Joint Response to the Department for Transport Consultation on the Station Champions’ Report on Better Rail Stations
February 2010
Joint Response to the Better Rail Stations Consultation
February 2010

This response has been prepared by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) with the support of Campaign for Better Transport, Living Streets, Ramblers, Railfuture, Carplus, Friends of the Earth and CTC (who have provided their own more detailed response) for submission to the Department for Transport's consultation on the Better Rail Stations report of the Station Champions.

Recognising rail as the low carbon ‘backbone’ of a sustainable transport system, we very much welcome the report’s ideas on improving stations and access to them. For example, new research1 shows that in the Netherlands, the total quality score for a railway journey is determined 41% by the rail trip itself, 21% by the access and egress and 25% by the station experience. A step change in conditions at stations, as well as access to and from them, would not only be a quick win for rail, it would have much wider community benefits for non-rail users too.

The report makes many helpful suggestions that we support, including:
• the setting of minimum standards for different types of station;
• a 25% increase in spending on stations;
• making the areas around stations more attractive and walkable;
• an increase in cycle parking spaces and a target to double cycling to stations to 5% as a first step to continental levels of cycle-rail journeys;
• support making all but the smallest stations accessible by 2020, which will also help people travelling with small children, heavy luggage and cycles; and
• more community activity at smaller stations, including ‘community hubs’, to build on the great work of Community Rail Partnerships.

We highlight the following as areas needing improvement:
• the overemphasis on increasing car parking, in particular the ‘predict and provide’ approach to cater for all suppressed demand (R15);
• although the suggested requirement for Station Travel Plans for larger stations is welcome, this should be extended to cover all stations;
• the lack of ‘option generation’ to consider alternatives to new car parking, such as providing new stations or implementing new charging structures for parking, to encourage commuters to car share or not drive at all, in order to free up spaces for off peak travellers;
• new public transport options should be considered, particularly at stations outside large urban areas, including Demand Responsive Transport and other options facilitated by the Local Transport Act 2008 – this is especially important to reduce car dependency in rural areas;

- the opportunity to include spaces for low carbon car clubs at station parking should be grasped, to provide more integrated transport;
- improved guidance on cycle parking, in particular how to make it secure, and milestones for 10% and 15% of trips to stations to be made by cycle;
- there is insufficient integration of stations, other than ‘super hubs’, with land use planning and maximising benefits from sites with high accessibility;
- consideration as to how introducing new passenger services on heritage and freight railways could be integrated into the proposals;
- ensuring that all station upgrades aim to make stations beacons of sustainability, following the example of ‘eco-station’ pilots such as Northern Rail’s upgrade of Accrington station.

**Parking For Prosperity?**
The report claims that ‘for many people outside inner cities, the car is the only realistic option’ and seeks to justify an unprecedented increase in car parking at rail stations on the basis that to do otherwise would ‘perpetuate the worst environmental scenario’ (para 4.10). This approach seems not just fatalistic in terms the possibilities for achieving a step change in station access by promoting more sustainable travel but it also fails to appreciate the bigger picture in terms of managing demand for car use.

Research on Park & Ride in the 1990s\(^2\) showed that while two-thirds of people using it would have driven, a fifth would have used public transport all the way and the remainder would have made a different journey. Given competition for funding and land, investing in car parking has a significant opportunity cost. Bodies such as the Commission for Integrated Transport and Committee on Climate Change have highlighted the incompatibility of future growth predictions for motor traffic with binding carbon reduction targets. This means that assumptions that new multi-storey car parks would pay back for themselves within 15-25 years may be built on weak foundations.

The headline target of 10,000 new spaces a year for ten years is of particular concern. This is likely to discourage the generation of a wide range of better options, including encouraging car sharing and discouraging all day parking to free up car parks for trips during the daytime when there is spare rail capacity.

Car club spaces should be provided at all station car parks, integrated with new smart card ticketing to provide integrated transport. Not only would this provide car clubs at sites with higher accessibility; increasing the catchment area of people given the choice of not owning a car, it would provide new transport options for those arriving at stations. Alongside these measures, we also believe efforts should be made to reduce the land take of car parks at stations, in order to facilitate higher density, mixed use development.

---

\(^2\) This is summarised in CPRE’s publication *Park and Ride – its role in local transport policy*, 1998. There has only been one piece of research into Park and Rides since.
Better Access To Stations
 Better access should mean giving people real choice how they access rail in order to reduce car dependency and increase equality of opportunity. The changes brought by the Local Transport Act 2008 could enable best practice on the continent to become standard. The Commission for Integrated Transport’s report, *A New Approach to Rural Public Transport* (2008) highlighted many examples so it is particularly disappointing that this report is so lacking and does not seek to facilitate the roll out of train-taxis or other similar services.

