



The voice of transport users

What do passengers want from London's smaller rail stations?

April 2017

Confidential draft



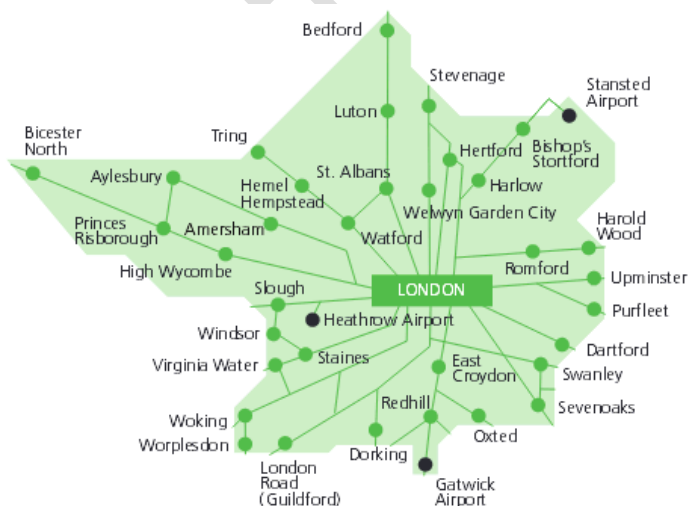
London TravelWatch is the independent, multi-modal body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public. This includes users of rail services in and around London, all Transport for London (TfL) services (bus, Tube, DLR, trams, taxis) and motorists, cyclists and pedestrians using London's strategic road network. We are funded by and accountable to the London Assembly.

Our approach

- We commission and carry out research, and evaluate and interpret the research carried out by others, to ensure that our work is based on the best possible evidence
- We investigate complaints that people have been unable to resolve with service providers – we get more than 6,000 enquiries a year from transport users and in 2015-16 we took up more than 850 cases with the operator because the original response the complainant had received was unsatisfactory
- We monitor trends in service quality as part of our intelligence-led approach
- We regularly meet with and seek to influence the relevant parts of the transport industry on all issues which affect the travelling public
- We work with a wide range of public interest organisations, user groups and research bodies to ensure we keep up to date with passenger experiences and concerns
- We speak for the travelling public in discussions with opinion formers and decision makers at all levels, including the Mayor of London, the London Assembly, the Government, Parliament, and local councils.

Our experience of using London's extensive public transport network, paying for our own travel, and seeing for ourselves what transport users go through, helps ensure we remain connected and up to date.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience for all those living, working or visiting London, and its surrounding region.



(Crossrail Elizabeth Line only – Reading to Shenfield)

Foreword

'Small' is only relative in the transport world. Any station with less than 1 million passengers a year is classed as small – the London Railway Area has 188 stations in this category, and passengers make almost 100 million journeys a year to and from them – nearly twice the number using London Bridge and nearly three times the number using Paddington.



Yet these stations are more likely to suffer neglect than larger ones, despite their importance, as they rarely hit the headlines, some serving isolated communities with little other travel choices and sometimes they are just 'small' because they aren't as good as they could be. They often receive less investment than larger stations and are not necessarily eligible for funding programmes. The quality of the passenger experience can also vary quite significantly as small stations are not subject to a set of minimum standards. And many small stations are not currently included when passenger satisfaction surveys are carried out.

In this report we look at the priorities for passengers using small stations and make the case for some modest improvements, particularly to improve accessibility and information.

Station operators could gain quick wins and raise satisfaction levels with relatively simple improvements such as regular and frequent cleaning, providing secure cycle storage and increasing the availability of clear and consistent travel information and signage.

Some small stations have already 'blazed the trail'. A series of short cases studies shows what can be achieved when improvements are made to a small station, making it more attractive to potential passengers and increasing footfall and ultimately revenue.

Most of the improvements we identify would necessarily fall to station operators but the Department for Transport (DfT) can also play its part by setting minimum station standards in franchises. There is also potential to work with local councils, communities, and local user groups to generate positive changes for passengers using small stations.

Stephen Locke
Chair

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1. Executive summary and recommendations

Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to look at the priorities for passengers using small stations and make the case for improvements.

The report concludes that:

- Basic standards should be set specific to passenger needs at small stations
- Passengers value smaller stations
- The DfT should enforce penalties for train operators that neglect small stations and regular audits should be carried out to ensure standards are kept up
- Small stations can often benefit from local community involvement (e.g. Cambridge Heath, London Fields or Brondesbury)
- Small stations face the problem of lack of funding as often priority is given to larger stations with higher footfall
- The importance of staff presence to safety (link back to other research, including the ticket office review)

Summary of recommendations

Train Operating Companies should implement the following recommendations:

Improve co-ordination of services where more than one operator is involved

- Adopt specific guidance on standards at small stations, working collaboratively with other TOCs to do so where relevant.

Improve the quality of services and facilities provided at small stations

- Ensure that the basic facilities needed to increase satisfaction are available at stations (i.e. ticketing facilities and customer waiting areas, lighting, the quality of platforms and other surfaces).

Adopt consistent standards and surveying/monitoring regimes at all stations and strive for continual improvement in standards

- Combine qualitative passenger satisfaction measures (NRPS) with a more objective measure of station performance audits such as QUEST.
- Increase the robustness of Customer Satisfaction Survey data to allow for analysis at the station level.
- The DfT should develop a longer-term strategy for station improvements and standards

- Franchise and concession agreements should include clauses that necessitate improvements at sub-standard small stations and ensure that standards at all small stations are progressively raised e.g. a requirement to get and maintain 'Secure Station' status.
- Transport Focus and TfL should consistently collect data on small stations to accurately measure satisfaction levels.

Ensure that investment in infrastructure and service improvements is distributed to the full range of stations in and around London, in particular for small stations

- Improvements to include:
 - the availability of ticketing and smart card facilities
 - passenger and onward travel information
 - interchange with other services and modes
 - assistance and security
- Bid for funding to improve the infrastructure and amenities at small stations
- Take account of the added value investing in stations has on the local economy.

Engage in effective partnerships with the local community

- Develop simplified Station Travel Plans in partnership with local authorities, stakeholders, and community members
- Develop partnerships with local residents and organisations, and passenger groups to help improve small stations through, for example, Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) and Adopt-a-Station initiatives
- Seek accreditation for the Secure Stations Scheme, Railway Safety Accreditation Scheme, and Safer Parking Scheme (where applicable)
- Establish individuals responsible for promoting and enabling development at small stations within property functions
- TOCs should consistently keep passengers updated on improvements being made at small stations, as well as information on any disruptions that may occur as a result of works.

Permit to Travel (PERTIS) machines at a small number of stations¹ in the London area with no Ticket Vending Machine (TVM), should be phased out in favour of conventional means of ticket purchase or smart card use.

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¹ Sudbury & Harrow Road, Sudbury Hill Harrow, South Greenford, Castle Bar Park, Drayton Green, Denham Golf Club, Watford North, Garston (Herts), Bricket Wood, How Wood and Park Street.

2. The growing importance of small stations

For the purpose of this report, a small station is one that has fewer than 1 million passenger entries and exits annually. Data on entries and exits comes from the Office of Rail and Road's (ORR) *Estimates of station usage* for 2015-16.² Small tube stations that do not interface with National Rail were determined using London Underground's multi-year entry and exit data.³ These statistics show there are 188 small stations within the London Railways Area. See Appendix A for a complete list of the small stations discussed in this report and the companies that operate them. We acknowledge that the ORR figures are in some cases estimates – for instance, at stations that do not have automatic gatelines in operation. Nevertheless, given there is no other reliable benchmark available, the ORR figures have been used to determine the small stations which form the basis of this report. The 1 million passenger entries and exits figure is a rough borderline between those stations that justify the provision of automatic ticket barriers, staffed ticket offices throughout the operational day and other traits normally associated with larger stations.

The usage statistics for all 188 small stations in and around London show collectively over 96 million passenger entries and exits in the 2014/15 year.⁴ In comparison, Paddington Station had over 35 million entries and exits, and London Bridge Station just fewer than 50 million.⁵ London's population growth means that demand for rail transport is likely to continue to grow in coming years. Increasing usage means that some stations currently classed as a small station will exceed the 1 million total annual entries and exits threshold in coming years. Indeed, 12-19 stations each year for the past five years have grown to over 1 million entries and exits. In 2015-16, 14 London stations previously classed as small stations exceeded the 1 million threshold – ironically, this means that 'graduation' will eventually reduce the problem.

