reducing overall car trip length. This will depend on local circumstances and would for example mean that at stations in inner London we would not support car parking, but in outer London and beyond that we would.

4 Acceptance that for the present the feasibility of the retrospective introduction of 'Travel Plans' for individual stations is not possible. However, where development of a station is envisaged which would have a significant impact on travel patterns and behaviour then a 'Travel Plan' should be adopted.

5 Encouraging the provision of secure cycle storage at, and of safe and secure walking and cycling access routes to, all rail stations in its area.

6 That the number of disabled parking spaces at railway stations in relation to the overall size of the car park should be as set out in Appendix A and that the Blue Badge national scheme is the basis on which such spaces may be used. Consideration should also be made for additional disabled parking spaces at stations with step free access over and above this standard.

7 That all rail operators should adopt company 'Travel Plans' for all their staff travel, thereby setting an example to other companies whose business they wish to attract and benefit from.

Alternative land use

8 Clarification from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on what they regard as a proper definition of 'key worker' housing and to apprise them of the situation regarding the position of 'Transport Workers'.

Development planning

9 Supporting the principle that all stations outside of London Travelcard Zone 1 should have where possible some form of limited short stay parking of up to 20 minutes duration.

10 That there should be a sequential test used to evaluate proposed development of rail stations which would give priority of land use in the following order:

- a) Pedestrian access
- b) Cycling access and secure storage
- c) Public Transport interchange
- d) Taxi ranks
- e) Car parking for people with disabilities
- f) Operational and emergency service parking and access
- g) Alternative land use
- h) 'Kiss and Ride' short term parking
- i) General car parking.

11 Welcoming the proposals put forward by Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames for the development of Kempton Park as a Park and Ride station, and the expansion of car parking by London Underground at Hatton Cross, Epping, Stanmore and Hillingdon subject to their compliance with the sequential test as outlined in recommendation 10. In terms of policy we believe all station access issues should be considered as part of the Rail Corridor Plans being developed by Transport for London (TfL).

12 That when reviewing road signage, Local Authorities and Highway Agencies should give consideration to enhanced directions to rail stations with car parks.

Enforcement and ticketing standards

13 Supporting the interpretation of day of issue validity for car park tickets issued at railway stations to be concurrent with the train service operational day from first until last trains or if an all night service is provided from 0401 to 0400 or to the London Underground standard of 0431 to 0430.

14 That as a matter of policy all station car parks on Mondays to Fridays should have an area available only to Season Ticket holders before 0930, but after 0930 any unoccupied spaces may be occupied by other users. In terms of space availability we recognise that station car parking is different in nature to that of either off or on street parking, in that turnover during the operational day is likely to be much less than conventional car parks and so the practicality of pricing for 10% availability is questionable.

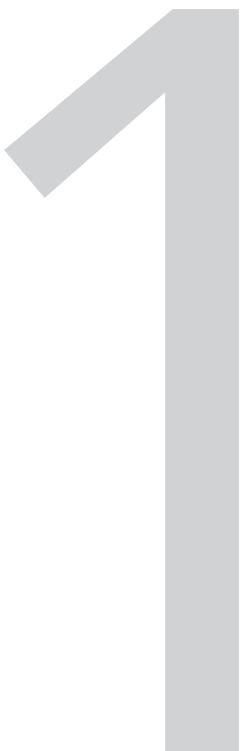
15 Encouraging the development and expansion of alternative means of payment, ticketing and display mechanisms for rail station car parks, where these offer clear benefits to passengers.

16 That in relation to pricing of car parking and its relationship to London Travelcard Zones, whilst in principle it would be preferable to have a structure linked to Travelcard Zones, in practice car parking prices will more likely be determined by local factors and so it may not be possible or desirable to adopt such a structure.

The importance of access

This report is a discussion paper seeking to clarify and enhance the London TravelWatch's policies and thinking around access to rail stations within our area, but particularly focusing on availability and pricing of parking space at or near rail stations.

Members were asked to consider and receive this report, which took account of comments about its contents after consultation on the draft policy which was approved by the Service Development and Planning Sub-committee on the 15th December 2004, with rail user groups, adjacent Rail Passengers Committees, local authorities, the Automobile Association, the RAC Foundation, Commission for Integrated Transport, British Parking Association, Cycle Touring Club, the London Cycling Campaign, the British Motorcyclists Federation, the London Taxi Drivers Association, Transport for London, the London Assembly, Members of Parliament, Train Operating Companies, the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA), Network Rail, the British Transport Police and other police forces.



Background

London TravelWatch is aware that car parking standards have become an increasing part of our correspondence workload both in the casework and in policy development in response to consultations from outside bodies. It is therefore appropriate to consider this issue in a more general sense – encompassing all the ways of reaching rail stations, so that the principles can be applied to the specific instances when these arise in casework and policy issues.

Parking at railway stations has traditionally been provided on the basis of the availability of railway land not required for other railway purposes or suitable for redevelopment. As such, station parking (with the exception of dedicated 'Parkway' type stations) has not been considered as part of an overall transport planning strategy. This has resulted in an ad-hoc approach to providing car parking, largely favouring locations where some form of rail activity has ceased eg former goods yards, engine sheds, carriage sidings, junctions for closed rail routes etc. Constant change of management of the rail network has added a further malaise, with varying levels of security, pricing and quality of provision across the network.

"A consequence of the approach above is that adequate parking is currently not being provided by operators. Along the Chiltern Line there are areas where improved services are increasing passenger loadings year on year by 15 –18% with no additional car parking provided 'till after the event', ie cars overflow into the surrounding residential areas. Car park planning/provision has to be part of the franchise requirement; the franchise ought to also insist that alternative transport strategies be put in place."

Tony Shields

London TravelWatch member

The SRA requires that station car parks should meet the standards of the Secure Car Parks scheme run by the Association of Chief Police Officers and other bodies. However, there are no set standards with regard to:

- pricing (as station operators' revenue from car parking does not form part of their franchise payments)
- enforcement (of parking payment, abandoned vehicles etc.)
- what facilities are provided at each car park
- how car parks impact on the surrounding road network or environment.

There is no timescale attached to the implementation of these standards to existing car parks. Casework highlights a great deal of inconsistency across the rail network often characterised by a 'feast and famine' approach to the enforcement of parking charges and regulations with the result that passengers are often penalised when there is a sudden 'purge' of activity.



Questions to rail operators and the Strategic Rail Authority

How many car parks currently comply with the secure car park standards and would it be possible to attach a timescale to plans to achieve this?

Should any proportion of revenue from car parking be included in rail operators franchise payments/income?

Should revenue from car parking be 'ring fenced' to improving car park and station access infrastructure?

What standards do you currently have with regard to pricing, enforcement, facilities provided and impact on surrounding road network and environment?

Should there be a railway industry wide standard for these?

Answers from rail operators and the Strategic Rail Authority

Chiltern – we do not have any car parks accredited to the secure car park standards scheme. Our experience has shown that at car parks such as ours which are already very secure, and have very little recorded crime, it is very difficult to meet the criteria to gain accreditation. We believe that our car parks are already secure – and doubt that accreditation would make any material difference to their security. Car parking revenue is one of the few unregulated elements of a franchise operator's income. Channelling revenues back to the SRA via franchise subsidy lines would, in our view, simply 'tax' and so discourage further car park expansion and improvement schemes. Whilst we can appreciate the theoretical case for ring fencing car park revenues to channel back into improvement schemes, it would in reality be difficult to do this in any meaningful way. Some car parks need regular expansion and improvements – others are in a stable and satisfactory state: ring fencing income would serve to prevent operators channelling income at the areas where attention is most needed – this can either be car parking or other improvements to stations and train services. We contract our car park management out to Vinci – but we still set the level of charges. For our fully staffed car parks, the all day charge is £4.50 although this is reduced after 10am to £2, and is free at weekends for all stations except High Wycombe, Banbury and Aylesbury.

GNER – is working towards all their car parks having 'Safer Parking Award' accreditation. All car park revenue is included in the operator's franchise; therefore in bidding for the franchise this amount should be included. For GNER it is difficult at times to justify investment in car parks from the revenues received, however they do take into account the fact that by providing a car park they give access to an InterCity railway, which with its longer journey times and higher fares can justify the investment. Pricing should be on a locality basis.

Govia – Southern has no stations with an accredited secure car park. Thameslink has one station accredited (Luton Airport Parkway). However, Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) covers most car parks. No plans for extending accreditation. Car parking income is included in the business plan and is reflected in franchise payments and income. Our franchises have a profit share mechanism; such that good performance reduces the subsidy paid by the SRA. We do not believe car parking income should be ring fenced due to the nature of our profit share agreement. However, given that our parking supports the demand for rail travel we may, and do, spend more on specific car parks than their income would support. This is especially true when resurfacing, relighting or installation of CCTV is required. We currently set car park pricing centrally, and in doing so are mindful of retail price index, local car park pricing, demand for car parking at that station and the need for the prices to work effectively with car park machines. We subcontract the management of the car parks to Meteor who also operate many car parks at airports. This provides a consistent standard across all the car parks we charge for. We do not believe railway wide standards would be appropriate, unless they recognised a minimum service provision before charging could be applied.

LUL – all LU car parks have now achieved the Secure Parking Award following a comprehensive investment programme over the last five years covering CCTV, help points, surfacing, drainage, Pay and Display machines, fencing, height restrictors etc. There is one exception (Rickmansworth) where redevelopment of the site is due to start imminently. The replacement of the Secure Car Park Award by Safer Parking Award has complicated the position somewhat, and it is likely that in future the standards for LU car parks will reflect the new award. Car park revenue, like any other source of additional income, should be targeted to improve the public transport service as a whole. Whilst a proportion of this will clearly be needed to maintain and improve car parks, there should not be restrictions on what other projects it can be used for within the transport undertaking. LUL standards for pricing, enforcement, facilities provided and the impact on the surrounding road network and environment are set out in Appendix B.

South Eastern Trains – only Sevenoaks meets this standard. The current secure accreditation requirements state that each car park must have a help point installed. Sevenoaks was a trial location for the installation of a help point but there are currently no plans to extend the installation of help points in any other car parks. Our prices are set according to a number of factors including the availability of parking, the market rate for parking in the area and the standard of facilities available. As far as enforcement is concerned, we have a set patrolling schedule whereby each station is visited at least once a day on weekdays. Enforcement is undertaken by way of issuing penalty charge notices to anyone found to be in breach of one of the parking conditions (as displayed in each car park). As a company, we have now moved to a clamping as an exception policy, which is no longer used on a daily basis. Clamping is now used as a method of last resort to target persistent offenders or those parked in a hazardous way, eg blocking emergency access etc.

SRA – 118 Stations have Secure Station Scheme Accreditation. The SRA encourages accreditation to the security schemes (car park and stations) and some more recent franchise agreements do contain specific Key Performance Indicators in respect of station car parks and where relevant car park security – eg One currently has no car parks with secure accreditation but does have a franchise commitment to gain such for 30 car parks on their route before the end of the franchise. Car park income is taken into account generally in agreeing the overall franchise payment/subsidies along with all other considerations. We have no plans to require that car park revenue is ring fenced. There are many local factors that will determine the Train Operating Companies' (TOCs') car parking strategies and we consider a blanket approach would not be appropriate. Recent franchise agreements apply standards in relation to security at the same level as secure car park accreditation.

TfL Rail – not a TfL responsibility at present, although development of Silverlink Metro may involve some work in this area. TfL's approach at present is to ensure that our limited support for development goes across the board to ensure a safe and secure environment for the public on the railway network in London. In principle car parking income should be included in rail operators' franchise payments/income, although such revenue should not necessarily be narrowly focused on car parks as such. There should be standards with regard to pricing, enforcement and facilities provided but this should take into account local circumstances.

Virgin Trains – 80% of our car parking facilities have 'secure accreditation'. VWC have designed a toolkit handbook to cover the requirements of our car parks. We are currently assessing pricing policy and enforcement and are to introduce a revenue protection policy very shortly.