The table below shows that growth in station usage at small stations in and around London was higher than other stations in Great Britain every year between 2010 and 2015. However, in 2015-16, growth in London slowed, and in fact, there were fewer uses of small stations than in 2014-15. This may in part be due to the changes in the methodology used to survey small stations for the 2015-16 period. Information on this is available on the ORR website.⁶

Table 1 - Proportion of growth in station usage (ORR estimates)

* Note that at the time of producing this table, TfL had yet to release data on entries and exits for the 2015-16 year, so the statistics in the final column exclude London Underground stations.

Station usage growth (%)/year	2010 / 2011	2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	2014 / 2015	2015/ 2016*
Great Britain	10.44	9.39	3.57	4.96	5.11	5.13
London small stations	25.57	9.75	5.87	6.48	5.29	-0.1
London Railways Area	18.77	11.24	5.94	7.5	5.75	5.14

² <http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>

³ <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/underground-services-performance>

⁴ Figure derived from ORR statistics plus TfL for London Underground

⁵ Figure derived from ORR statistics but does not include London Underground entries and exits.

⁶ <http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>

Different operators manage stations in London through franchise or concession arrangements with either the DfT or TfL. This results in variances in levels of investment in smaller stations. Smaller stations tend to receive less investment than stations that have higher footfall and are not necessarily eligible for some existing funding programmes. Standards at stations differ depending on the operator, and as the focus tends to be on larger stations, some small stations can end up neglected.

Passengers expect a minimum standard at the stations they use, irrespective of their size, as they are paying to use the network and expect value for money in the services they receive both on the train and in the station.

Investing in infrastructure and service standards at small stations is fundamental to improving the customer experience for existing users, as well as to attracting new passengers. Increasing public transport usage would help meet the sustainability objectives of transport operators, the DfT, TfL, the Mayor of London, and local authorities alike. Collective work to improve standards and thereby increase usage would help to achieve these objectives. For example, the Mayor of London, local authorities and local community groups should collaborate to improve standards at small stations to make them more attractive and therefore encourage modal shift from car to rail, which can feed into air quality goals.

The rail industry should recognise the importance of small stations to the wider London network and that therefore it is important to raise the standard at some of these stations. A joined up effort between operators and the DfT to make incremental improvements will provide better value for money for the many passengers who use small stations in and around London.

The wider role of small stations

In 2015, research for London TravelWatch, London Councils, and Trust for London identified that of Londoners living in poverty, 58% live in outer London compared to 42% in 2005. Of the 188 small stations we have identified, 81 (43%) are located within zones 4 to 6 in outer London and 71 (37%) are located outside zones 1 to 6. The trend for lower income groups to be concentrated increasingly in outer London has implications for the services and facilities provided at stations in these areas. Access to jobs and services are an essential component of tackling poverty and inequality, as well as providing employers with a wider pool of potential employees. Poor levels of service e.g. restricted evening and weekend services, low frequency peak and off-peak service levels at these stations will naturally tend to restrict the job and life prospects of people living in their vicinity. Conversely, improving service levels and facilities such as secure cycle storage at smaller stations has the potential to help reduce social isolation, and enable people on low incomes gain access to jobs and services that would not otherwise be available to them. An example of this is Belmont, in the London Borough of Sutton. This station is served by hourly services Monday to Saturday and none on Sundays. It is also very close to Sutton and the Royal Marsden Hospitals. Improving services here would not only benefit the local area, but also people in wider South London that need access to these hospitals, who otherwise have to travel by car, taxi or private hire vehicle or endure long and complicated journeys by bus.

3. Understanding passengers' needs at smaller stations

The following section will examine the research carried out by London TravelWatch and other bodies on what passengers want to see in stations, with a particular focus on small stations.

Our research

London TravelWatch has conducted research into what passengers expect from rail stations. This research includes:

- *Interchange Matters: passenger priorities for improvement* (July 2015);
- *The London Travelling Environment: What consumers think* (January 2014)
- *Standards at London's Rail Stations* (September 2010);
- *Whose station are you? – Facilities at joint Underground and National Rail stations* (August 2004); and
- *Interchange Matters blog* (ongoing)

A full list of London TravelWatch research relating to passenger expectations in stations is located in Appendix B.

The research conducted has shown that the following things are of importance to passengers:

- Step-free access within and around the station to help passengers with disabilities and those travelling with children and/or luggage
- Staff presence from first to last service either at a ticket office, on the concourse or on platforms to help with tickets, travel advice and security
- Easy to use ticketing facilities (for example a ticket office, ticket machine or nearby outlet);
- Toilets, sheltered waiting areas, seating (both within the station concourse and on the platforms), and refreshments
- Good quality, clearly visible and real-time journey and onward travel information which is not overwhelmed by advertising
- Signage both bespoke to the station yet consistent in design to be easily recognisable and appropriately placed as to not obstruct movement or views
- Ease of interchange with other services (other trains, buses, cars and bicycles)
- Litter bins and a clean, safe, and well cared-for environment

Passengers recognise that facilities and services will not necessarily be consistent across stations. However, they do expect a minimum standard irrespective of station size or train operator. Investment in station infrastructure and the passenger experience should not focus only on medium and large stations, but rather be allocated proportionately to all stations on the network.

Below are the key issues arising out of our research and recommendations to address these:

Tickets and smart cards

Passengers want to be sure that they are purchasing the right ticket at the best price. Ticket vending machines (TVMs) at stations should be easy to use, sheltered from the elements, and should provide the required National Rail and London Underground services at the best price. A small number of stations⁷ in the London area have no ticket machines, instead there is often a Permit to Travel [PERTIS] machine to allow passengers to pay for their ticket at another station along their journey). This is a very outdated method of operation, and in the London context should be phased out in favour of conventional means of ticket purchase or smart card use. Alternatively, retail outlets within or near the station should have the capacity to sell tickets. Operators should take the opportunity to provide TVMs at small stations that do not have them, particularly during ticket machine renewal programmes on the network. 'Virtual' ticket machines, like the ones recently introduced at some South West Trains stations, are a potential new way to help passengers buy tickets at unstaffed or partly staffed small stations.

An increasing number of passengers in London use smart cards such as Oyster and Contactless that automatically calculate the best fare for journeys within London's Travelcard zones. We recommend that all stations within the zones have Oyster card products available for purchase through ticket machines. The transition between paying for travel with Oyster and Contactless and National Rail tickets should be as simple as possible.

Travel information

Passengers want service updates, particularly at stations where services are infrequent. Signage, way finding, and Customer Information Screens providing real-time service information should be available at all small stations. Likewise, public address systems need to be clear, concise, and audible for passengers across all parts of the station.

Interchange

Throughout our research, it is clear that passengers want to be able to interchange quickly and easily both in stations and from stations to other modes. This is particularly important in London, where interchanges are common and often multi-modal (e.g. from train to bus).

Assistance, security, staff and the availability of toilets

Assistance for passengers with mobility issues should be easy to book when it is not available as a 'turn up and go' service, as on the London Underground. Network Rail currently use the Assisted Passenger Reservation System, which needs to be consistently available at all stations. National Rail operators should have a Disabled Peoples' Protection Policy setting out procedures for assisting disabled and elderly passengers who wish to use their services.

⁷ Sudbury & Harrow Road, Sudbury Hill Harrow, South Greenford, Castle Bar Park, Drayton Green, Denham Golf Club, Watford North, Garston (Herts), Bricket Wood, How Wood and Park Street.

Assistance varies from providing a special telephone service, to assisting passengers into stations and onto trains, to providing alternative routes where a station is not fully accessible. The industry's efforts to improve accessibility across the network have increased the level of passengers with disabilities using the railways; each year for the past four, more passengers are purchasing the disabled persons' railcard and more rail passengers are requesting assistance to travel.⁸

Yet there continues to be inconsistency between different operators and/or members of staff. Disabled passengers may require assistance throughout their journey, and this should be consistent, even when customers use multiple operators to complete their journey. A negative experience can profoundly affect a disabled person's confidence and sense of independence using public transport, so assistance needs to be up to standard at all stations, irrespective of size.

Where stations are unstaffed for part or all of the hours of service, CCTV should be monitored and Help Points should be available for passengers who may need assistance. Some small stations have a staff presence only at certain times of day and, as mentioned above, this is a priority for passengers. Operators need to monitor footfall at small stations and ensure that staff are present, especially during busy periods, to increase the likelihood of customers gaining the assistance they require.

Toilet provision is increasingly an issue for train operators given the rising age profile of the UK population, and also pressure on space within trains to accommodate rising passenger numbers. Providing toilets at stations is helpful to passengers in various ways, but also reduces the need for on train toilets with associated technologies for controlled emissions.

Other research

Transport Focus (formerly Passenger Focus) and TfL conduct passenger satisfaction surveys, which include questions about stations.