*"Fully support the proposal that all station car parks should be to the Secure Car Park standards, and to include issues below."
Mark Prisk MP and constituents*

Other issues include:

- spaces not marked out clearly (leading to clamping and fines)
- poor surfaces
- accumulated rubbish
- poor lighting
- lack of information on prices and time limits
- poor quality tickets that fade or curl up after a few hours
- lack of 'ownership' of complaints by parking operators and train operating companies alike
- use of car parks for anti-social behaviour
- damage to vehicles by car park infrastructure
- faulty ticket machines/machines unable to give change.

Question to rail operators and the Strategic Rail Authority

Should there be rail industry standards for these items and how easy would it be to implement them?

Answers from rail operators and the Strategic Rail Authority

Chiltern – we do not believe there would be any advantage in setting an industry wide standard for car parking – we are happy to set our own standards, which we believe our customers expect.

LUL – believes that these issues are best managed by the individual companies concerned, taking into account local circumstances. However, LUL would not be averse to some minimum industry standards, although these should ideally be at the level of the car parking industry as a whole rather than specifically for railways.

SRA – no standards are proposed with regard to the management of car parking areas but the SRA Code of Practice 'Train and Station services for disabled passengers' requires that disabled parking spaces are marked clearly.

TfL Rail – should use parking industry standards.

Question to local authorities

In your area do you know of any poorly maintained rail car parks, and have you had any difficulties in persuading operators to keep their car parks in good order or to police them against anti-social behaviour?

Answers from local authorities

Bexley – car parks at Bexley stations appear to be generally satisfactory based on the lack of complaint that we receive. Car parks such as the Sidcup car park which experience high usage have generally benefited from a good working system, although there were a few minor complaints about advertising when increased car parking charges were introduced.

Buckinghamshire – in Buckinghamshire all the car parks on the Chiltern line are well maintained and, with the exception of the 'halts', are manned at least from 0600 to 1200 each day. Denham and Haddenham are manned 24 hours. Chiltern Railways not only keep their car parks in good order they are, wherever possible expanding them. In some cases, such as Beaconsfield by installing tier over the top of the existing car park. The 'halts' have little or no parking.

Chiltern District Council – not aware of any problems.

Guildford – none known.

Hammersmith and Fulham – no.

Royal Borough of Kingston – rail car parks in our area are maintained and don't have any anti-social behaviour problems of note.

Redbridge – none of note. The three car parks predominantly used by rail commuters in Redbridge (High Road Seven Kings, Goodmayes Road, Station Road Chadwell Heath) are operated by the council and generally do not suffer from poor maintenance or anti-social behaviour. Ilford station does not have a specific car park but is close to a number of different public car parks in the town centre.

Tandridge – in general the car parks are maintained in a satisfactory manner. However, acts of anti-social behaviour have taken place in recent years.

Wandsworth – the only station with parking (Wandsworth Common) has benefited from recent improvements to security and cycle parking as part of the borough's Safer Stations partnership. Maintenance is not a problem.

West Sussex – no particular problems, but have contributed to CCTV and other enhancements.

London Underground observed that a number of local authority owned car parks near to their stations do not benefit from the investment or maintenance as do those managed by LUL (eg Ruislip Manor).

"Many of the stations in my constituency of Enfield Southgate are experiencing problems with crime and anti-social behaviour."
Stephen Twigg MP

Due to the specific nature of the industry BTP work within, a number of the railway specific offences are classed as non-notifiable. The Home Office publishes regular crime statistics, but due to the fact that BTP are not a Home Office police force, our crime figures are only published in the annual statistical bulletin along with the other non Home Office police forces. BTP are happy to provide crime data to external organisations if requested.

Essex and Hertfordshire police confirm the BTP response though Herts will record the crime as an 'OF' or other force responsibility.

"Station car park crime ought to be published as part of the overall crime figures for an area. Should station car park crime be a BTP responsibility? At Gerrards Cross the experience of my wife and I was that it was not possible to get the BTP to the scene of the crime that evening!"

Tony Shields
London TravelWatch member

"The BTP report that crime is unacceptably high in many railway station car parks as a result of miscreants knowing that most of the vehicles are left for the whole day – more than 10% of all crime recorded by the BTP involves a vehicle."

British Parking Association

"Policing of car parking needs to be reconsidered so that matters are dealt with promptly and there are not disputes over boundaries between the local police and the BTP."

Mark Prisk MP and constituents

Recommendation 1

In the light of the above discussion in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.4, that London TravelWatch should support and encourage the adoption of car park industry standards for secure car parking by the rail industry at all places where the industry manages such an asset.

An interesting situation which came to light as a result of a piece of casework, is that crime committed on railway property (and not just against cars) is not included in the crime statistics for local police forces as it is considered to be a British Transport Police (BTP) matter. This could mean a considerable under reporting of car crime in certain areas where rail station car parks form a large proportion of car parking places and where naturally criminals would go to commit their crimes.

Questions to the British Transport Police and other police authorities

Is there an easy way of recording and reporting crime statistics on railway property alongside that of local police forces so as to give more accurate area crime statistics?

Answers from the British Transport Police and other police authorities

BTP records all crimes and incidents that have been committed within our jurisdiction, which includes all incidents and crimes committed on or against railway / London Underground / Docklands Light Railway/ Croydon Tramlink property. BTP records two types of crimes: notifiable and non-notifiable offences. Local police forces only record notifiable offences as defined by the Home Office.

Recommendation 2

The responses received above seem to confirm our suspicions in this area. It is recommended that London TravelWatch should press for the clarification of responsibility for car park crime and that there should be an exploration as to whether responsibility for car parks should be transferred to local police forces.

The purpose of car parking at stations

The purpose of car parking at rail stations is to allow interchange between car and rail travel, and to encourage the use of rail for the journeys to which it is most appropriate ie long distance journeys to and from major centres of population and activity. Providing car parking at rail stations is an important means of reducing road traffic levels and encouraging the use of sustainable transport. However, car parking should be viewed as only part of the range of options for access to the railway and not as the sole means of access. Obviously in some areas car parking will have greater importance than in others.

Question to local authorities

In your Local Transport Plan (LTP)/Local Implementation Plan (LIP)/Local Development Framework (LDF) what importance do you give to improving car parking at Rail Stations as a means of reducing overall car trip length?

Should this be considered more important than improving access to rail stations by other forms of travel?

Answers from local authorities

Bexley – is supportive of station car parks and although as an alternative we have been able to introduce controlled parking zones easily around stations, in some areas it is a challenge to provide bus stops closer to station hubs in order to maximise public transport and interchange opportunities rather than encourage car use to the station. In such areas we encourage other forms of travel as an alternative. Rail stations in the borough are generally located in the heart of (or reasonable distances from) town centres (with the exceptions of Bexleyheath, Sidcup and Belvedere) and associated car parks benefit from our parking strategy which aims to contribute towards competitiveness, regeneration and environmental quality in the borough. This would imply, providing sufficient car parking to ensure borough town centres remain attractive and competitive; protecting and enhancing the environment by taking parked vehicles off the street; ensuring the availability of sufficient car parking to meet the needs of access to jobs, services and recreation; balancing local parking needs with the duty to facilitate the safe movement of traffic; protecting and enhancing the environment and enforcing parking restrictions effectively to ensure the optimum use of the highway network.

Buckinghamshire – it is accepted that in some rural areas the only means of transport to the railway stations is by car. Our aims in the LTP are to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking and so reduce congestion.

Guildford – we are currently at the early stages of preparing our local development framework. The core strategy will contain topic areas such as transport. Feedback from the public will determine whether there is demand for improved car parking at rail stations. Current local plan does not have any policies relating to car parking at stations.

Hammersmith and Fulham – as an inner London borough, we do not wish to encourage car parking at stations, as this is likely to increase road traffic and reduce revenue to rail operators, as most car drivers would park further out and the rail component of their journeys would be longer. Our policies are consistent with the LIP guidance and the Mayor's Transport Strategy. It is much more important for us to improve walking, cycling and bus access to stations.

Kingston – In our LIP we are most concerned with improving and encouraging non-car access to stations. We would not expect more or better car parking to reduce overall car trip length in the case of our stations.



Redbridge – as part of the draft LIP, a parking review was carried out in the vicinity of each main line station in the borough (Ilford to Chadwell Heath) in order to establish parking capacity and demand. Providing adequate parking capacity at stations is important in encouraging people to travel longer distances by train, but improving access to rail stations by other modes of transport is considered of at least equal importance. Encouraging public transport usage within the borough is the key aim of the LIP.

Tandridge – too early to give response.

Tower Hamlets – borough supports the use of sustainable modes of transport and has low levels of car ownership and high dependency on public transport. Therefore considers improving access to stations by other modes more important than providing parking.

Wandsworth – improving (as in increasing) car parking at stations is not seen as desirable in this borough, as increasing car parking at stations this far in London would be likely to result in a net increase in traffic on local roads. Improving access by other modes – walking, cycling and bus – is considered more important.

West Sussex – car parking is not prioritised over improving access to rail stations by some other form of travel. We are working with rail operators to provide more cycle storage at rail stations (with improved lighting and CCTV).

Recommendation 3

In view of the above responses London TravelWatch should give support to improved car parking at rail stations where this can act as a means of reducing overall car trip length. This will depend on local circumstances and would for example mean that at stations in inner London we would not support car parking, but in outer London and beyond that we would.

Sustainable access to stations

All stations have by definition a catchment area from which their customers are drawn. These customers will make their way to or from the station by a variety of modes. The provision or not of particular types of accessibility will either increase or reduce the potential catchment area accordingly. Similarly, enhancing one modal choice may impact on the use of others eg increasing the number of car spaces may result in fewer trips by foot, cycle or public transport. Train operators should know how their passengers are arriving at each station they operate and where these passengers are coming from.

Question to rail operators and the Strategic Rail Authority

Do you know the current catchment areas of the stations for which you are responsible for, and the approximate modal share of passengers arriving there? What use do you make of this information in planning services?

Answers from rail operators and the Strategic Rail Authority

Chiltern – it is not possible to generalise; the catchment areas for stations vary massively. Stations such as Warwick Parkway and Haddenham & Thame Parkway have massive regional catchment areas, whereas other smaller stations have predominantly local catchment areas. At many of our stations, particularly those not in town centres, the majority of passengers arrive by road (car?).

GNER – approximately 20-30 miles radius of each station.

Govia – We have good knowledge based on surveys, counts and season ticket records. However, we have little knowledge of the residential location of those purchasing car park tickets via machines. We have quite precise information on car parking as a proportion of total users.

LUL – with over 250 stations it is difficult to provide information here on catchment area and modal share for each specific station, although some of this information is in principle available. However, as a general comment the catchment area is generally larger for stations at the end of lines (and certain other key 'gateways' such as North Greenwich) than for suburban locations serving local communities.

SRA – believe there may be merit in investigating the creation of residential catchments for each station for which residents may apply for car park permits to preclude rail heading.

TfL Rail – do have some data available through the London Area Transport Survey results (LATS), this however does mainly cover public transport journeys.

VWC – we commissioned a survey some time ago to look at catchment areas for our stations. This was based on information given by customers using our stations. Our most recent surveys have put the emphasis on duration of stay and numbers per vehicle.

In recent years planning requirements for new developments have increasingly required the use of 'Travel Plans' to reduce the impact of developments on local roads and transport by encouraging the use where possible of sustainable transport. It would be possible to adapt this methodology easily to do a similar plan for an existing station. London TravelWatch would want to see a travel plan for any station where there is a significant shortage of available car parking, in the first instance, before consideration is given to expanding the number of spaces available.



Question to operators and local authorities

Do you see any merit in extending the 'Travel Plan' concept to existing stations, and would you be prepared to co-operate with other bodies in preparing and implementing such plans? Would the addition of 'Travel Plans' for rail stations add value to a local authority's LTP/LIP?

Answers from operators and local authorities

Chiltern – we do already offer some alternatives to driving to the station: Princes Risborough has the Chinnor rail link: Bicester North has the Taxibus, High Wycombe the Cressex Express and Aylesbury the Silver Rider. Most of the schemes are joint ventures between the local authority and ourselves and they do make a useful contribution to freeing up car parking space for other passengers.

Govia – Travel plans are really relevant to employers. We work closely with BAA at Gatwick and have provided discounted rail travel and car parking for airport employees. We have had discussions with local authorities but these have not produced any firm plans. It is difficult to see how travel plans could be applied individually to stations.

LUL – Travel plans are a matter for TfL.