Transport Focus research - The National Rail Passenger Survey

Transport Focus is the official watchdog for passengers and road users across England outside London. They engage with around 50,000 passengers to produce the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) twice a year to gauge the satisfaction of rail passengers with their experience both in stations and on trains. The NRPS is the rail industry's measure of operator performance, which demonstrates what is important to passengers, but the sampling method is based on journeys rather than station use as such. Information captured about stations includes:

- overall satisfaction with the station
- ticket purchasing facilities
- train times and platform information
- the upkeep and repair of station buildings and platforms
- cleanliness
- facilities and services (for example, toilets, shops, cafes)

⁸ <http://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/browse/reports/18>

- availability, attitudes and helpfulness of staff
- connections with other forms of public transport
- facilities for car parking
- overall environment
- personal security
- provision of shelter
- availability of seating.

The NRPS is a great resource to see how operators are doing in terms of passenger satisfaction and provides enough information about small stations to be useful for some purposes and small stations in the generality but not in the particular. More could be done in this survey for small stations such as combining passenger satisfaction measures with a more objective measure of station performance (for example, whether the ticket machines or the toilets are in working order) through, for example, the Quality Experience on Stations and Trains (QUEST) audits.

However, there are also more basic limitations to the NRPS in measuring standards at small stations. Firstly, not all small stations in and around London have received responses or been surveyed at all throughout the last five years (2011-2015). The NRPS has never surveyed approximately 25% of all London stations - mainly small or medium in size. The inconsistency in surveying may give rise to 'gaming' by operators. Operators may know that surveys are less likely to take place at certain stations and therefore have less incentive to carry out station improvements. To reduce the possibility of this and to increase the accuracy of data, London TravelWatch has previously advocated that the NRPS should aim to cover all stations in and around London and that the frequency of surveys should be increased.

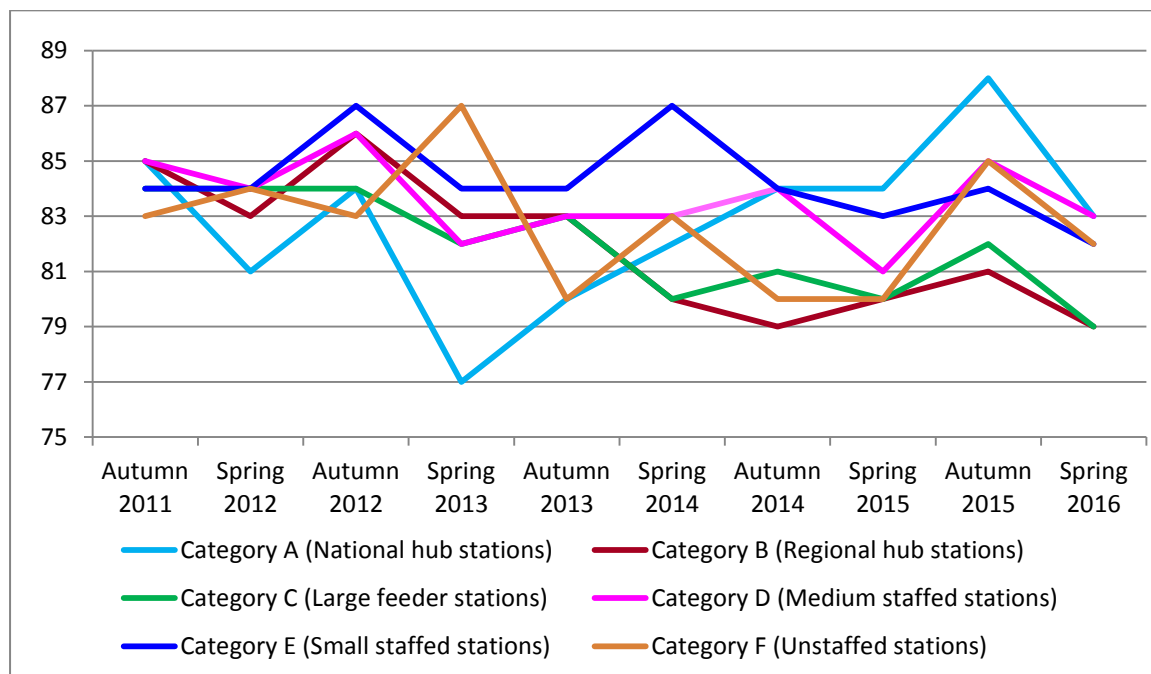
Secondly, analysing survey results for individual stations is difficult. For those small stations in and around London that have been surveyed for all or some of the bi-annual (spring and autumn) surveys over the past five years, most have generated fewer than 25 responses and many fewer than 10 responses. In addition, there is often significant variation in the number of responses received for each survey. For example, at a given station there may be 10 responses received in a spring survey, three received in the autumn survey, and 14 received in the following spring survey.

Transport Focus seeks a minimum of 50 respondents for the findings to be robust, with 100 respondents being ideal. As individual small stations tend to generate fewer responses, Transport Focus combines results to provide a more robust assessment of small stations as a category, rather than at individual station level.

Charting NRPS passenger satisfaction scores by station category (for all of Great Britain) reveals fluctuation between spring and autumn surveys and few strong trends. Despite this, all categories saw some increase between the spring and autumn 2015 surveys and all saw some decrease between the autumn 2015 and spring 2016 surveys. This illustrates some of the difficulties in using NRPS data for this purpose – which it was not specifically designed to be used for. Enhancing the NRPS to make it fit for the purpose of assessing the needs of small stations would be prohibitively expensive and would not, in our opinion, necessarily drive behaviours amongst operators that would enhance the passenger experience at

these locations. Commitments to small scale improvements and maintenance of existing standards would in this case be a better use of resources than additional surveys.

Figure 1. Passenger satisfaction scores by station category for all of Great Britain (NRPS data)



In spite of the gaps in the NRPS data, if we group together available passenger satisfaction scores at small stations in and around London by operator from spring 2011 to spring 2016:

- c2c, London Overground, and Chiltern Railways perform best
- Southeastern, Great Northern and Greater Anglia are at the bottom of the list.

Table 2. Passenger satisfaction scores at small stations in and around London by operator

Operator	Score
c2c	95.84
London Overground	92.92
Chiltern Railways	88.28
Great Western Railway	87.78
Thameslink	86.30
London Midland	83.22
Southern	81.31
South West Trains	77.36
Southeastern	74.68
Great Northern	72.10
Greater Anglia	71.01
TfL Rail	No data

This ranking offers a generalised picture of how the different operators are performing at small stations in and around London, but a more consistent set of passenger responses would provide a clearer picture for comparison. It is noticeable however, that the operators at the top of the league also perform well overall for passenger satisfaction more generally, are smaller in overall operation and for whom small stations generate a significant proportion of their business. They therefore have an incentive to ensure that their small stations are well looked after.

Assessing the National Stations Improvement Programme

Transport Focus (formerly Passenger Focus) produced research in 2012 on the impact of the National Station Improvement Programme on passenger satisfaction.⁹ Using 'before and after' (phases one and two) surveys, they found that the improvements made at various stations drove up overall satisfaction and that these successes indicated the potential for further improvement.

In phase one of the research, passengers placed the greatest importance on shelters and waiting rooms. Improvements were made based on phase one and in the phase two survey, passengers 'gave much higher satisfaction scores for facilities such as the ticket office/sales points, platform shelters, waiting rooms and the station entrances/exits.'¹⁰ This demonstrates the effectiveness of making improvements to small stations, but also the relative importance that passengers give to different facilities within a station. Get these right and passenger satisfaction and usage will follow.

The most effective improvements in raising satisfaction were in the 'appearance of the booking office, the condition of platform shelters, the footbridges, ticket sales points, the main entrances/exits, and the waiting rooms.'¹¹

In summary, the research showed that investing in stations leads to higher levels of passenger satisfaction, and investments need not be elaborate to have an impact. The fact that passengers cited basics such as waiting areas and station entrances as important factors in satisfaction demonstrates this.

Network Rail initiatives

Network Rail research has also showed the importance of providing the basics to passengers. The Action Stations initiative 'covers stations of any size or type' and lists 10 principles for station improvement over the next 20 years. It found that passengers value seated waiting areas, toilets, ticket sales facilities, cash points and reliable information.¹² Network Rail aims for stations to:

- 'Be safe, secure and easy to use
- Provide the information needed for passengers to plan their journeys
- Allow quick and easy transfer to other forms of transport

⁹ Passenger Focus (2012). *National Station Improvement Programme - Phase Two: Report on a research study conducted for Passenger Focus*, May 2012.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* (p.1)

¹¹ *Ibid.* (p.1)

¹² Network Rail (2009). Action Stations (booklet). <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/6368.aspx>

- Attract people to use the rail network
- Have a positive impact on the environment
- Be places people want to work, shop and travel to
- Showcase good British design and safeguard our heritage
- Provide a hub for other modes of transport
- Act as a catalyst for the development of our major cities
- Anticipate the changing and dynamic needs of our passengers¹³

Network Rail has invested £3.25 billion in station improvements over the past five years, which includes some small stations covered by this report.