TfL Rail – in principle the 'Travel Plan' concept is sound.

VWC – the 'Travel Plan' concept seems very sound, and we give full support to any plan that encourages the use of public transport to stations.

Bexley – welcomes and recognises the possible merits in extending the 'Travel Plan' concept to existing rail stations. However, we will tread cautiously drawing attention to the possibilities of conflict with other transport and planning policies. A carefully prepared concept (with the emphasis on interchange schemes) would greatly assist in reducing car use. We will consider working with other parties subject to available funding. Such a scheme would add value to our LIP in principle and it would be useful in making TOCs contribute positively towards transport planning initiatives around rail stations.

Guildford – There may be some merit in extending the 'Travel Plan' concept to existing stations, particularly the large ones. We would be prepared to co-operate with Surrey County Council and other bodies in preparing and implementing such plans.

Hammersmith and Fulham – This is an interesting idea but it seems to have practical difficulties. Who would be responsible for it? The most appropriate body would be the train operators, but my experience in dealing with them suggests that they would not be willing or able to commit resources to developing, implementing and monitoring the plan.

Kingston – a travel plan for a station would add value to our travel plan strategy. However, it requires some degree of self-interest by the organisation and a champion if it is to be effective. It is doubtful whether the train operator would treat the plan as a priority so, while we would be happy to co-operate with them, effective plans may not be easily achieved as you imply.

Redbridge – whilst developing travel plans for rail stations is likely to be worthwhile, their initial implementation may prove more difficult than for conventional travel plans. Where the necessary resources are available (eg a dedicated travel plan co-ordinator is in place), the viability of implementing travel plans at stations could be investigated. Where it could be demonstrated that a travel plan for a rail station would be viable, it would be a valuable addition to LIPs.

Tandridge – there could be merit in extending the 'travel plan' concept to stations. However, any involvement by the council would be subject to constraints including resource implications.

Wandsworth – travel plans for stations might be a valid concept for stations in other areas, but not this borough where there is not a great need to reduce car access to stations as parking in the vicinity is restricted anyway.

West Sussex – there may be some merit in this. We would be happy to work with other bodies that have found the local rail operator unreceptive to Travel Plan initiatives (eg discounted fares for employees of organisations with Travel Plans, providing additional space for cycles on trains etc). Significant input would also be required from employers of commuters. There is potential to add value if employers and rail operators are fully on board.

Recommendation 4

In view of the comments above London TravelWatch accepts that for the present the feasibility of the retrospective introduction of 'Travel Plans' for individual stations is not possible. However, where development of a station is envisaged which would have a significant impact on travel patterns and behaviour then we would wish that a 'Travel Plan' should be adopted.

In terms of sustainability, it is clear that modes of transport other than the private car should take priority in importance of access, or alternative forms of land use should be considered before a decision is taken to use or continue to use land for car parking. This would suggest a sequential test, which could also be the basis of 'Travel Plans' for individual stations along the following lines:

Pedestrian (and wheelchair) access – safe and direct walking routes to and from points within walking distance of the station. Our casework highlights poor lighting, un-cleared rubbish, overgrown vegetation and poor road/pavement surfaces outside stations. All these give little incentive for passengers to arrive by foot.

Cycle access – safe and direct cycling routes to and from points within cycling distance of the station and appropriate secure cycle and motorcycle storage at the station. Ideally such storage at stations should be within the sight of the public and station staff to minimise the risk of theft and vandalism. Our casework highlights that there is a lack of storage facilities at many stations – especially at central London termini, and more generally for motorcycles.

Questions to local authorities and Transport for London

Do your walking and cycling strategies include rail stations in the strategic network of cycle routes and footpaths?

For stations in your area, are there any simple small scale schemes which could extend the walking/cycling catchment area? (eg Foot and cycle path links, extension of footways on roads currently without them).

Answers from local authorities and Transport for London

Bexley – our strategy for the cycle and walking network is to serve local modes and stations, and we have schemes which will provide better cycle links to Bexleyheath, Welling and Barnehurst stations from the London Cycle Network+ route between Crayford and Greenwich. There is scope for small scale schemes from stations and we have aspirations for walking and cycling links between Slade Green and Bexleyheath stations via Barnehurst station and Bexleyheath town centre.

Buckinghamshire – are included and network is being expanded. None that spring to mind.

Guildford – both the Guildford Joint Walking and Cycling Strategies recognise the importance of having good links with railway stations. There are a number of schemes identified to extend the walking/cycling catchment areas of the stations in our area. At present no specific schemes have been identified in the Walking Strategy but it is anticipated that they would be.

Hammersmith and Fulham – yes, stations are included and yes, we have included schemes in our borough spending plan and the draft LIP.

Kingston – yes, stations are included and yes, we have included schemes in our borough spending plan and the draft LIP.

Redbridge – incorporated into the LIP. Improvements to the walking and cycling environment, including access to stations, are suggested and implemented on a rolling basis, often as a result of regular public transport and cycling liaison group meetings. To take some examples, the pavement approaching Ilford station is planned for re-paving and season ticketed cycle lockers are planned to be located near Chadwell Heath and Seven Kings station.

Richmond – The walking and cycling strategies both include stations as part of their strategic networks. Within the borough there is potential for the development of small scale schemes at both Barnes and Mortlake that could extend the walking/cycling catchments of these stations. These projects include improved lighting and pedestrian/cycling access across Barnes Common and better access at Mortlake station.

Surrey/Tandridge – all stations in Tandridge have cycle parking facilities at them. We are currently working to identify key stations within the district with good links to the cycle network to establish better facilities at these. The walking strategy aims to improve access in Tandridge by auditing all town centres and villages with local people and user groups. As most stations fall within a town centre or village, pedestrian access to these facilities will be improved as a part of this strategy.

TfL Rail – agree these are important considerations.

Wandsworth – rail stations are among the most important destinations for people on foot or bicycle, hence improvements to routes accessing stations are considered a priority.

West Sussex – yes. We intend to make interchange improvements at a number of stations during the forthcoming LTP period.

“Mr Prisk commented on the number of letters he has received highlighting the need for additional cycle storage facilities particularly on the Hertford North branch and other areas of his constituency including Bishops Stortford (including a complaint that covered cycle parking had been removed at Hertford North). There was also concern about safe walking routes for lone women during the hours of darkness.”

Mark Prisk MP

“The provision of adequate and secure motorcycle and cycle parking facilities, protective clothing and helmet storage should be reviewed at all major public transport interchanges.”

British Parking Association

“A number of respondents noted that cycling may not be an attractive option in hilly areas.”

Other comments

Recommendation 5

That London TravelWatch should seek to encourage the provision of secure cycle storage at, and of safe and secure walking and cycling access routes to, all rail stations in its area. In addition, in view of the comments from Mark Prisk MP it is recommended that London TravelWatch contact One, WAGN and Hertfordshire County Council to see if additional cycle storage can be secured at stations in this area, and whether a covered storage area can be reinstated at Hertford North.

Public transport interchange – local public transport provides an important means of access to rail stations if it is properly planned and delivered. Within this a hierarchy of service should be pursued:

- That there is a maximum use of rail for the length of journey, so that at main stations for example passengers are encouraged to use their local station by a connecting service rather than by driving to the main station. (eg passengers from North West London using Watford Junction to go the Midlands, could travel from intermediate stations between Euston and Watford Junction)
- That the use of buses and light rail services is encouraged (eg East Croydon) and integrated ticketing such as the Bus Plus initiative
- That Demand Responsive Transport services should be encouraged (eg Bicester North Taxibus service)
- Taxis and Private Hire vehicles enable access to and continuation from stations to and from places, which are inaccessible by other modes.

Our casework highlights poor integration with bus services particularly outside Greater London, and there is some evidence that car parking has to be provided to substitute for poor evening (post 1800) bus services. This might suggest that better evening bus services in these areas could encourage modal shift in the journey to the rail station. A way to achieve this might be to include in franchise specifications a requirement to secure bus services where no service or inadequate commercial services exist at present. This may also need measures to reduce perceived personal safety risks on local public transport (such as recent projects co-ordinated by Transport for London at Clapham North/High Street, Seven Sisters and Lambeth North).

Where bus interchanges and taxi ranks are provided kerb heights need to be increased to enable better access by wheelchair accessible buses and taxis.

Recommendation 6

The kerb heights of boarding areas of bus interchanges and taxi ranks should be increased to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Question to local authorities outside of Greater London

Do you feel it is more important to promote local employment opportunities than to accommodate commuting to Greater London? If so, does this affect your prioritisation of tendered bus services, which connect into rail services linking to the capital? As part of a 'Travel Plan' process for stations in your area, would you consider tendering for additional connecting bus services? Have you considered or developed a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service based on a station in your area and, if not, would this be something you'd be interested in developing?

Answers from local authorities outside of Greater London

Buckinghamshire – Each are accommodated. We have 2 DRT schemes serving railway stations.

Guildford/Surrey – we do not seek to dictate as to whether local employment opportunities are more important than accommodating commuting to London. Therefore it does not affect our prioritisation of tendered bus services. In any event, we would not consider tendering for additional bus services connecting to rail stations due to budgetary pressures, which make it difficult for us to maintain the existing tendered network, let alone add to it. We once considered a DRT scheme based around Effingham Junction station and requested some funding towards it from the DfT. However, our request was turned down because it was not a priority. We have no further plans to develop DRT schemes based specifically on stations, though we remain keen to develop DRT schemes in general, some of which might serve stations as part of a wider remit (much as our Buses 4U buses already do in East Surrey).

Tandridge – both local and commuting employment activities are important. However, the fact that the promotion of local employment opportunities is clearly stated in the Council's objectives suggests that this has a higher priority than catering for commuters. Although no special action is currently being taken to prioritise tendered bus services, consideration could be given to tendering for additional services as part of a travel plan associated with the regeneration of the district's town centres. The Tandridge DRT 'Buses 4U' project of the East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership commenced on the 7th February 2005. It covers the whole of Tandridge, therefore any one of our stations can be requested as an origin or destination 0900 to 2300 Monday to Saturday and 0900 to 1600 Sundays.

Question to train operators

What barriers are there to promoting train to train connections to/from more local services? (eg competition considerations, agreement on fares, space in publicity)

Answers from train operators

Chiltern – in our view connections work best where there are frequent rail services, where the interchange station is well signed, and has staff on hand to help, and good facilities. For this reason we focus connections at Princes Risborough, Banbury and Leamington Spa.

Govia – we do not believe we experience many problems with train to train connections and we put in a lot of effort trying to make sure these work. A good example of this would be connections from South Eastern Trains services at Ashford for Rye.

A number of potential issues arise when considering the prospect of making the car element of journeys as short as possible, so as to link local with longer distance services.

These include:

- The percentage of rail journeys in scope.
- Customer action cannot be unduly forced. Car park and rail capacity at the interchange point will be major decision making criteria. There must therefore be some incentive to reduce the journey length or disincentive to drive further. The question is then what is done and who pays.
- Timetable connectivity is already considered as part of the planning process, as it makes commercial sense for as many local services as possible to connect with longer distance services.
- Questions of income transfer apply to this issue, because if people drive shorter distances through encouragement to do so, then the InterCity operator will lose car park revenue (assuming them to be the operator of the major station). The 'local' operator, however, stands to gain both car park and journey income. The case for InterCity operators to forego revenue would need to be addressed.
- Each circumstance has to be taken on its own merits. What if local station car parks were already essentially full, whereas interchange stations that tend to be larger were not? In this case complex cost benefit analysis would be required to ascertain the best course of action eg whether to extend local car parks, or not to discourage longer car journeys.

One – we operate a robust connectional policy in respect of main line services meeting other trains.

TfL Rail – the key issues here are performance and frequency. If connections are offered then they need to be honoured. Frequency of service must be such to attract passengers to the feeder service. The regulatory regime for attributing delays may need revision to reflect the desirability of ensuring connections are held.

"Reducing reliance on the use of cars to travel to a station could involve the use of motorcycles, cycles and walking instead. Sufficient bicycle and motorcycle parking facilities at rail stations are needed if more people are to be persuaded to transfer some of the journeys they currently make by car, thereby, reducing the demand for car parking spaces. The provision of Public Transport (including shared taxis and buses operating on flexible routes) could provide an alternative means of reaching a station especially for commuters who tend to travel at the same time each day."