TfL research

TfL has its own measure of passenger satisfaction called the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS). The survey measures satisfaction with information, safety and security, staff helpfulness and availability, cleanliness, and services on trains and at stations. CSS data, measured quarterly, is not published on the TfL website, but the results are included within the publicly available performance reports for the various transport modes operated by TfL, including London Underground, London Overground and TfL Rail. London TravelWatch publishes this in its [TfL Performance Report](#).

As with the NRPS, there are limitations to CSS data relating to stations. Survey responses are not sufficiently robust at individual station level. Instead, results on a line basis (for London Underground) or route basis (for other modes such as London Overground) are a better indicator of passenger satisfaction. For this reason, CSS data makes it difficult to analyse what the situation is at smaller TfL stations. TfL should aim to increase robustness of CSS data at a station-by-station level; particularly as it is unlikely that stations on the same line or route will perform at the same level. There is inconsistency in surveying passenger satisfaction both through the National Rail Passenger Survey and the TfL Customer Satisfaction Survey. This inconsistency means that the needs of passengers at smaller stations are not being heard through these surveys. Therefore, other methods need to be employed by train operators and TfL to ensure that the voices of users of small stations are listened to and acted upon.

The approach of other surveys by Transport Focus, Network Rail and TfL are good in relation to the task that they are designed to achieve. However, these approaches would be prohibitively expensive to replicate on a regular individual basis, especially at stations with low usage. Better value for money would be achieved by practical activities and investment at stations in accordance with the recommendations of this report.

¹³ *Ibid.* (p.2)

4. Current improvement initiatives

The Government has recently pledged the 'biggest investment in the railways since the Victorian era'.¹⁴ The relatively higher growth in passengers at small stations in and around London compared to the rest of Great Britain strengthens the case for investment in these smaller stations. See Table 1 - Proportion of growth in station usage (ORR estimates).

The following section will examine industry guidance on station improvements, funding currently available to small stations and the way in which community involvement can improve standards at small stations.

Firstly, small station operators should identify opportunities for 'quick wins' – that is to say, improvements which are inexpensive and easily implementable in a short space of time. We recognise that the cost of making the whole network accessible at the same time is prohibitive, but incremental progress towards a more accessible transport system is vital at large and small stations alike.

In some cases, investing in small stations is cheaper than in larger stations and can give better value for money. Station improvements mostly need small interventions, particularly to improve access and information. Station operators could gain quick wins and raise satisfaction levels with relatively simple station improvements. For example:

- ensuring dropped kerbs or access ramps to improve accessibility for mobility impaired passengers and those travelling with luggage or children e.g. Castle Bar Park southbound and Sudbury Hill Harrow both platforms
- providing clear and consistent travel information on London's wider transport network
- maps, signage and wayfinding to and from the station
- secure cycle storage at the station
- ticket machines, Oyster/Contactless card validators or permit to travel machines, information points and toilets
- regular and frequent cleaning of the station environment for detritus, litter, and graffiti.
- Refreshing paintwork, repairing broken windows etc.

Industry guidance

Industry guidance for rail stations tends to focus on planning, design, and accessibility improvements. Though some general direction is available to help train operators raise overall standards at their stations, much of the guidance addresses a broad range of stations with little information specific to small stations.

Until 2009, attempts to introduce station standards across the rail industry were not very effective. For example, minimum standards set by the Office of Passenger Rail

¹⁴ Transport Secretary Chris Grayling in the following interview, August 2016.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/08/10/biggest-rail-investment-in-uk-since-victorian-age-safeguards-100/>

Franchising (OPRAF) from 1996 were ineffective, as they were not enforced. The lack of regulation by the OPRAF meant that most operators did not meet the standards set. The *Modern Facilities at Stations* fund developed by the Strategic Rail Authority in 2003 was short-lived, achieving little impact. DfT franchise agreements in place from 2004 strengthened requirements for station standards, but these varied depending on the franchise. Southern became the first train operator to place greater emphasis on station standards when they began their franchise period in 2009. In the same year, the DfT published a review of stations, entitled *Better Rail Stations*, which set standards for stations in England and Wales.¹⁵

Minimum standards for stations

As mentioned above, the *Better Rail Stations* report was the first real attempt at setting standards for stations in England and Wales. This independent review considered and recommended minimum levels of service, delivering better stations and enhancing stations as both transport interchanges and community institutions.

The report proposed detailed minimum standards for the six station categories implemented by the DfT in 1996 applied as rail franchises were renewed. The categories are as follows:

- Category A: National hub stations
- Category B: Regional hub stations
- Category C: Large feeder stations
- Category D: Medium staffed stations
- Category E: Small staffed stations
- Category F: Unstaffed stations

For the purposes of this report, a small station falls into categories D, E, and F in the DfT's categorisation scheme.

Broadly, the report called for greater investment in stations to bring their access, information, facilities, and environment up to a consistent modern standard in order to raise passenger satisfaction scores. The report is of use as it addresses standards at smaller stations specifically. It recommends that smaller stations 'should be progressively brought up to minimum standards through franchise tenders' including the removal of redundant buildings and upgrading remaining facilities.¹⁶ Station standards should be treated as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be regularly reviewed within franchise agreements and TOCs should seek accreditation such as Park Mark (for car park security) and the Secure Stations scheme to demonstrate that they are complying with standards.

The report also recommends 'Adopt a Station' and Community Rail Partnership initiatives to involve community members in the upkeep and improvement of stations. Attracting retailers and local organisations to operate at small, particularly unstaffed

¹⁵ <http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20100409091328/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/passenger/stations/beterrailstations/pdf/report.pdf>

¹⁶ *Ibid.* (p.7)

stations would not only help integrate the station within the local community, but would also provide more station presence to make passengers feel safer.

The report recognises that smaller stations 'should be capable of quick and proportionate improvements.'¹⁷ It also recognises that at small unstaffed stations, improvements are possible but they just 'need a different funding strategy compared to the larger staffed stations.'¹⁸

See Appendix C for a list of specific recommended standards for stations in categories D, E, and F.

Investment in stations

The Value of Station Investment: Research on Regenerative Impacts, produced by Steer Davies Gleave (SDG) for Network Rail in 2011, argues that investment in stations contributes to the wider economic development of the local area by not only raising land values, but by encouraging economic activity as well.¹⁹ On the contrary, stations in poor condition can act as a barrier to local economic development and lead to a negative perception of the area. The report focuses on improvements to station facilities, the station environment, and accessibility to both local/onward destinations and to passengers with restricted mobility.

Although investment in smaller stations may have a low impact on the local economy in absolute terms, it can still play a significant role in supporting local regeneration. Therefore, coordination between station operators and local stakeholders, in particular businesses is important to help develop the area around stations. Station operators should look into funding from local stakeholders to minimise their dependence on the limited public sector funding available to them.

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) produced its *Vision for Stations* in October 2015 to help operators, passengers, and local communities work together to meet changing passenger needs and expectations at stations in Britain, as well as to promote the important role stations can play in the local community. The vision sets out nine guiding principles for stations to:

- be customer focused
- use technology intelligently
- offer a seamless journey experience
- reflect local needs and opportunities
- provide a safe and secure environment
- promote entrepreneurial spirit
- have flexible and long-term stewardship
- share industry know-how
- be part of an optimised network.²⁰

¹⁷ *Ibid.* (p.13)

¹⁸ *Ibid.* (p.13)

¹⁹

http://www.steerdaviesgleave.com/sites/default/files/newsandinsights/Station_Investment_Report.pdf

²⁰ http://www.raildeliverygroup.com/files/Publications/2015-10_vision_for_stations.pdf

The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) is also currently working with the DfT on the *Sustainable Stations Framework*, a tool for the rail industry to help inform investment decisions and realise the RDG's *Vision for Stations*.²¹ The framework aims to create a new classification system for stations to replace the current A to F categories, as well as a dashboard to help improve benchmarking, provide a common set of performance indicators, and use the existing and potential characteristics of the station and its surrounding community to better measure and improve performance. The framework informs the franchising process on ways to improve stations standards and to simplify information on what passengers can expect from stations.

When examined in conjunction, the *Vision for Stations* and *Sustainable Stations Framework* provide a step in the right direction to placing more focus on the quality of and potential for stations after decades of industry neglect.