British Parking Association

Another area of complaint concerns the conflict between taxis and other vehicles parked on station forecourts. This highlights the need for greater enforcement of both taxi rank provision and of casual illegal use of taxi facilities by other car drivers, and the appropriateness of the location of the taxi rank.

Question to local authorities

Are taxi ranks at stations in your area controlled by the Highway authority in your area or by the train operating company? Would handing control to the Highway authority enable better enforcement action to be taken against vehicles which should not be there or for breaches of discipline by taxi drivers? Would a common national standard for Taxi and Private Hire licensing be beneficial to passengers?

Would placing taxi ranks within the public highway increase the supply of taxis, by removing restrictive agreements with train operating companies? What proportion of the taxi/private hire fleet licensed in your area is accessible, and are you proposing to increase this proportion? Would provision of 'Kiss and Ride' facilities reduce casual illegal use of taxi ranks by other drivers?

Answers from local authorities

Bexley – handing control to the highway authority would enable improved enforcement action.

Buckinghamshire – in the main taxi ranks are on railway property. We are not aware of any breaches of discipline by taxi operators. The ability to ban taxi operators from the company premises is sufficient to keep order.

Guildford – taxi ranks at stations in the borough are controlled by the train operating company. Handing control to the highway authority would enable better enforcement action. A common national standard for Taxi and Private Hire Licensing would be beneficial to passengers. Approximately 20% of the taxi/private hire fleet is accessible. All new Taxis (plate) are required to be accessible. Provision of 'Kiss and Ride' facilities would reduce illegal use of taxi ranks by other drivers.

Kingston – TfL control a taxi rank outside Surbiton station from which taxi drivers queue to enter the station forecourt. Use of the forecourt is not really allowed but is tolerated by SWT.

Redbridge – the only taxi rank in Redbridge is located adjacent to Ilford station and is controlled by the local authority. Formal provision in the form of taxi ranks is unlikely to be required in the near future due to the availability of local minicab offices. Whilst the provision of taxi ranks is limited, the promotion of 'Kiss and Ride' would probably be viable where it could be implemented, although it would have to be enforced, perhaps by CCTV.

Richmond – taxi ranks are designated by the Public Carriage Office (PCO) but enforcement is carried out by the borough under the terms of a Special Parking Order for taxi bays. Changes to taxi ranks are agreed with the PCO. There is only one taxi rank located at a station within the borough at Richmond.

Tandridge – They are controlled by the district council (ie ourselves). Passengers could benefit from a common national standard for Taxis and Private Hire vehicles. Placing taxi ranks in the public highway might be a problem if it resulted in a loss of parking places. Reduction in abuse by other vehicles would depend on the location in relation to the station entrance.

Wandsworth – Taxi ranks at stations in the borough are managed by the highway authority, namely the borough council on borough roads and TfL on the TLRN. Casual use of taxi ranks is not a significant problem.

Car parking for people with disabilities – We recognise that the private car will sometimes be the most appropriate means for people with disabilities to access a rail station. Therefore, priority should be given to the design and allocation of station car parking to reflect this. The recommended standards are set out in Appendix A.

Where operators wish to make an exception to these rules, then they will need to make a demonstrable case that the needs of people with disabilities are being reasonably met by their proposals.

Operators should also be encouraged to pro-actively promote the existence of car parking for people with disabilities. This should be seen in the light of low expectations of people with disabilities about the availability of facilities and their ability to make use of them.

The pricing of disabled parking spaces should reflect the fact that people with disabilities are a) likely to have less disposable income than ordinary rail users and b) are more likely to use a car to access a rail station for journeys which an able bodied person might more reasonably walk or cycle. Therefore, it is recommended that either free or substantially reduced charges be applied to these types of spaces. As there is an already recognised national scheme for disabled car parking spaces – the Blue Badge Scheme, it is recommended that this system should be the means of implementation and recognition at rail stations. However, it is recognised that in some locations demand will need to be managed to prevent abuse of the system. Our casework highlights poor enforcement of existing parking for people with disabilities and abuse by other customers and even railway staff.

Question to operators, interest groups and local authorities

Are the standards suggested in Appendix A too generous, insufficient or about right? Should stations with step-free access have a higher proportion of disabled car parking spaces than those without? Would operators have difficulty in complying with these standards? Should the Blue Badge Scheme be the definition of persons eligible to use a designated parking space? Are there any circumstances where the use of such a space could be permitted without showing a Blue Badge?

Answers from operators, interest groups and local authorities

DfT – the numbers of disabled parking spaces recommended in Appendix A are more generous than those required by the SRA's *Train and Station Services for Disabled Passengers – A Code of Practice*. Also, we feel that requiring regular monitoring of the use of such bays, to establish whether demand exceeds supply, is a more flexible way of deciding on additional provision above these minima, rather than the degree of step-free access, which is what your document suggests. Finally, in private car parks, the most common practice for provision and enforcement of parking spaces for disabled people is by requiring the blue badge to be displayed. Some car-park owners/operators use the exemption from vehicle excise duty for disabled people (which is identifiable by an exemption disc displayed in the windscreen) as an alternative. Operators can of course consider using both methods.

Chiltern – in our experience the SRA's Stations Code of Practice requires more blue badge car parking spaces than are actually needed. At busy car parks, this can prevent other passengers from finding a space.

Govia – this is broadly similar to the standard defined in our Franchise Agreement. We believe this should then be variable based on demand for these spaces, either up or down. At car parks with over 400 spaces 6% is often excessive and we would suggest 4% above this level. We allow free parking to blue badge holders. There is always the need to make exceptions to the blue badge rule, but this should be done by prior arrangement.

LUL – please see Appendix B.

South Eastern Trains – The SRA standard is a total space size of 3.6m wide by 6.0m long. This is a standard size bay (2.4m x 4.8m) with the addition of a transfer space of 1.2m at the side and end. Stations with step free access should only have a higher proportion of disabled parking spaces if this is proven as a need by monitoring the use of the disabled parking bays over a period of time – certainly not as a rule without intelligence as there are many disabled bays at step free stations which go unused. There has to be a scheme with recognised badges which have been issued by an authority. There would be no way otherwise to enable car park attendants to tell if a vehicle is entitled to be in a space reserved for disabled parking. There are no circumstances when use of such a space should be permitted without a blue badge. Badges issued outside the UK will be acceptable.

TfL Rail – the standards are about right and we would agree in principle that stations with step free access should need a greater proportion of ‘disabled spaces’.

British Parking Association – care needs to be taken over the provision of designated free parking spaces and general acceptance of the national blue badge as an authority to park in these spaces as it could, without other controls, lead to these spaces being used by non-rail passenger disabled persons. It might be appropriate to consider providing a number of these ‘special needs’ spaces to test demand rather than ‘over-provide’ at the expense of frustration to other users caused by general spaces being always ‘full’.

City of London Access Group – we assume the recommendations should follow the requirements of BS8300 section 4.1.2.3, which states that the minimum number of designated spaces should be one space for each employee who is a disabled motorist, plus 5% of the total capacity for visiting disabled motorists. Stations with step free access – in principle we fully support this proposal since it is likely to foster the use of accessible stations. In all cases disabled car park spaces need to be close to accessible station entrances and extra ones not added on to the end of a large car park.

Bexley – as a guide Appendix A seems reasonable, however should allow tailoring to specific needs where known. Stations with step free access should have a higher portion of disabled car parking spaces than those without, as these are likely to attract more people with disabilities, with the blue badge scheme used to identify such users, with no exemptions, except in an emergency.

Buckinghamshire – all the railway stations have dedicated parking areas close to the station entrances. The numbers of places are proportionate to the size of the car park. The attendant at the car park has the discretion to allow those that are obviously disabled to use the disabled bays without a blue badge.

Kingston – the standards look quite generous as a minimum. We might support a lower minimum with the understanding that if by observation the spaces were fully occupied more should be provided.

Redbridge – Appendix A is reasonable as long as proper use of the disabled parking spaces is properly enforced. The blue badge scheme is the best way of defining eligibility for a disabled car parking space. To avoid the risk of improper use, no other definition of disabled eligibility should be used.

Tandridge – it is considered the standards are reasonable. However, stations with step free access could be allocated a higher proportion of spaces for the disabled than stations without step free access, although operators may have difficulty with the standards in cases where car parking is limited. The blue badge scheme could be used for eligibility definition purposes; however, there may be occasions such as emergencies when the use of a space for the disabled might need to be used without a blue badge.

Wandsworth – our Unitary Development Plan specifies a minimum of 4% of spaces in car parks to be reserved for disabled people, with at least one space to be provided in car parks smaller than 20 spaces. These standards are slightly lower than those suggested in your Appendix A. Where developments are permitted with lower or no levels of parking, adequate provision for disabled people must still be considered. For operational simplicity, and to maintain a reputable and enforceable system, it makes sense for disabled car parking to be restricted to blue badge holders (notwithstanding concerns about fraudulent use). While intuitively it makes sense for more disabled car parking spaces to be provided at stations with step free access, such stations are also likely to attract other drivers who may have difficulty climbing steps, but do not qualify for a blue badge. For this reason it is suggested that the minimum proportion of disabled car parking spaces should be consistent across all stations, irrespective of whether they have step free access.

“There may also be a case for taking into account the needs of ‘fit but elderly and slow’ and ‘parents with babies and young children’ in allocating additional space in car parks.”

Rail Passengers Committee Wales

“A fixed percentage for the provision of disabled parking may not make sense at larger railway stations.”

Mark Prisk MP and constituents

Recommendation 7

In view of the discussion above that London TravelWatch adopts a revised Appendix A with the number of disabled parking spaces in car parks with over 41 spaces, so that for those with 41 to 100 spaces 4 disabled spaces are provided and those above 100 spaces the total provision should be 4% of all spaces; the national blue badge scheme being the basis of aspirational standards for availability of disabled parking at rail stations. Consideration should also be made for additional disabled parking spaces at stations with step free access over and above this standard.

Operational and emergency service parking. The safe and efficient operation and maintenance of the railway will require the use of land for vehicles used to service the railway. This may also include providing car parking for staff who are required to work outside of the normal operational day, ie before first train arrival and after last train departure. In areas of inner London where all-night bus services are commonplace this may not be necessary.

Question to operators and Network Rail

Do you have a company 'Travel Plan', and has this identified areas in which the use of road vehicles could be reduced? Are there measures, which at little or no cost could encourage staff to use more sustainable means of travel? (eg providing secure cycle storage, or making available to staff (and the public?) vehicle movements currently not available to the public. Would any reduction in operational parking make a significant contribution to the supply of parking spaces available to passengers?

Answers from operators and Network Rail

Chiltern – we do not have a company travel plan – but all our employees have free car parking and free travel on Chiltern Railways. Cycle storage is available at most stations. It is probably not feasible to run extra 'staff trains' – because we try to maximise the amount of opportunities for train maintenance, outside the operating day. It is only really at one location where we have both a full station car park and large numbers of staff – I do not think the problem is company wide.

Govia – We do not have a specific travel plan but we do provide free and subsidised rail travel to our employees. We also restrict parking permits based on need and usage of specific car parks. We recognise that those delivering front line public transport services are forced to use private transport, as they need to start and finish work at times when public transport is not available. Since the commencement of the Southern franchise in May 2003 we have provided an additional 740 cycle parking spaces usually in partnership with local authorities. We have made a number of empty coaching movements into passenger trains and we feel we have reached the limit of what is possible. Thameslink has provided many more spaces over the past few years. A reduction in operational parking would make more spaces available but the disbenefits could outweigh the benefits. As an example at Brighton we have 600 car park spaces. The modal use of operational staff usage is around 150. The majority of the 450 passenger cars have BN1 or BN2 postcodes and so live close to the station. The station has a daily footfall of 22,000 so travelling by car to the station is a very small proportion of users, yet train crew have to get to the depot before the services start or leave after it ends thus limiting their public transport options.

One – do not believe that a reduction in operational parking places would free up significant additional spaces for rail passengers. We do have to recognise that the rail industry employs many staff who are required to work unsocial hours, often travelling to / from work when other modes of public transport are not operating.

South Eastern Trains – many key stations have secured cycle lockers available. A survey would need to be undertaken to look at occupancy of these lockers ahead of offering spare spaces to staff. Regarding train movements there are very few services running that are open to staff movements outside the regular timetable. There are safety implications of carrying passengers (staff or public) on empty coaching stock which may make it impossible to make these available to staff. Most of our business critical car parking has been minimised already so there is very little operational spare parking that has not already been put back into the public domain.

VWC – we are contractually obliged to provide 'operational parking' at all our car parks. We are currently reviewing the number provided.

Network Rail – we do not have a travel plan as such, but provide travel concessions to employees. Those previously employed by British Rail continue to enjoy their previous privilege travel rights, whilst those employed by us since the privatisation of Railtrack in 1997 can purchase Season Tickets discounted by 25%.

Recommendation 8

It is surprising given the nature of the business that rail operators are in, that none of them has a company 'Travel Plan' or has considered the environmental impact of their own employees' travel. It is therefore recommended that London TravelWatch should encourage rail operators to adopt company 'Travel Plans', thereby setting an example to other companies whose business they wish to attract and benefit from.

Alternative land use. Use of land for non-car parking purposes such as housing, employment or retail development may be more sustainable and more profitable for the rail operator. This can take the form of either encouraging the use of rail for journeys by the users of the new development (and its closeness to the railway will enhance its attractiveness) or by some other use, which benefits the railway indirectly. For example use for social housing for key workers employed by the railway industry. This may be of more importance in areas close to major operating depots, especially in areas where it is difficult to retain or recruit staff and where property may be expensive or in short supply.

Question to operators

Has your company experienced recruitment difficulties as a result of a lack of affordable/social housing? If so, would making available redundant railway land for housing development allocated to railway workers be of benefit?

Answers from operators

Chiltern – we can generally recruit the calibre of staff we need at the level of pay we offer – I am not aware of a lack of affordable housing being a particular issue. Because they have free travel, our staff are able to travel quite long distances to reach their place of work – so evening out the sort of difficulties you hint at.

Docklands Light Railway (DLR) – many staff members travel long distances to work, which may be due to availability of affordable housing. This issue is being addressed on a larger scale by the regeneration of the Thames Gateway and the lower Lea Valley, which are areas the DLR will serve in the future.

Govia – a lack of social housing has not created recruitment difficulties. We do not believe it is for us to determine where our employees live and do not believe using redundant railway land would be an appropriate use of such brownfield sites.

LUL – we have not generally experienced recruitment problems due to a lack of affordable/social housing, although for some the increased cost of commuting in order to find more affordable housing has been a factor. This particularly became an issue following the withdrawal of National Rail Privilege ticket facilities for new LU staff, which has ultimately led to LU agreeing to subsidise annual Travelcards for these staff.

TfL Rail – this has been and continues to be a major issue in respect of operational staff across all modes, and any measures to address this would be welcome.

Questions to local authorities

Have you identified transport workers as 'key' workers in your housing strategy for affordable/social housing?

What barriers are there to the development of railway land for non-railway uses eg residential, employment or retail? (noise, conformity with local plan?).

Answers from local authorities

Bexley – we have not identified transport workers as 'key' workers as this is not specifically recognised by Government; examples of relevant services will be specified in Supplementary Planning

Guidance, which will be updated during the plan period. Barriers to the development of railway land for non-railway uses will include listed buildings, noise, pollution and conformity to the London Plan and the Local Development Framework. Most stations are close to residential areas and so car servicing activities may not be appropriate.

Guildford – yes we have a definition which includes transport workers among others. Not every resident or business wants to live or work on former railway land due to noise and a poor environment. Depending on the previous use the land can be contaminated. If it is, this can complicate the planning process or even restrict what can be built there. There may be existing planning constraints on the land such as it being located in a conservation area, which can restrict the levels of development that can take place. Often the land can be very narrow – only a few metres wide – which restricts development opportunities.

Hammersmith and Fulham – yes (public transport workers) – planning policies and future possibility of requirement for rail use.

Kingston – has not defined key workers in its affordable housing strategy yet and is using Office of the Deputy Prime Minister categories if occupation is a consideration.

Redbridge – transport workers are currently not considered as key workers in the Redbridge Housing Strategy.

Tandridge – yes transport workers are identified as 'key' workers. A major barrier could be planning constraints such as Green Belt policy.

Wandsworth – No

Question to Network Rail

Would you be willing to consider release of land for 'key' worker housing at less than the current market rate?

Answer from Network Rail

Network Rail – The Office of Rail Regulation stipulates that Network Rail should maximise asset value. Therefore we would be unable to consider selling railway land for less than market value.

Recommendation 9

It is clear from the responses above that there is a clear divergence of opinion as to the definition of a 'key worker' amongst local authorities. London TravelWatch should seek clarification from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as to what they regard as a proper definition and to apprise them of the situation regarding the position of 'Transport Workers'.

'Kiss and Ride'. All stations should have some short term parking for people dropping off and collecting passengers from the railway. Typically this should be of duration of no more than 20 minutes. This enables a rapid throughput of vehicles using a minimum amount of space. This does not have to be a 'free' facility – a small charge may be enough to divert some journeys to other modes. The committee recognises that in Central London (say zone 1 Travelcard stations or those within the Congestion Charge area) providing this type of short stay parking may not be desirable or feasible.

Question to operators and local authorities

Is it feasible or desirable for every station to have short term parking nearby? Does this necessarily have to be off-road? How easy would it be to enforce a 'Kiss and Ride' rule of 20 minutes without introducing a minimum charge?

Answers from operators and local authorities

Chiltern – it is desirable for all stations to have car parking in the vicinity – and most do, but at those stations which do not it is because of the lack of suitable land etc. It would be difficult to enforce free 'Kiss and Ride' parking in the general (full priced) car park area.

Govia – it is desirable for every station to have short term parking. The feasibility of this varies station by station but is normally achieved. Our experience of the 20 minute rule is that it is quite self enforcing. Enforcement is only usually necessary at stations with extreme parking difficulties.

LUL – it is not feasible or desirable to have short term parking near every station, particularly not in central London. However, at stations where a significant part of the catchment area is beyond easy walking distance then short term parking is useful. Depending on the layout it does not necessarily need to be off-road, and in practice customers will tend to park as close to the station as possible, for example in a taxi-rank or forecourt area, even if there is a formal short stay facility slightly further away. The most appropriate option at each site will be somewhat dependent on Local Authority parking policy. For example, if there are no local parking restrictions then the attraction of a specific facility at the station may be reduced. It would not be easy to enforce a 20 minute 'Kiss and Ride' rule without some form of ticket being issued. At car parks with attendants they may be able to enforce this although at busy times it would be difficult for them to fully monitor the situation. Cars parked for undue amounts of time would generally be noticed though.

One – most of our stations do have short stay / drop off areas. The provision of such is less important at the smaller stations where traffic flow tends to be less of an issue.

South Eastern Trains – most stations in the Metro area have some form of demand for short stay parking eg to pick up relatives, to purchase an advance ticket. However, not all our stations have a facility at present. Such facilities are hard to police and are frequently abused by taxi drivers. There is no evidence to suggest that these areas improve traffic flows at peak times as the limited number of bays cannot usually accommodate the demand experienced at peak times. On the second point, there is no actual requirement for the parking to be off-road so long as the parking is within a reasonable distance of the station and its positioning does not impair traffic flows in the station vicinity. Many local authorities are trying to encourage the use of public transport to reduce traffic in their towns. Therefore additional parking facilities may not support local policy. Kiss and Ride – this is a very difficult area to police given the current car parking strategy we operate. Many car parks receive only one or two visits per day from a patroller. Therefore, it is difficult to monitor if a car has been in the bays for more than 20 minutes unless it is there for the duration of the visit and the visit lasts for more than 20 minutes.

TfL – expect that in most locations it should be feasible to provide some short term parking, but this will clearly have to be looked at on a site by site basis.

Where such parking is proposed on a TLRN red route then clearly this would be more difficult, given that there is an over riding imperative to ensure that traffic flows are not affected by parking. Where parking on the TLRN is possible I would expect that this could be managed as a free 20 minute parking bay, particularly if this were to be enforced via a CCTV camera. In the absence of such a camera then the bay would be much more open to abuse as it would only be enforceable when a parking attendant is present and they would probably have to wait 20 minutes at the site before they could issue any penalties.

TfL Rail – yes this would be helpful. However, it should not be done in a way that impacts on bus or taxi bays. Ideally this should be segregated from other uses, and be properly enforced.

VWC – we have a maximum 20 minute short stay facility at all our stations. This is not easy to enforce at all times, but it exists.

Bexley – ‘Kiss and Ride’ is not an issue in Bexley. It is desirable to have short term parking nearby but it is not always feasible for this to be off road.

Buckinghamshire – many stations have such a facility. Chiltern already provides the space for short term stay, supervised by the car park attendant.

Hammersmith and Fulham – not desirable and difficult to enforce.

Kingston – very difficult to enforce.

Redbridge – due to constraints on land, and the demand for high density development at accessible sites, it is not feasible for every station in Redbridge to have short term parking nearby.

Richmond – there are currently ‘Kiss and Ride’ facilities at Twickenham and Richmond stations and the parking spaces for this purpose work well. The introduction of charging for such spaces could introduce a whole host of arguably unnecessary problems – costs, signing, enforcement and disputes.

Tandridge – it is considered desirable for stations to have set down and pick up facilities. However, in certain locations such short term parking need not be off road. The introduction of a ‘Kiss and Ride’ rule of 20 minutes free parking would be difficult to enforce particularly at unstaffed stations.

Wandsworth – in our location (Zones 2-3) it is not desirable to have short term parking available at stations. Our preference is to encourage access by non-car modes of transport. Kiss and ride would be difficult to enforce, though it might be useful at some stations. There is little observed demand for a 20 minute waiting facility in Wandsworth.

West Sussex – this will depend on the level of use of the station for commuter parking and pressure on local residents parking. This may not be enforceable unless adequate station staff are around to ‘police’.

“There were a large number of comments in favour of having short term ‘Kiss and Ride’ parking at all stations.”
MPs and User Groups

Recommendation 10

That London TravelWatch supports the principle that all stations outside of Travelcard Zone 1 should have where possible some form of limited short stay parking of up to 20 minutes duration.

General car parking. For journeys where a walking, cycling or other mode trip to the station is not feasible, it is recognised that car parking should be provided for long term stays and short ‘Kiss and Ride’ pick up/set down operations. Station car parking can provide an effective means of encouraging the use of rail for the journeys to which it is most appropriate ie long distance journeys to and from major centres of population and activity, thus reducing overall road traffic levels.

The sequential test as outlined in section 4 is consistent with Transport for London’s Interchange Plan (Policy 4P.2) and Park and Ride policy principles, the SRA’s interchange standards and the Mayor’s Transport and Spatial Development Strategies.

Question to all

Does this sequential test add value as a tool to your existing plans and procedures?

Answers

Govia – as a checklist section 4 is too subjective to work as a guide. However, we are sure that a useful checklist could be developed from this. For example, we have found the placement of CCTV to observe cycle storage helpful in encouraging use, and car servicing within car parks often ends up with less car park spaces available to rail users. So any checklist requires careful validation and sharing of best practice.

LUL – sequential test is a matter for TfL.

Hammersmith and Fulham – Yes.

Kingston – the sequential test is slightly useful.

Redbridge – the sequential test is a valuable tool for existing plans and proposals although its application will vary for individual stations and locational circumstances.

Tandridge – the outlined sequential test could add value as a tool for the policy on railways in the Tandridge District Local Plan.

Wandsworth – the sequential test is similar to existing practice.

West Sussex – we are thinking along the same lines, but it is useful to have these things spelt out.

Woking – a very useful aide memoire.

TfL Rail – support the use of such a tool.

Muswell Hill Metro Group – a very useful tool for the development of stations.

Rail Passengers Committee Scotland – the paper begins to open up the broader subject of rail / other transport integration and the sequential test is a good way to tackle this.

Question to Network Rail

Would you welcome this approach as a means of managing your estate portfolio?

Answers from Network Rail

Network Rail support station improvements subject to relevant funding and planning requirements.

Recommendation 11

That in view of the discussion and responses in sections 3 and 4 London TravelWatch adopt the sequential test as outlined in section 4 when asked to comment on proposed development of rail stations.