Incremental improvements to accessibility, travel and onward journey information, facilities, the travel environment, safety and security, and staffing (where possible) are necessary at London's small stations. For example, new 'virtual' ticket vending machines (TVMs), like the ones recently introduced at some South West Trains stations, can help passengers buy tickets at unstaffed or partly-staffed small stations, especially since TVMs can be complicated and small stations are not likely to have an alternative ticket retailer nearby.

Station Travel Plans

Our research shows that production of a Station Travel Plan (STP) can improve interchange at stations. A STP is a document that seeks to bring together stakeholder plans for improvements to a station and the area surrounding it. This covers how passengers get to and from stations, through provision of things such as car and cycle parking, or improved links to buses. A STP assesses the unique characteristics, constraints, and opportunities for the station. STPs increase the likelihood of station operators and local authorities working together to achieve meaningful improvements to both transport and sustainability objectives.

STPs at small stations have the potential to increase footfall through improvements to the quality of the interchange, including increased safety, and the facilities available to customers using the station. Small stations may be able to gain stakeholder funding through STPs that may not be available to them from elsewhere; this is not such an issue at larger stations that generally receive more investment

A STP is a management tool that brings stakeholders together to improve multi-modal access to and from stations, with a focus on sustainable transport objectives and making door-to-door journeys smoother for passengers. *Guidance on the Implementation of Station Travel Plans*, produced by the RSSB in 2013, used lessons learned to describe the benefits of STPs and provide advice to station operators wishing to develop their own.²²

²¹ <http://www-uat.rssb.co.uk/research-development-and-innovation/research-and-development/research-project-catalogue/t1074>

²² <http://live-cycle-rail.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/STP-Toolkit-low-res-web.pdf>

Guidelines for Development Management for Stations, published by ATOC in 2014, also promotes the use of STPs.²³ It provides a breakdown of requirements and considerations when producing STPs for all station categories, including small stations. Category D stations should have a summary STP and action plan, but with less strict criteria than for larger (A to C) stations. Since smaller (E and F) stations are not formally required to produce an STP, the guidance suggests that smaller stations could instead use a simpler 'plan on a page' evaluation of access arrangements. Local Community Rail Partnerships and neighbourhood audit processes are ideal ways of carrying out this type of assessment.

STPs are a relatively new idea, introduced by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC, now the Rail Delivery Group, RDG). As of yet, there has been little uptake of stations producing STPs. Small stations should look to produce STPs, or a 'plan on a page', to look to improve access and interchange at stations.

There are many examples on the Southern rail network where the use of STPs has resulted in improvements to station facilities and growth in usage in the past.

Safety at stations

The *Secure Stations Scheme* sets design and management safety standards aimed at reducing crime at rail stations.²⁴ Established in 1998 and managed by the DfT and the British Transport Police (BTP), the scheme provides accreditation to station operators that provide a safe station environment for passengers and staff. The certificate is valid for two years, but a station can lose accreditation if it fails to comply with standards.

Meeting these standards can help station operators manage the risk of crime and reduce the cost of vandalism, while providing a safer environment for staff and passengers, and potentially increasing passenger numbers. Most small stations in the London Railway Area meet the 'Secure Stations' standard – a small number operated by Great Western Railway, London Midland and South West Trains do not have this accreditation.

The BTP operate the similar but separate *Railway Safety Accreditation Scheme*, which sets standards for organisations and their employees, including station staff, which aim to control anti-social behaviour.

The *Safer Parking Scheme* sets a national standard for car parks and awards the 'Park Mark' certificate, valid for one year, to car parks with 10 spaces or more that have measures in place to reduce crime, such as CCTV. Of the 188 small stations in London, 53% have car parks, of which 45% have Park Mark certification. This represents 24% of all small stations in London.

²³ <http://www.atoc.org/latest-publications/>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/secure-stations-scheme-accreditation-for-rail-operators>

TfL asset management

TfL does not have any formal guidance for station standards, though it does have an asset management policy and strategy that set out its long-term objectives for station improvements. For example, its strategy for the London Underground sets goals for future delivery plans, including for stations, lifts and escalators, and communication systems.²⁵

Similarly to the DfT, TfL has created categories for the 270 stations that they operate on the London Underground (LU) network. These categories group stations based on their footfall, passenger types and operational assets, and are as follows:

- 'Gateway stations – main visitor entry points to London, with a high proportion of people unfamiliar with the Tube network, such as Kings Cross/St. Pancras and Heathrow Terminals 123 stations
- Destination stations – busy stations in central London, which have high volumes of customers and include commuter rail termini and tourist destinations, such as Embankment station
- Metro stations – that serve predominantly inner London communities, with many regular users, such as Clapham South station
- Local stations – smaller stations in Outer London or beyond, with lower customer numbers that serve mainly regular customers, such as Rickmansworth station.²⁶

Only eight London Underground stations would qualify as small stations; all of these fall into the Local station category as outlined above.

The overall goal for London Underground stations is to:

'Provide our customers with a functional, bright, clean, and welcoming environment that is safe, accessible to all, whilst keeping in line with growth demands delivered through our line upgrades. Good station design will be applied that will be attractive, spacious, reflect our heritage, have a local identity whilst reinforcing the world famous LU brand.' [p.25]

The strategy also aims to:

- improve interchange between modes through changes to layout, signage and customer information
- maintain and improve lifts and escalators, which are crucial for managing congestion, reducing journey time, and increasing accessibility at stations
- improve communication systems such as help points, public address systems, service update boards and new technologies (Apps, etc.) to improve the passenger experience.

²⁵ Transport for London (2013). *LU Asset Management Strategy Summary*. <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/lu-asset-management-strategy.pdf>

²⁶ *Ibid.*

London Underground bases the schedule for delivering station improvements on the overall condition of stations and the number of faults as well as customer usage. Smaller stations therefore risk being last to receive improvements. Yet TfL's higher standards for stations (both London Underground and others) do result in better station environments for passengers when compared with other station operators in and around London. This may in part be because TfL does not have many 'small' stations – particularly in terms of the classification used for this report, but primarily it is because small stations are an integral part of TfL's main business and are managed on a local basis. Local management that has an interest in promoting the small stations under its care is essential for all small stations regardless of operator.

Funding programmes

The National Station Improvement Programme

The National Station Improvement Programme (NSIP) is a partnership between Network Rail and the train operators to deliver £150 million provided by the Government to upgrade over 150 stations across England and Wales.²⁷ The main aim of the programme is to raise passenger satisfaction through the improvement of station environments. The fund has increased to £220 million from additional industry investment, with the Government also investing a further £100 million. Although mostly aimed at medium-size (A to D) stations, some small (E and F) stations in and around London have benefitted from the fund; this will be discussed in the next section.

Access for All

In 2006, the DfT launched the Access for All (AfA) programme as part of the Railways for All strategy to improve step-free access at stations.²⁸ The fund distributed £35 million annually between 2006 and 2015 to improve access to and between platforms for passengers with disabilities, elderly passengers and those travelling with children and/or luggage. From 2011, a 'mid-tier' programme began accepting bids for smaller access projects costing between £250,000 and £1,000,000. However, the fund only included one small London station – Horley.

In 2014, a further £135 million extended the AfA programme to 2019. However, following the Hendy Review (November 2015) this was reduced to £87.1m up to 2019, with the remaining £47.9m available between 2019-2024.

TfL's accessibility programme

TfL has its own rolling programme of accessibility improvements for the stations, tram, and bus stops it operates. London Underground, London Overground, and TfL Rail stations benefit from year-on-year investment aimed at making them at least partially step-free. TfL's 2016/2017 Budget and Business Plan has doubled the station accessibility fund from £75 million to £150 million, with a target of making 50 per cent of rail and Tube stations step-free by 2018. (Note: London Overground and

²⁷ <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/nsip/>

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/access-for-all-programme>

TfL Rail have also sought AfA funding for their stations, including Ilford and New Cross Gate).

Station Commercial Project Facility

The Station Commercial Project Facility funds projects that increase income for the DfT while simultaneously improving station environments. These projects include extended paying car parks, ticket gatelines to increase fare income, and approaches to reduce operating costs.²⁹ £100 million was available between 2011 and 2014, and a further £60 million is available between 2014 and 2019. However, this fund is mainly for larger stations as they tend to provide bigger returns on investment. Eight projects have been funded since March 2016, seven of which were category C stations and one of which was a category D station. None of the stations covered by this report have so far been enhanced using this fund.

The Cycle Rail fund supports train companies to improve the integrations between cycling and rail at stations, primarily by providing cycle parking and storage.³⁰ The DfT made £14.5 million available from 2012 to 2014 and a further £15 million for 2015-2016. Some small stations in and around London have benefitted from this fund, including Addlestone and Bookham.