Development and planning issues

Having said that there has traditionally been an ad-hoc approach to providing car parking, there is no reason why the planning system should not seek to bring station car parking within the remit of local transport plans and the SRA's franchise replacement programme. Local Authorities in the London TravelWatch area could be encouraged to adopt the 'Zonal' approach outlined in section 6 in their local transport and local development plan frameworks. This would certainly bring a more rational approach to car park planning and property management and development. It may be that certain car parks could be closed, whilst allowing for the expansion or provision of others. For example, in Luton, under the proposed regeneration of the town centre, a new bus station and road will replace the existing station car parks, and an existing under-used bus station made into the station car park.

Question to TfL and London boroughs

Should rail stations with car parks within Greater London be reassessed for development potential?

Answers from TfL and London boroughs

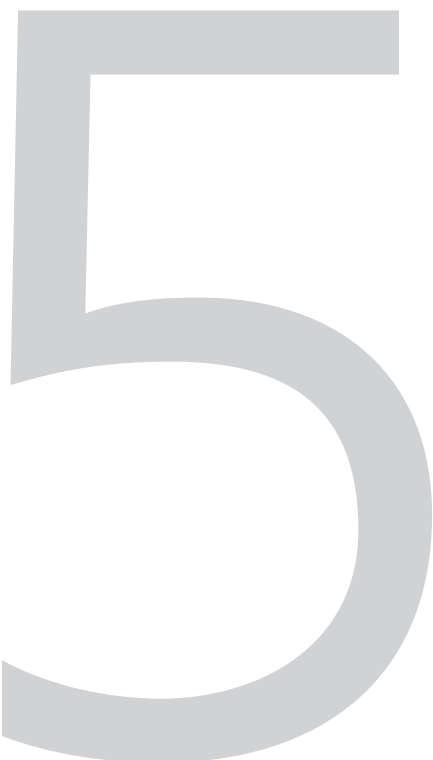
Bexley – a reassessment of car parking provision at rail stations would be helpful in accelerating economic growth and development particularly in areas of dereliction.

Hammersmith and Fulham – yes.

Kingston – stations with or without car parks can be reassessed for development potential by their owner at any time. In RBK the Surbiton station has a UDP planning brief defining preferred land uses on policy grounds. It is likely that the existing 526 space surface car park will be redeveloped partly for housing with a multi storey car park erected to roughly match existing capacity. The brief would not permit an increase in capacity.

Redbridge – where feasible. However, any development of a rail station car park should take into account the impacts of the displaced traffic, and the potential journeys that are wholly dependent on the private car, rather than on part car, part rail.

Wandsworth – this is a matter for planning authorities and land owners/developers to determine in accordance with relevant planning policies. Planning authorities will seek the most appropriate use of land.



What do passengers want from their station car park?

Security, safety, space and value for money describe the four main themes of customer aspirations for car parking.

Security and safety, including enforcement

Customers have an expectation that their personal safety is assured between parking their vehicle and catching their train and vice versa. In addition they expect their vehicle, whilst left at the station at their own risk, is secure from theft, damage or vandalism during the time that it is parked at the car park.

The Secure Car Park Scheme operated by the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Home Office, the Automobile Association and the British Parking Association has produced self-assessment guidelines for car parks covering issues such as surveillance, boundary treatment, lighting, vehicle access, parking area design, pedestrian access, security, signage and management practice. As these are established standards for car park operators in general, and the SRA has a duty to ensure that railway car parks are to these standards, it is not proposed here to restate them. However, there is no programme to ensure that they are implemented across the network in a consistent manner.

Whilst accepting that there is an industry standard in place, there is a case for modifications to deal with some of the side effects of railway operations. These could be that delays and disruptions to services could result in passengers arriving at stations on their return journey later than anticipated – so flexibility needs to be in place with enforcement, so as not to penalise passengers delayed through no fault of their own. In addition normal railway operations may require location specific conditions eg where the last train of the day arrives after midnight or by offering 24-hour tickets where train services run 24 hours per day. As a minimum, parking ticket validity should be in line with rail day ticket validity.

Question to operators

How easy would it be to switch to 24 hour rather than day of issue validity only or to train service operational day rather than 12midnight?

Answers from operators

Chiltern – it would be difficult with the current ticketing systems to offer and police 24-hour rather than day rate ticketing – although we do understand the desire to achieve this.

Govia – the adoption of 24-hour validity rather than day of issue would depend on ticket machine type. However, there are car parks which have charges by the hour or some other time period so 24-hour validity could not be adopted as a general practice. Passengers have advocated this when they wish to leave their car at a station overnight unexpectedly and maybe it would be better to focus on this aspect. We do not see the point of daily car park tickets expiring at the end of service. This is complicated to administer and we think will cause confusion.

South Eastern Trains – The pay and display machines can be reprogrammed to achieve this but new internal microchips would need to be purchased and installed in the machines. Central Parking System tickets are currently valid until 0400 on the day following purchase to fully cover the previous day's train service to its conclusion with time built in to accommodate potential disruption to the last services.

TfL Rail – see no reason why this could not be easily done. Signage should be clear. It is good customer relations' practice to assume that car park tickets are valid until the end of the train service day.



"The 24-hour ticket would be welcome."
**Orpington District Public Transport
 Users Association**

Recommendation 12

That London TravelWatch should support the interpretation of day of issue validity to be concurrent with the train service operational day from first until last trains or if an all night service is provided from 0401 to 0400 or the London Underground standard of 0431 to 0430.

Enforcement, however, does need to be consistent, regular and fair. Rail companies should make it their business to ensure that competent persons inspect each car park at regular intervals either daily or at minimum weekly at various times of day. Increasingly, car park enforcement is being contracted out to specialised car parking contractors such as Central Parking Systems and Meteor – these companies will need to be made aware of the special requirements of rail car parking and this will need to be reflected in their policies and staff training.

Special attention should be paid to ensure that vehicles (including bicycles) are not abandoned at stations, and where this has obviously happened swift action should be taken to remove these. Station/Enquiry staff must be notified of any such removal and keep a record.

Space and value for money

Who should pay? Ultimately the users of the railway pay for providing car parking as for any other facility on the railway in some way, because there is a cost in providing it. These costs can range from opportunity costs (revenue foregone if the land were used for another activity) to security, maintenance and train fare revenue foregone (if pricing at one station encourages longer car journeys to another). Recouping this expenditure can take various courses depending on the outcome desired.

It costs the rail industry less to provide for users who walk, cycle or use public transport to reach the station, and these forms of travel are the most environmentally sustainable. So there is a case for charging rail car park users for using the spaces that they occupy.

Traditionally the pricing of car parks at rail stations has been geared to either recovering the costs of operation of the car park or as a means of attracting custom to the railway. The costs of providing car parking will vary on a site by site basis depending on the size of the facility, the level of security etc. and also on the opportunity costs that might be incurred. For instance the rail property owner may find that redevelopment for residential or commercial use may be a more profitable activity than its use as a car park.

Rail operators may in certain circumstances wish to reduce the price of parking or provide free parking for rail users as a means of encouraging the use of the railway. This may also reflect funding from outside bodies such as Local Authorities for providing or upgrading parking facilities either as part of a wider transport strategy of modal shift, or to address a local problem such as commuters' cars filling side streets near to rail stations with consequent difficulties for local residents. Conversely, the location of railway stations in city or town centres may result in use of any car park by non-rail users, to the detriment of people wishing to use the railway, who may as a result find no space available. The pricing of the car park in this case needs to work in favour of the rail user either by means of a rebate on purchase of a rail ticket or of a pricing or length of stay structure, which would deter but not prohibit use by non-rail users. If the operator is to capture the benefit of income from a car park, account should be taken of the availability of 'competing' car parking facilities nearby such as those owned by local authorities or private companies, or the availability of on street parking whether paid for or freely available. The availability of such facilities if there is an excess of space over demand could enable rail companies to use their spaces more profitably for the railway.

Question to local authorities

In setting your car park charges do you take account of rates charged at nearby rail stations? Do you operate any car parks, which are primarily used by rail passengers? Are there any particular reasons for this?

Answers from local authorities

Bexley – yes, we reflect their charges. We operate car parks at Avenue Road, Bexleyheath and Abbey Wood that are mainly used by rail users, and the revenue ensures that the facility is maintained and retained for rail users.

Kingston – no do not take account of rates charged at nearby rail stations. No car parks operated primarily for rail users.

Redbridge – set by local authority. The charges take into account the charges at other rail station car parks in the borough. Season tickets are popular.

Richmond – charges at station car parks should be consistent with parking charges at other nearby car parks and not be so low as to attract non-rail passengers. As with most parking operations, supply and demand will influence pricing.

Tandridge – yes. We have no car parks specifically for rail passengers.

Wandsworth – no comment. Limited car parking at stations in the borough.

West Sussex – not really applicable to us, although Park & Ride stations have been mooted in the past. The rail companies in our area set the parking charges, which don't appear to be uniform.

Having said all of the above it has to be recognised that the price of car parking should be recognised as part of a 'whole travel cost' including the price of the rail journey. Where train services are less frequent, there is an argument for reducing the price of car parking at stations, with the converse that a higher frequency of service could merit higher parking charges. Appendix C explores the impact of whole cost pricing in the London area.

Questions to operators

Is it feasible to introduce combined parking and rail tickets on a wider scale? Good practice suggests that lower prices for evening and weekend times would increase usage – what barriers are there to introducing such differential pricing? Our casework highlights that often finding a space at railway car parks is a problem – what level of occupancy do you plan for your car parks to recover your costs? If you were required to plan for a minimum of 10% space availability what effect would this have on parking prices?

Answers from operators

Chiltern – it would be difficult with the current ticketing systems to offer this – although we do understand the desire to achieve this. We already have free parking at most of our stations on Friday evenings and at weekends. We continually monitor the usage of our car parks. We see whether we can make a case for extending them when average occupancy reaches 95%.

Govia – we are just introducing differential pricing based on pay on foot on departure from Brighton. This will offer cheaper tickets to those who validate their car park ticket inside the gate line. We have a wide variety of differential pricing mechanisms across both TOCs. We do not plan a specific occupancy although we monitor occupancy levels. Many of our car parks have less than 10% availability and to enforce 10% would by definition mean driving passengers away either by pricing or regulations. This would seem counter productive.

LUL – although the situation is complex, LU car park prices are generally set to encourage car park occupancy to be as high as possible. LU's objective is for car parks to act as a source of additional revenue and not merely to cover operating costs. Achieving a minimum of 10% space availability at all times would be almost impossible to manage in practice, as demand fluctuates to some extent every day. At the most popular sites it would require prices to be increased to unacceptably high levels, which would have a negative effect on demand for the Tube as a whole. LU does however attempt to manage demand to an extent through its pricing policy, and also provides directions to the nearest alternative locations when car parks are full.

One – we already offer a flexible approach to charging, with different rates at weekends at some of our car parks. We also provide free parking at a number of car parks across our rural network.

South Eastern Trains – differential pricing is possible with our current Pay and Display machines and would again require a new microchip to be installed in the machines. The budgeted occupancy for every car park differs depending on the location. It is impossible to set a blanket occupancy for all station car parks as there are a number of external factors outside of our control that have a direct bearing on the patronage of each car park such as: the catchment area, the availability of free parking in the area, the price of council car parking etc. Again, in relation to the 10% ruling this would not be a problem at some of the low occupancy car parks, but at the higher occupancy car parks, a significant price rise may be needed to create 10% spare capacity. This could be achieved in two ways: 1) increase our charges to a comparative level to those charged locally by the council and 2) introduce dual level charging for rail users versus non-rail users whereby a rebate is made to anyone purchasing a rail ticket.

TfL – it would be desirable to extend combined parking and rail tickets, but there may be difficulties with regard to VAT.

VWC – we operate a 'pay and display' and all 'pay on foot' facilities. We have a minimum charge, which is currently being reviewed in line with an overall policy as indicated earlier. It would be very difficult to plan on the basis of minimum 10% availability. All our car parks are 'at capacity'. We have carried out some detailed analysis of capacity in this area, and are looking to expand our parking facilities in a strategic manner.

"The idea of cheap or free parking at underused stations will not succeed if the rail service on offer is poor."

Orpington District Public Transport Users Association

"The basis of charging should follow the '85% rule' which is advised for on-street management, ie charges are set at a level to regulate demand to about 85% of capacity. This allows for efficient use of space and optimises 'searching' time for casual users."

British Parking Association

Recommendation 13

That London TravelWatch adopts a policy that all station car parks on Mondays to Fridays should have an area available only to Season Ticket holders before 0930, but after 0930 any unoccupied spaces may be occupied by other users. In the case of the Harrow-on-the-Hill LUL car park mentioned below, it is recommended that London TravelWatch write to LUL recommending the adoption of the above policy. In terms of space availability London TravelWatch recognises that station car parking is different in nature to that of other off and on street parking, in that turnover during the operational day is likely to be much less than conventional car parks and so the practicality of pricing for 10% availability is questionable.

Means of payment and display of tickets. Our casework has highlighted this as an area where rail companies need to be aware and be a part of developments in car park management. For example payment of charges can now be achieved by WAP mobile phones or via the Internet. This could potentially mean that the need for tickets to be issued and displayed within a vehicle might be avoided. This has a number of advantages, not least that as railway car parks are more likely to be in the open and have vehicles staying for long periods creating problems of tickets fading and 'curling up' in bright sunlight could be eliminated. Potentially this could reduce the number of disputes with car owners, who may be wrongly clamped or charged as a result. Similarly, in an increasingly cashless society ticket machines should be capable of accepting debit or credit cards, or stored value cards such as Oystercard as a means of payment. This would also allow car park season tickets to be purchased from machines rather than booking offices, with consequent reductions in the need for customers to queue. Customers are also increasingly looking for flexibility in the products that they purchase – being able to purchase tickets for 2 to 3 days in advance for example or differential charging rates for off-peak, evening and weekend parking.

Question to operators and TfL

Are these suggested developments feasible and/or desirable? How feasible would it be for Season Ticket holders to be guaranteed a parking space, and if one is not available should compensation be payable?

Answers from operators and TfL

Chiltern – we believe that developments of this nature are desirable, and over time will become feasible. We have just started to experiment with a 'print at home' e-ticket, which does not require a visit to the ticket office. Conceptually at least this could be rolled out to car park charging as well. We would like to do this, but in reality it would be undesirable for our attendants to turn cars away (so probably losing business to rail) whilst there were free spaces reserved for season ticket holders (who may or may not turn up).

Govia – we agree that credit and debit cards should be more generally accepted for car park tickets. As for new WAP technology we have yet to see a viable business model for stations but do keep this under review. Every station with a few minor exceptions has many more season ticket holders than car park spaces. Thus to guarantee spaces for season ticket holders would require bigger car parks and no space for occasional travellers. This is clearly not sustainable. In addition many season ticket holders use more environmentally friendly methods of getting to the station such as the bus or walking and we would not wish to discourage this.

LUL – LU already offers the purchase of car park tickets from machines and the flexibility to buy several days in advance. Debit and credit card acceptance is technically feasible although commission costs and connection charges for authorisation are an issue. Oystercard payment is under development. LU is aware of mobile phone payment systems although there are no plans to introduce these at present. The elimination of tickets presents issues in terms of enforcement, but LU accepts in principle the advantages of this if an appropriate alternative (eg electronic or number plate based) system can be found. LU offers season tickets with a guaranteed space at one car park (Harrow on the Hill). This is charged on the basis of a fixed annual price, but beyond this up front commitment there is no premium. However, the result is that a number of spaces remain unused everyday, whilst other potential customers have to be turned away. This is not deemed in the best interest of customer service or revenue, particularly if season ticket holders are paying the same or even less than daily users. A compromise might involve a number of spaces being held until (say) 9.30am, thereby providing a limited guarantee. LU does not believe that compensation should be offered to season ticket holders if space is not available.

South Eastern Trains – it is feasible at some car parks to implement this. It would require a strict limit being placed on the number of seasons available at each station and an area marked out specifically for the use by these season ticket holders for one ticket equals one space. It is not an overly productive use of car parking space to guarantee a space to season ticket holders. Strategically, we currently offer areas whereby it is season ticket holders only before 0930 hours but then any excess capacity is made available to other station users after 0930 on the basis that the majority of season ticket holders will have arrived at the station by 0930. If we have to guarantee spaces at all times then potentially these bays would be left empty all day on the off chance that the season ticket holder may arrive expecting a space. Guaranteed season ticket holder parking puts us in the realms of personalised parking spaces, something we do not want to encourage as people come to expect this as a right and it becomes difficult to change the conditions in these areas in years to come. Regarding compensation being payable to season ticket holders unable to find a space, it would be very difficult to administer this with proof that the person could not find a parking space especially outside of ticket office opening hours. This is not something that we would recommend introducing.

TfL Rail – technological advances will make some of these solutions more feasible than others. Guarantees for Season Ticket holders would be very difficult to work out in practice.

VWC – we have a successful 'Traveller' branded scheme, providing protected and prioritised parking for regular business customers. I do not believe the option of 'guaranteed' parking is the solution to these problems. I believe that we need to have a long term strategy to deal with an issue that will increase as demand for train travel increases.

"There was much support for the concept of a guaranteed parking space for season ticket holders and for alternative means of payment/ticket display."

MPs and User Groups and the British Parking Association

Recommendation 14

That London TravelWatch should encourage the development and expansion of alternative means of payment, ticketing and display mechanisms, where these offer clear benefits to passengers.

Should there be any expansion of rail station car parking? If so, where?

It is accepted that the growth of the economy and the continued growth of car ownership outside of Greater London, requires some growth in car parking at rail stations where this is the only way of achieving greater use of public transport for most of each journey.

Where should this growth be targeted?

Providing car parks at rail stations enables the growth of the number of passengers on rail services. However, this growth needs to be managed in relation to the capacity of train services to carry the additional business generated as part of an overall plan to grow the rail business as a whole. This lends itself to a sequential test of where such growth could occur. This could be:

- 1) Is the location of the car park within easy access of the rail station?
- 2) Does the train service have the capacity to carry additional passengers to the various destinations en route?
- 3) Will extra train services be required to cater for the growth?
- 4) Would providing a car park lead to abstraction from other rail services with a net reduction in rail passenger miles travelled?
- 5) Would implementation of a 'Travel Plan' for the station reduce or eliminate the need for expansion of car parking space?

In the case of the items one and two: yes, and for items three and four: no; this would indicate that provision of car parking is worthwhile. Train operating companies already have commercial incentives to expand car parks in places where demand is already proven, and in which instance plans for expansion should be supported. However, there is also a case for some creative thinking about providing car parks in areas where at present it is not commercially viable, but which may add value as part an overall package to improve transport facilities and which could bring benefits to the railway. Potential areas where extra car parking might be explored in this vein could be:

- The use of Kempton Park Racecourse station (on non-race days) as a Park and Ride station for Kingston and Wimbledon shopping centres (this may require the agreement of the racecourse operator to provide land on non-race days, and additional highway capacity between the M3 junction and the station).
- Knockholt as a Park and Ride station for Orpington and central London from the M25 and A21.

Questions to local authorities, TfL, SRA and operators

Have these ideas been considered before? Do they have any merit? Are they practical? What problems do you foresee in implementing these? (eg station is outside of area for the authority that would benefit; extra spaces provided might be used for Central London commuting?) Do you have any other alternative schemes that would merit London TravelWatch's support?

Answers from local authorities, TfL, SRA and operators

Bexley – each site should be assessed independently. There is merit in applying these ideas in less developed or socially deprived areas to act as an incentive to stimulate economic growth and development.



Kingston – yes, Kempton Park is Kingston's first priority as a Park and Ride site for Kingston Town Centre. The biggest barrier to this is probably securing agreement from United Racecourses and Spelthorne District Council. Each are concerned about local traffic impacts and the views of people living in the area. We would not expect there to be any need for additional highway capacity between the M3 junction and the station. We would certainly welcome support for the use of this station as a P&R site.

Tandridge – consideration has been given to the possibility of decking all or part of a station car park in the district, which could provide additional spaces to meet a growing problem of on-street parking. It was considered that such a scheme could also provide a location for a Park and Ride interchange for train services to Croydon, so enabling a reduction in the number of cars travelling to and from Croydon. This suggested decked car park scheme did not proceed beyond a preliminary stage (largely because of an apparent lack of commitment from the railway industry) and the council was not committed to it in any way. There was no public consultation of how such a scheme would fit in with an overall package of parking management proposals; nor was any sustainability appraisal undertaken. A major barrier to the provision of car parking for Park and Ride could be planning policy constraints such as Green Belt policy. Scope for the innovative approaches shown in some of the examples quoted on the previous page do not exist in Tandridge District, and Green Belt designation would be a major constraint. Similarly, any facility which threatened the existing commercial viability of some businesses, by encouraging travelling out of the district would not be welcomed.

Govia – the expansion of station car parks needs to be carefully considered with local authorities and the Highways Agency. It is very easy to encourage long distance rail heading with car parking spaces close to London. This is especially true when close to main radial routes. Individual stations act as railheads based on the time adjacent roads become congested; this of course varies with time of day. We would seek to grow car parks only where current demand outstrips supply and then only in conjunction with local authorities and the Highways Agency.

LUL – currently we have a number of proposals for the development of car parking. These relate primarily to implementation of the 'gateway' strategy of providing larger car parks at the end of lines to encourage customers to transfer from their cars to public transport as early as possible. The most advanced scheme is at Hatton Cross, where a planning appeal is pending. Other sites that are currently being considered include Epping, Stanmore and Hillingdon. Further improvements being investigated for existing sites include covered walkways and customer information systems to provide information about the train service before customers pay for their parking.

TfL Rail – expansion of car parking is not a high priority for TfL, as the emphasis in our current plans is on improving public transport interchanges in a broader sense.

"There should be a more systematic approach – all the places where radial routes cross the M25 and North and South Circular roads should have an expansion of car parking facilities."

David Leibling

London TravelWatch member

"Recommend that road signs should give directions to suitable Park and Ride stations."

Tony Shields

London TravelWatch member

Recommendation 15

That London TravelWatch should welcome the proposals put forward by Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames for the development of Kempton Park as a Park'n Ride station, and the expansion of car parking by London Underground at Hatton Cross, Epping, Stanmore and Hillingdon, subject to their compliance with the sequential test as outlined in section 4, and should invite these organisations to come and speak to a relevant meeting of this committee. In terms of policy London TravelWatch would wish to see all station access issues considered as part of the Rail Corridor Plans being developed by TfL.

Recommendation 16

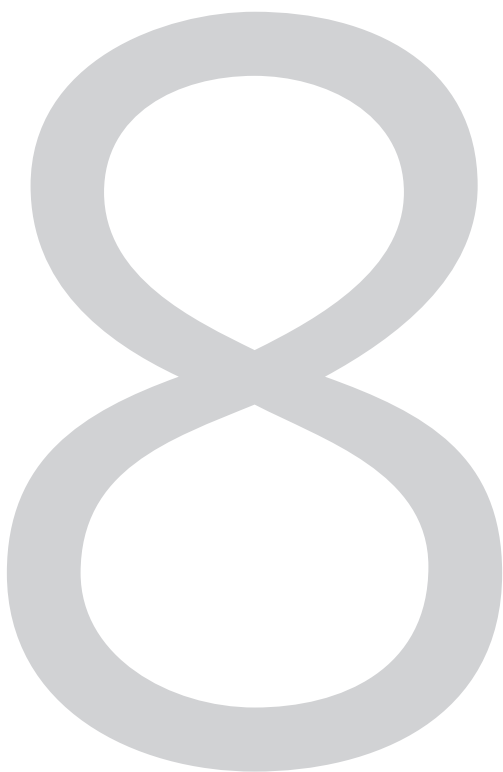
To recommend to Local Authorities and Highways Agencies that when reviewing road signage consideration should be given to enhanced directions to rail stations with car parks.

Conclusions

Car parking will continue to play a significant role in enabling and maintaining access to the rail network for a significant proportion of rail passenger customers.

Retaining and growing this customer base (whilst at the same time encouraging the use of sustainable modes to access stations) will be a significant challenge in the coming years as public expectation of the level of service at rail station car parks increases.

A coherent and planned policy towards providing access in all its forms (whether by car, foot, cycle, bus or taxi) to rail stations is an essential part of growing the rail passenger business as a whole.