Planning gain

Through their planning powers, local authorities have the ability to secure improvements to stations made necessary by developments in the local area, such as new shopping centres or changes to transportation (e.g. introduction of one-way systems). This can include access improvements, additional station buildings, public toilets and new or upgraded ticket vending machines.

Local business and community involvement

Over the past decade, the DfT has promoted Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) as a way to involve local people and organisations in the support and maintenance of small stations. A CRP is an arrangement between the station operator, local council, and community organisation(s) (rail user groups, friends groups, etc).

An assessment by the Association for Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) found that CRPs can: generate station enhancements at good value for money, increase usage and fares revenue, encourage a modal shift from car to rail for part or whole journeys, reduce anti-social behaviour and increase security at stations, and stimulate economic development in the local area.³¹ CRPs can also be effective in pushing for more investment to improve the travelling environment of small stations through things such as artwork or gardening. Through some CRPs, under-used station buildings have been transformed into commercial, office, or training spaces

²⁹ <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/12458.aspx>

³⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-rail-fund-schemes-2015-to-2016>

³¹ Association for Community Rail Partnerships (2015). *The Value of Community Rail Partnerships and The Value of Community Rail Volunteering*.

for local businesses and social enterprise initiatives or developed into waiting rooms for passengers.

The DfT say that:

*'Although station developments can often be major projects involving substantial sums of money and the use of professional architects and contractors, community engagement can deliver more modest but still worthwhile station improvements. Many stations are now adopted by individuals or organisations and this type of community engagement can help to enhance the appearance and feel of station facilities.'*³²

CRPs are usually associated with rail lines and stations in rural areas. However, there are some in the greater London area, such as the award-winning CRP between London Midland and the Abbey Flyer Users' Group, for the Abbey Line between Watford Junction and St. Albans.

According to a 2015 Transport Xtra article, a successful CRP is:

*'about going well beyond the essential "basics" of accessibility, safety, lighting, and information. It requires flexibility, creativity and imagination. And it involves partners. What works in one location might not work somewhere else. One local authority or community group might be keen, others won't be. There is no simple 'rule book' on how to make it work, but lessons from around the UK are worth studying.'*³³

An increase in the number and quality of CRPs may be an effective way of improving a greater number of small stations in and around London, meaning CRPs are something in which station operators should consider investing. Section seven contains case studies of some of the work done by CRPs already in existence.

Case study

The Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership

The Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership (ALCRP) has promoted and improved services on the Abbey Line from Watford to St. Albans Abbey since 2005. The ALCRP has brought together community members and stakeholders to deliver award winning station improvements, including:

- A new waiting shelter with stainless steel artwork panels at Garston Station in order to combat vandalism. Groundwork Hertfordshire delivered this project and posters made by pupils at a local school inspired the designs
- Mosaics displayed at St. Albans Abbey Station designed by local schoolchildren

³² Department for Transport (2007). *Review of Community Rail Development Strategy*, p.12.

³³ Paul Salvesson (2015). The stations we deserve? *Transport Xtra* – Issue 666, 20 Feb 2015.

- A community art project in conjunction with the Watford YMCA and artist Eleanor Shipman displaying posters at the Watford Junction Abbey Line platform approach.

The ALCRP successfully encourages community members to take pride in their local stations and to get involved in smaller scale improvement projects. They provide a good example to station operators of how developing and nurturing a Community Rail Partnership can help generate positive changes at small stations.

A case study of two small stations that have benefitted from investment following the work of a user group to highlight poor official usage statistics, engage the police services to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and community action to improve the physical environment at Cambridge Heath and London Fields, is accessible via the Railwatch website.³⁴

Case study: Energy Garden Journey

In 2015, TfL launched the Energy Garden Journey initiative in conjunction with Groundwork and Repowering London. The project aims to bring local residents, community groups, and station managers together to install community gardens powered by solar technologies at London Overground stations. The aim is to create a sense of ownership in local stations and environmental awareness among local residents. This type of initiative will likely improve station environments and the passenger experience.

Other methods

Operators can often raise money for station improvements by developing buildings or pieces of land associated with smaller stations into small business units or housing. However, the cost of converting such buildings or sale or lease arrangements may not be attractive unless individuals or outside organisations contact them with a proposition and even then, this can be a lengthy and therefore off-putting process for some.

On the other hand, the benefits to passengers and to the railway from such development can be quite considerable if not always quantifiable in monetary terms.

Examples of such benefits might include provision of:

- passive security of stations by increased footfall and casual observation outside of peak hours (e.g. through presence of businesses or housing); and
- services or businesses that encourage passengers to use the railway (e.g. former goods shed converted to car maintenance business).

We recommend that Network Rail, TfL, and other train operators nominate individuals within their property teams to promote and deal with property development at smaller stations. These could be used to give trainees in these departments experience of station development before moving on to larger schemes. Such developments might include residential property to increase passive

³⁴ <http://www.railwatch.org.uk/pdfs/20160701a%20small%20stations.pdf>

surveillance and usage of the station, small retail units to serve the needs of passengers and the locality, small industrial workshops for car and cycle servicing which again would benefit passengers.

Recommendations for improving small stations

- Regular mystery traveller type surveys
- DfT/train operators/TfL should adopt specific guidance on standards at small stations, working collaboratively with other operators to do so where relevant
- Ensure that standards at small stations are progressively raised through DfT franchises or TfL concession agreements
- DfT and TfL to take account of the added value investing in stations has on the local economy
- Train operators to develop simplified Station Travel Plans in partnership with local authorities, stakeholders, and community members
- Train operators to seek accreditation and reaccreditation for the Secure Stations Scheme, Railway Safety Accreditation Scheme, and Safer Parking Scheme (where applicable)
- Train operators to bid for funding to improve the infrastructure and amenities at small stations from local authorities.
- Network Rail and TfL to establish individuals within property functions responsible for promoting and enabling development at small stations
- Train operators to develop partnerships with local residents and organisations to help improve small stations through, for example, CRPs and Adopt-a-Station initiatives.

5. Bringing poor stations up to scratch

The diverse management and wide-ranging history of rail stations in and around London by various operators leads to differences in station design, services, and upkeep. In London, station operators have contractual agreements with either the DfT or TfL, who set standards for stations that can differ and therefore lead to inconsistent levels of service or upkeep at stations. Additionally, there is a range of levels of funding available to the different station categories, and not all train operators bid for the funding for the same reasons.

As a result, some small stations in London are better developed and maintained than others. Passengers' experiences at small stations depend on which ones they use. Passengers using 'neglected' stations can experience a sub-standard station environment and relatively limited facilities, both in terms of quality and number, including ticket offices, waiting rooms, toilets, step-free access, and passenger information. Some stations are simply cleaner than others, in part caused by the lack of specific guidance relating to station cleanliness. In this respect, levels of cleanliness should be no different at small stations to large ones: there should be minimum cleanliness standards across the board.

Different station operators and contractual agreements

Network Rail owns most stations on the National Rail network and leases most stations out to train operators. At most stations the operator that provides most of the trains also operates the station (there are some exceptions to this rule in the West Midlands). TfL directly controls London Underground services and stations, and leases operations of the London Overground, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), Tramlink, and TfL Rail to different companies. Appendix A contains a list of the small stations and their operators that form the basis of this report.

At the start of their franchise or concession period, operators face different challenges that depend on the condition of the rail, train, and station infrastructure they inherit from the previous operator. Levels of investment from the operator can also be subject to change during the course of the franchise or concession, which can cause variances in the quality of stations operating on different franchises.

Problems arise in the event of operators offering sub-standard station environments and facilities to their passengers and not appearing to do anything to improve the situation. Franchise and concession agreements should include conditions that necessitate incremental improvements to stations that are below standard.

The TfL experience

TfL has a longer-term strategy for both London Underground stations directly under its control as well as for stations operated under London Overground, DLR, Tramlink, and TfL Rail concessions. This ensures that the level of investment and therefore improvement to small stations does not vary much when franchises or concessions change hands. The DfT should adopt a similar long-term vision for rail stations, which remains constant irrespective of the franchisees temporarily operating them. This will develop consistency in station improvements across the network.

In addition, when compared with the DfT, TfL sets higher standards for its stations, including for cleanliness, which relate to things such as graffiti, litter and staffing. TfL have committed to ensuring there is a staff presence from first to last train on the Tube and London Overground, which helps to reduce anti-social behaviour, including instances of vandalism, and increases passengers' sense of safety.

The rail industry looks at individual operators' approaches to improving stations for examples of best practice that are applicable elsewhere. For example, TfL tend to promote the investment they make in stations and other station operators should follow their example. In promoting improvements, operators should also be sure to include relevant information about any resulting disruptions to passenger journeys.

With consistency across all services in both standards and branding, passengers can easily recognise that TfL controls its own station standards, despite their concession arrangements (e.g. with London Overground and TfL Rail). On the other hand, passengers tend to think that individual operators are in charge of improving station standards at stations operated under franchises for the DfT. This means that TfL are accountable if standards slip at London Underground stations, for example, but the DfT is not accountable for the stations it controls through Network Rail or train operators.

Case study: London Overground takeover of Greater Anglia routes

In May 2015, London Overground took control of the Liverpool Street to Enfield Town, Cheshunt and Chingford lines from Greater Anglia. The change in operator brought about service and station improvements along the lines, including the deep cleaning and repainting of stations, as well as improved travel and onward journey information.

Cambridge Heath Station in Zone 2 was previously a dark, dirty, and threatening station. It has benefitted from London Overground rebranding and investment, and will also be getting improved CCTV and links with the British Transport Police, a station repaint and deep clean, help points, and improved Customer Information Screens. Station usage statistics will need to be analysed to see whether the improvements have led to an increase in passenger numbers.

The station will be brighter and more welcoming upon completion of the deep clean and repaint. Although the station is currently not step-free, with about 30 stairs up to the platforms, the station upgrade should look to improve the travel experience for visually impaired passengers by installing a missing strip of tactile paving along the edge of Platform 2.

London Fields station

London Fields station on the London Overground is an excellent example of a station improved due to the work of a user group. London Fields was previously a run-down, underused station that was on the verge of closure in the early 1990s.

The Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users Group (CHLFRUG) began campaigning in 1996 to improve the two stations to save them from closure. ORR

statistics on station usage show that London Fields had over one million entries and exits in 2015-16, meaning that it is no longer considered a small station. It is likely that this is in part due to the regeneration of the station by London Overground following the years of campaigning by CHLFRUG.³⁵

Differing approaches to Investments

Investments to improve stations, including safety and accessibility, are set within individual franchise or concession agreements between the DfT or TfL and rail operators. This includes specific agreements to invest in certain stations at the outset of the franchise as well as a general promise on behalf of the operator to invest in stations throughout the duration of its franchise. Investment funds may come from the DfT, TfL, or the operators themselves.

We understand from the DfT that for all new franchises a portion of funding for station improvements will be reserved for the last year of the franchise, to avoid under-investment by outgoing franchisees. This 'last year' funding generally goes towards smaller station improvements and maintenance. As this is a new approach, there is currently limited evidence on its effectiveness; the franchises to which this system applies will only be in their last year in the early 2020s. However, it should reduce the likelihood of neglect by operators, and ensure that operators that take over franchises inherit stations in good condition at the start of their franchise.

In addition, operators under newly tendered franchises will be subject to fines if they do not meet customer service targets in areas such as staff politeness and toilet cleanliness.³⁶

Although franchise and concession agreements contain some information on station improvements, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether and when small stations in London will receive investment. Contracts may reveal intentions to invest in certain stations as well as a more general commitment to investment throughout the franchise or concession. This information should be readily available to passengers. Openness from operators about improvements helps ensure increased passenger satisfaction.

Different approaches to funding

Another way stations in and around London receive investment is through funding programmes. Operators can bid for funding to improve station infrastructure and amenities, including accessibility improvements and cycling facilities at stations. Stations can also benefit from Section 106 agreements from the development of adjacent land and the Community Infrastructure Levy from development in the wider area.³⁷

³⁵ <http://www.railwatch.org.uk/pdfs/20160701a%20small%20stations.pdf>

³⁶ Graeme Paton (2015). Rail firms to be fined over dirty toilets. *The Times*, September 18 2015.

³⁷ Information on section 106 agreements can be found here: http://www.pas.gov.uk/3-community-infrastructure-levy-cil/-/journal_content/56/332612/4090701/ARTICLE

However, much of the investment in stations in and around London targets large and medium-size stations. Understandably, franchise agreements and other funding programmes tend to favour stations with a higher footfall to maximise the impact for passengers. Category A to D stations tend to receive the bulk of any investment, while the smallest (E and F) stations often receive little or no funding at all. Although it makes sense to distribute funding to benefit the highest number of passengers, the industry needs to ensure that small stations do not provide a poor service to passengers. Neglecting small stations risks high levels of dissatisfaction amongst passengers, leading to a lower footfall and therefore lower revenue for the operator.

In terms of accessibility, small stations should also be eligible for Access for All funding. As the transport network becomes ever more accessible, particularly from upgrades to large and medium-size stations, it becomes desirable to invest in smaller stations so that even more passenger journeys can become fully step-free.

Case study: Accessibility at Silver Street Station

Silver Street Station, operated by London Overground, is located near the Middlesex University Hospital. Changes in health care provision in the area have led to more people needing to use this station. Despite this, there are about 30 steps up to each platform, which are a challenge to passengers with health problems travelling to and from the hospital. Provision of a lift and getting rid of the small step up to the sheltered seating area on Platform 1 would overcome these issues. The station operator should then ensure that all step-free routes are clearly signposted, to make it easy for passengers to enter and exit the station.

The 2015-16 ORR statistics show that Silver Street station had over one million entries and exits, so is no longer a small station. However, this illustrates how stations can and do outgrow their 'small' status. This then requires a major rethink of their facilities and their management.

There is limited evidence showing the amount and type of investment that London's small stations receive. There is no publicly available assessment of small stations to understand where improvements are necessary to reduce the gap in standards between stations in and around the capital. Operators should provide better information about the present state of the small stations they manage and a schedule of future improvements.

Other opportunities to make improvements at smaller stations

Case study: Roydon Station upgrades

On occasions, opportunities arise to carry out additional improvements as well as scheduled station works. In May 2016, Greater Anglia upgraded platforms, a waiting room, signage, and Ticket Vending Machines at Roydon Station at the same time as redeveloping the London Bound platform. The station also got new Customer Information Screens and CCTV, as well as additional cycle parking hoops. Platform 2 underwent repairs, including repaving, while a large section of Platform 1 has been resurfaced using a plastic material, which over time may prove more resistant to wear.

The new waiting room on Platform 1 has new seats, a Customer Information Screen, and a new PA system. The PA system is audible in the waiting room, but not outside on the platform. Future improvements could see the extension of the PA system to enable passengers to hear service updates from outside the waiting room.

Recommendations for substandard and under-invested stations

- DfT franchises and TfL concession agreements should include clauses that necessitate improvements at sub-standard small stations to bring them up to at least minimum standards.
- The DfT should develop a longer-term strategy for station improvements and standards
- Train operators should consistently keep passengers updated on improvements being made at small stations, as well as information on any disruptions that may occur as a result of works
- Operators should provide evidence on the present state of small stations, as well as any improvements that are either in progress or scheduled
- The rail industry should look to provide funding to small stations as well as larger ones to ensure consistency of service across station types.
- Ensure that investment in infrastructure and service improvements is distributed to the full range of stations in and around London, in particular for small stations, including improvements to:
 - step free accessibility
 - the availability of ticketing and smart card facilities
 - passenger and onward travel information
 - interchange with other services and modes
 - assistance and security
 - replacement of outdated PERTIS machines
 - provision of toilets
- Combine qualitative passenger satisfaction measures (NRPS) with a more objective measure of station performance audits such as QUEST
- Ensure that the basic facilities to increase satisfaction are available at stations (i.e. ticketing facilities, customer waiting areas and cycle storage)
- Increase the robustness of the CSS data to allow for analysis at the station level.

6. Conclusion

Small stations represent an important part of the transport network in and around London and with the capital's population set to grow, demand for rail transport is likely to increase in the coming years.

There is a clear case for investing more in small stations and operators and the DfT should consider them separately from large stations. They should also promote other opportunities to secure funding for improvements, such as through Community Rail Partnerships.

Passengers in and around London would also benefit from clearly publicised minimum standards which are specific to small stations. Good quality stations should be incentivised when franchises or concessions are awarded and there should be penalties in place for not adhering to standards.

Even relatively minor improvements such as good quality, clearly visible signage can make a huge difference to the passenger experience. Raising standards can help to increase footfall and create a virtuous circle, with operators receiving increased revenues, which ultimately pave the way for further investment.

The case studies included in this report show how investment can transform small stations. We hope that operators will learn from these experiences and draw inspiration to the benefit of all passengers.