Appendices

Appendix A

Table of recommended number of 'Blue Badge' car parking spaces to accord with standards set by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. (Source Cambridge City Council. Car and Cycle Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance 2003) – as amended by discussion above.

Total number of car parking spaces to be provided on-site	Minimum number of spaces for people with disabilities
< 20	At least 1, more depending on specific needs
21-30	2
31-40	3
41-100	4
> 101	4% rounded up to the nearest whole place.

The location of these spaces should be as close as possible to the accessible entrances to the station, and be capable of close supervision by staff. Stations with step-free access to the platforms from the car park should have more than the minimum number of spaces for people with disabilities, as these stations would expect to see greater use by people with disabilities.

Appendix B

LUL standards for pricing, enforcement, facilities provided and the impact on the surrounding road network and environment

Pricing – LU currently sets maximum prices for its commuter car parks within the TfL strategic framework, with the car park management contractors permitted to adjust tariff levels below this. In general the maximum prices are relatively low to avoid discouraging customers from using the facility and hence the Tube network. More information on LU's pricing policy is provided in the response to Question 17.

Enforcement – Enforcement is managed by the car park management contractors with a maximum permitted penalty of £50. The majority of enforcement involves Penalty Charge Notices, with clamping used as a last resort in the case of repeat offenders. At least one warning is issued prior to clamping. Towing away of vehicles is not permitted.

Facilities provided – The main equipment provided in the car parks is lighting (generally to a minimum level of 30 lux throughout the car park), CCTV cameras covering every space, together with a help point facility, signage, fencing, traffic control measures, height restrictors and Pay & Display machines in the following minimum amounts:

Number of Parking Spaces	Minimum Number of Machines
1-100	2
101-150	3
151-200	4
201-300	5
301-400	6
401-550	7
551-700	8
701-900	9
901+	10

Some car parks also include a cabin for use by attendants, whilst a few have cycle parking facilities where appropriate space is available and facilities are not already provided elsewhere on the station.

Surrounding road network – LU does not have any specific standards relating to the road network surrounding existing car parks, as these are a matter for TfL.

Environment – The car park management contractors are required to monitor environmental performance and implement environmental improvements where possible. Petrol interceptors are installed at new sites and when significant resurfacing work is carried out. The drainage system must be kept clear of waste and blockages, and the car parks and equipment must be kept clean and tidy and free of litter, including dirt, graffiti, stickers, snow, ice, leaves, broken glass, excrement and deposits of oil or grease. Vegetation, foliage and landscaping must be maintained at a height no greater than 2.5m, and must be kept sufficiently clear so as not to provide areas of concealment or hinder the effectiveness of the CCTV system. Landscaping adjacent to footpaths must be maintained with a maximum height of 0.5m. Any works to car parks and footpaths must be carried out at times when they cause least inconvenience to customers, LU and neighbouring properties.

Appendix C

Discussion of possible pricing structure for car parks in Greater London

Taking all these factors into account a framework for providing car parks and their pricing in the London TravelWatch area could be based around the principles of the Travelcard zoning system.

Zone 1 – 6 major stations have car parks¹. Given that these are in the centre of London and have extensive all-night and all-day public transport serving them and they are within or on the edge of the congestion charging zone, it is difficult to understand why except in the case of parking for operational reasons and for people with disabilities, parking is provided at all at these locations. There may be an argument for providing car parking as a perk for first class travellers, as this may encourage long distance travel by rail as opposed to air. However, the cost of this provision may be outweighed by, for example, making through rail fares for first class ticket holders from all stations within Greater London the same as from the main London terminals, or by providing a free taxi service to and from destinations in Zones 1 and 2. It is recommended that the current provision be reviewed at these locations.

"RPC Eastern have cautioned against the withdrawal of central London parking as the alternatives may not be attractive, especially for passengers starting their journeys in South London."

Rail Passengers Committee (Eastern)

Zone 2 – The only station in this zone with significant parking provision is North Greenwich. This performs an important function in that it provides a park and ride facility for the Docklands area, thereby reducing the throughput of the nearby Blackwall Tunnel. This facility also acts to relieve pressure on South Eastern Trains routes for journeys into central London, but it could be argued that better provision in the South Eastern Trains area might be a more sustainable alternative. At North Greenwich the pricing structure should aim to minimise the amount of diversion of passengers from long distance rail services.

Question to London Underground

Have you conducted any research on the origin and destination of car park users at North Greenwich to see whether there is any scope for encouraging modal change at other places to enable the use of rail for a greater part of the journey?

Answer from London Underground

Some research has been undertaken at North Greenwich car park. A significant proportion of customers were formerly driving further into central London, so the car park has reduced their car journeys. However, there is also a sizeable minority who were previously travelling from South Eastern Trains stations in south east London. These could theoretically transfer to rail earlier in their journey, although it is not easy to see how this could be encouraged given that the routes in question are generally heavily congested with relatively poor journey times. There is also a notable group driving from the Thamesmead vicinity, which is not well served by rail at present. Finally, it should be noted that the level of commuter parking available at North Greenwich will be reduced drastically within the next 2-3 years as part of the redevelopment of the Dome site.

Zones 3 to 6 – There are 144 stations with parking, of which 24 are 'Town Centre' stations². The pricing structure for all these stations should aim to minimise the amount of revenue abstraction from stations in the outer zones and beyond, with those 'Town Centre' stations priced to reflect that status. Similarly stations with easy access to the trunk road and motorway networks³ should be priced to reduce the diversion of passengers from long distance rail services, and to enable local residents to use the facilities on offer. In zone 6, however, there may be an argument for encouraging Park'n Ride at these stations if appropriate levels of service, sufficient parking and highway capacity can be provided. Epping, Theydon Bois, Debden, Loughton and Moor Park are stations which have Zone 6 status but which are geographically outside Greater London. These stations should be priced in a similar way to other stations outside Greater London, but with appropriate incentives to Travelcard purchase.

Stations outside Greater London. Pricing at these stations should be geared towards the encouragement of Travelcard 'add-on' fares for journeys toward London and this should be reflected in the prices paid, so that the first station with a car park outside Travelcard zone 6 (ie Dunton Green, Upper Warlingham, Whyteleafe, Earlswood, Chipstead etc) has a car park price which is lower than the equivalent Zone 6 station, and is linked to the Travelcard price, to give the incentive for passengers to buy a Travelcard from this station rather than drive to stations within Greater London. In certain cases account will also have to be taken of their 'Town Centre' status. This could take the form of adjustments to charging levels at other more distant but non-town centre stations such as Eynsford, Boxhill & West Humble, Virginia Water, Wraysbury, Roydon and Chalfont & Latimer etc.

Question to operators, local authorities and TfL

Is this kind of structure feasible or desirable, and what sort of problems do you foresee (need for exceptions etc.)?

Answers from operators, local authorities and TfL

Chiltern – none of our Greater London stations have any significant parking provision – because they are in densely populated areas. We do not agree that a case can be made for having lower car parking charges at stations near London, and vice versa. This is because the cost of constructing and maintaining car parks, and the cost of staffing them is not linked to their distance from London. Our experience is that passengers will willingly pay quite high prices to park – provided that they are confident of their car being intact when they return. Our relatively high prices allow us to staff our car parks from 0600 – 2300 on weekdays and Saturdays – so giving the best deterrent against crime.

Govia – we see no point in linking car park pricing to Travelcards. In London car parking is only provided where space is available with no further scope for expansion generally.

LUL – the pricing strategy outlined above is broadly similar to that adopted by LU, although the situation is somewhat more complex. In essence, LU's policy is to charge more for car parks closer towards central London to discourage drivers from driving further in, and also more at the most popular 'gateway' sites at the end of lines to try and manage demand. Other car parks in the outer zones are cheaper, although there are specific variations to reflect demand (for example around zonal boundaries), prices at nearby (non-LU) car parks, and to provide equitable arrangements in communities with several car parks (eg Ruislip).

SWT – please see confidential annex. (Section 145 Railways Act 1993 applies).

TfL Rail – agree with in principle.

Bexley – happens to an extent now. Zonal fares may encourage concentration of demand eg Bexleyheath –higher charges are made here because demand is high.

Redbridge – whilst there should be a general level of consistency of car park charges for similar stations, the zoning system approach is perhaps too simplistic. Car park prices should be set according to individual site circumstances.

Tandridge – Warlingham and Whyteleafe station charges are lower than zone 6 and are therefore very well used by commuters with the parking facilities inadequate at peak times.

Tower Hamlets – Fares outside the Travelcard zone are considered expensive and poor value for money. Combined with station car parking fees these can often prove a deterrent to the use of public transport. This is an issue for us in terms of social inclusion and in marketing alternatives to car use. In your report you cite 5 LU stations outside the Greater London boundary and suggest they should be priced in a similar way to other National Rail stations. This would most likely increase the cost, place pressure on on-street parking, and increase social exclusion. Inconsistencies in car park pricing by TfL and policies adopted by the TOCs to maximise revenue run counter to reducing car trip length. As demand often outstrips supply availability is an issue. There is no need for operators to adopt anything but a commercial approach, often obviating national and local objectives. Clearly these are issues for the local authorities from where commuters originate and where the scope and availability of complementary transport is limited.

Wandsworth – no comment.

Recommendation 16

In relation to pricing of car parking and its relationship to the Travelcard Zones that London TravelWatch agrees that, whilst in principle it would be preferable to have a structure as described above, in practice, because car parking prices will more likely be determined by local factors, it may not be possible or desirable to adopt such a structure.

Footnotes

- 1 Paddington, Euston, Kings Cross, St.Pancras, Victoria and Waterloo
- 2 Zone 3 Lewisham, Greenwich, Forest Hill, Wimbledon, Mortlake, East Finchley, Tottenham Hale, Zone 4 Woolwich Arsenal, Eltham, Bromley North, Beckenham Junction, Richmond, Brentford, Hounslow East, Wembley Park and Finchley Central, Zone 5 Bexleyheath, Sutton, Hounslow, Hayes and Harlington, Harrow-on-the-Hill and Chingford, Zone 6 Orpington and Surbiton
- 3 Zone 3 Kidbrooke, Lee, Chiswick, North Ealing, Brent Cross, Highgate and Leytonstone, Zone 4Welling, Mottingham, New Malden, Isleworth, Osterley, Greenford, Perivale, Sudbury Town, Queensbury, Colindale, Mill Hill East, New Southgate, Arnos Grove, Palmers Green, Woodford, South Woodford, Snaresbrook, Wanstead, Redbridge and Newbury Park, Zone 5 Sidcup, Tolworth, Berrylands, Twickenham, Hatton Cross, Hounslow West, South Ruislip, Ruislip Gardens, Stanmore, New Barnet, High Barnet, Cockfosters, Oakwood, Gordon Hill, Bush Hill Park, Buckhurst Hill, Hainault, Fairlop, Barkingside and Dagenham Dock, Zone 6 Slade Green, Crayford, Bexley, Knockholt, Chelsfield, Kenley, Coulsdon South, Woodmansterne, Smitham, Cheam, Chessington South, Chessington North, Hampton Court, Feltham, Hillingdon, Ickenham, Ruislip, West Ruislip, Northwood, Gidea Park, Harold Wood, Uxminster and Rainham

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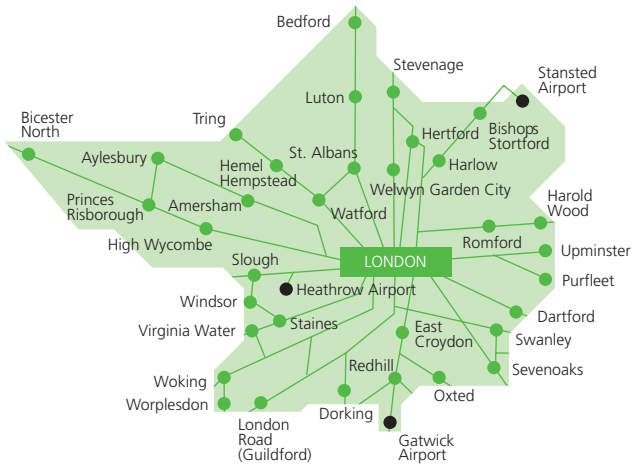
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