7. Appendices

Appendix A - List of small stations and operators

Station Name	Station Facility Operator	Travelcard Zone
Acton Main Line	Great Western Railway	3
Addlestone	South West Trains	-
Anerley	London Overground	4
Angel Road	Abellio Greater Anglia	4
Apsley	London Midland	-
Banstead	Southern	6
Barnes Bridge	South West Trains	3
Bat & Ball	Southeastern	-
Bayford	Great Northern	-
Beckenham Hill	Thameslink	4
Bellingham	Thameslink	3
Belmont	Southern	5
Berrylands	South West Trains	5
Bickley	Southeastern	5
Birkbeck	Southern	4
Bookham	South West Trains	-
Bowes Park	Great Northern	3/4
Boxhill & Westhumble	Southern	-
Bricket Wood	London Midland	-
Brimsdown	Abellio Greater Anglia	5
Bromley North	Southeastern	4
Brookman's Park	Great Northern	-
Bruce Grove	London Overground	3
Bush Hill Park	London Overground	5
Byfleet & New Haw	South West Trains	-
Cambridge Heath	London Overground	2
Castle Bar Park	Great Western Railway	4
Chalfont & Latimer	London Underground	-
Chertsey	South West Trains	-
Chesham	London Underground	9
Chessington North	South West Trains	6
Chessington South	South West Trains	6
Chigwell	London Underground	4
Chipstead	Southern	6
Chorleywood	London Underground	7
Clandon	South West Trains	-
Claygate	South West Trains	-
Cobham & Stoke D'abernon	South West Trains	-

Coulsdon Town	Southern	6
Crews Hill	Great Northern	6
Crofton Park	Thameslink	3
Crouch Hill	London Overground	3
Cuffley	Great Northern	-
Dagenham Dock	c2c	5
Datchet	South West Trains	-
Denham	Chiltern Railways	-
Denham Golf Club	Chiltern Railways	-
Drayton Green	Great Western Railway	4
Drayton Park	Great Northern	2
Dunton Green	Southeastern	-
Earlswood (Surrey)	Southern	- / Oyster
Eden Park	Southeastern	5
Effingham Junction	South West Trains	-
Emerson Park	London Overground	6
Epsom Downs	Southern	6
Erith	Southeastern	6
Essex Road	Great Northern	2
Ewell East	Southern	6
Eynsford	Southeastern	-
Fulwell	South West Trains	6
Garston (Hertfordshire)	London Midland	-
Grange Hill	London Underground	4
Grange Park	Great Northern	5
Great Missenden	Chiltern Railways	-
Greenford	London Underground	4
Hackbridge	Southern	4
Haddenham & Thame Parkway	Chiltern Railways	-
Hadley Wood	Great Northern	-
Hampton Wick	South West Trains	6
Hanwell	Great Western Railway	4
Harlington	Thameslink	-
Harlow Mill	Abellio Greater Anglia	-
Haydons Road	Thameslink	3
Headstone Lane	London Overground	5
Hersham	South West Trains	-
Hertford East	Abellio Greater Anglia	- / Oyster
Hinchley Wood	South West Trains	-
Horley	Southern	- / Oyster
Horsley	South West Trains	-
How Wood (Hertfordshire)	London Midland Trains	-
Iver	Great Western Railway	-
Kempton Park	South West Trains	-
Kenley	Southern	6

Kensal Green	London Underground	2
Kent House	Southeastern	4
Kilburn High Road	London Overground	2
King's Langley	London Midland	-
Kingswood	Southern	6
Knebworth	Great Northern	-
Knockholt	Southeastern	6
Langley	Great Western Railway	-
Little Kimble	Chiltern Railways	-
London Road Guildford	South West Trains	-
Loughborough Junction	Thameslink	2
Lower Sydenham	Southeastern	4
Malden Manor	South West Trains	4
Merstham	Southern	- / Oyster
Mitcham Junction	Southern	4
Monks Risborough	Chiltern Railways	-
Moor Park	London Underground	6/7
Morden South	Thameslink	4
New Beckenham	Southeastern	4
New Southgate	Great Northern	4
North Dulwich	Southern	2/3
North Ealing	London Underground	3
North Sheen	South West Trains	3
North Wembley	London Underground	4
Northolt Park	Chiltern Railways	5
Northumberland Park	Abellio Greater Anglia	3
Otford	Southeastern	-
Oxshott	South West Trains	-
Park Street	London Midland	-
Penge West	London Overground	4
Ponders End	Abellio Greater Anglia	5
Princes Risborough	Chiltern Railways	-
Purfleet	c2c	- / Oyster
Purley Oaks	Southern	6
Ravensbourne	Thameslink	4
Rectory Road	London Overground	2
Reedham (Greater London)	Southern	6
Riddlesdown	Southern	6
Roding Valley	London Underground	4
Roydon	Abellio Greater Anglia	-
Rye House	Abellio Greater Anglia	- / Oyster
Salfords	Southern	- / Oyster
Saunderton	Chiltern Railways	-
Sawbridgeworth	Abellio Greater Anglia	-
Seer Green	Chiltern Railways	-

Shepperton	South West Trains	-
Shoreham (Kent)	Southeastern	-
Slade Green	Southeastern	6
South Acton	London Overground	3
South Bermondsey	Southern	2
South Greenford	Great Western Railway	4
South Hampstead	London Overground	2
South Kenton	London Underground	4
South Merton	Thameslink	4
South Ruislip	Chiltern Railways	5
Southbury	London Overground	5
St.Albans Abbey	London Midland	-
St.Helier	Thameslink	4
St.James' Street	London Overground	3
St.John's	Southeastern	2
St.Margaret's (Hertfordshire)	Abellio Greater Anglia	- / Oyster
Stamford Hill	London Overground	3
Stoke Mandeville	Chiltern Railways	-
Stonebridge Park	London Underground	3
Strawberry Hill	South West Trains	5
Sudbury & Harrow Road	Chiltern Railways	4
Sudbury Hill Harrow	Chiltern Railways	4
Sunbury	South West Trains	-
Sundridge Park	Southeastern	4
Sunnymeads	South West Trains	-
Sutton Common	Thameslink	4
Sydenham Hill	Southeastern	3
Tadworth	Southern	6
Tattenham Corner	Southern	6
Thames Ditton	South West Trains	6
Theobalds Grove	London Overground	7
Theydon Bois	London Underground	6
Tolworth	South West Trains	5
Tring	London Midland	-
Turkey Street	London Overground	6
Upper Halliford	South West Trains	-
Virginia Water	South West Trains	-
Waddon	Southern	5
Walthamstow Queens Road	London Overground	3
Wandsworth Road	Southern	2
Watford North	London Midland	-
Watton-At-Stone	Great Northern	-
Welham Green	Great Northern	-
Welwyn North	Great Northern	-
Wembley Stadium	Chiltern Railways	4

Wendover	Chiltern Railways	-
West Ealing	Great Western Railway	3
West Ruislip	Chiltern Railways	6
West Sutton	Thameslink	5
West Wickham	Southeastern	5
Westcombe Park	Southeastern	3
Whyteleafe	Southern	6
Whyteleafe South	Southern	6
Wimbledon Chase	Thameslink	3
Woldingham	Southern	6
Woodgrange Park	London Overground	3/4
Woodmansterne	Southern	6
Woolwich Dockyard	Southeastern	3
Worplesdon	South West Trains	-
Wraysbury	South West Trains	-

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Appendix B - List of London TravelWatch research relating to passenger expectations

London TravelWatch has carried out a range of research relating to passengers' priorities when using transport in London:

- Interchange matters: passenger priorities
- Review of ticket office closures on the London Underground
- London travelling environment: what consumers think
- Walking and interchange in London
- Value for money on London's transport services: what consumers think

The above reports are all available on our website: www.londontravelwatch.org.uk.

The exception to this is the review of ticket office closures, which is available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/transport/rail-and-underground/tube-ticket-office-closures-and-improving-customer-experiences> .

Appendix C - Standards specific to small stations (Category D, E and F)

What makes a small station good?

1. There is step free access from the street, car park, bus stop, taxi rank / private hire car office and cycle parking to the platform, into the station facilities and on to the train.
2. There is a staff presence or easy passenger access to staff via help points from first to last train. This could include staff operating retail premises within the station.
3. Has easy to use ticketing facilities that allow the passenger to purchase the correct ticket for their journey.
4. Has toilets available to passengers from first to last train, or provided free to use as part of a retail unit in the station.
5. Shelter is provided from all the elements such as rain, snow, sun and wind on all platforms.
6. Seating provided adjacent to the ticketing facilities and on all platforms.
7. Quality, reliable and visible real time train running information.
8. Wi-Fi and mobile phone coverage allowing passengers to access information from their own devices. Wi-Fi could be provided as part of a retail unit in the station.
9. Signage and information is bespoke to the station and of a consistent design.
10. Has easy interchange with other forms of transport
11. Has litter bins that are cleared on a regular basis as part of a commitment to a safe well cared for environment.
12. Is free from graffiti and has good levels of lighting in the hours of darkness.
13. Has accreditation for being a 'secure station'.
14. Is accepted and valued by the local community that it serves.