Active modes of travel have the advantage of offering very predictable journey times, allowing travellers to minimise the time they arrive before the departure of their train. The report assumes that 3 miles is the maximum catchment area for cycling, akin to the 5km limit suggested in Planning Policy Guidance 13: *Transport* as being the limit for cycling to be common. Experience from the continent and London\(^3\) shows this to be too low, with some cycle-rail trips being over 5 miles. Indeed as the health benefits of active travel become clearer, people realise that integrating it into their daily routine frees up their spare time from needing to go to the gym etc.

The Report requires a ‘Mandatory local road map & useful information (e.g. bus/taxi phone numbers)’ for all stations and directional signage from pedestrian/cycle routes for all but unstaffed stations. This should be changed to include an active travel map, showing footways (in particular along rural roads), rights of way and the best routes for walking and cycling. These maps should be displayed prominently at all stations and include information about journey times for, and health benefits from, active travel.

Public realm treatments like those in home zones, sometimes called ‘encounter zones’, are being used on the continent not just in residential areas but also in shopping streets and station forecourts. The approach to station forecourts and surrounding areas should be informed by the forthcoming *Manual for Streets* 2, which covers mixed priority routes, while the DfT’s Traffic Signs Policy Review is considering changes to zonal signage that could also encompass this. Access improvements to rural stations are also important and should include Rights of Way and wayfinding upgrades, as well as lower speed limits and designation of Quiet Lanes on the surrounding road network.

Better Planning Of Stations Is Key To Planning For Better Land Use
 We welcome the Government’s recognition that ‘Land use planning can have significant implications for transport emissions’\(^4\). In relation to the wider aspects of stations, the review’s remit asked ‘What else can be done to enhance stations as transport interchanges and community institutions?’ The remit did not include land use planning and while the report does propose

\(^3\) Mean distances for cycling trips in London are as high as seven miles: [www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/businessandpartners/final_monitoring_july07.pdf](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/businessandpartners/final_monitoring_july07.pdf)

better land use at super hub stations, it does not consider implications beyond this. The lack of rail access at some potential sites for eco-towns\textsuperscript{5} demonstrates the importance of this principle for all significant new developments.

Land around stations is at a premium and the report (para. 4.13), noting that it is being used up, suggests multi-storey car parking. Because land within walking distance of rail stations offers the highest accessibility, it should be prioritised for dense mixed-use development\textsuperscript{6} not car parking, so as to ‘reduce the need to travel, particularly by car’\textsuperscript{7}. New research\textsuperscript{8} suggests that access to rail is particularly important for the potential buyers and tenants of car-free housing. Sites around well-served stations should be prioritised for this type of development.

Similarly taxi loading bays (proposal R19) would make poor use of such space, particularly as taxi trips tend to have high emissions\textsuperscript{9}. Increased ride sharing and matching (as has been trialled at some London termini should be promoted using new technology and a roll out of train-taxi services that match passengers to taxis. This is common in the Netherlands.

**Better Stations Should Also Mean More Stations**

There are many opportunities across the country where new stations would be a better option than providing more car parking facilities, bringing rail services closer to people and businesses. Tram-trains could extend services into town centres, new housing developments and onto existing lines without regular passenger services, such as freight and heritage lines. The renewed emphasis on electrification reduces the penalties to existing services of stopping at new stations, while the roll out of new signalling (ERMTS) should help too.

Network Rail’s Route Utilisation Strategies have considered many new station proposals but the Benefit Cost Ratios for these schemes are based on out of date versions of the DfT’s New Approach To Appraisal. Changes introduced in April 2009 now place much greater weight on climate change and physical fitness benefits from walking and cycling: the *Future of Urban Transport* highlighted how the cost of obesity is as much as the cost of congestion yet likely to grow faster. Providing new stations within walking and cycling distance would achieve a step change in rates of active travel.

February 2010

\textsuperscript{5} Raised as a concern in a joint consultation response to the draft eco-towns supplement to PPS1: [www.cpre.org.uk/filegrab/BetterTransportPlanningforEco-Towns.pdf?ref=3917](http://www.cpre.org.uk/filegrab/BetterTransportPlanningforEco-Towns.pdf?ref=3917)

\textsuperscript{6} For example, see CPRE, *The Proximity Principle*, 2008

\textsuperscript{7} See the Climate Change Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1

\textsuperscript{8} Melia, *Potential for Carfree Development in the UK*, UTSG Conference Paper 2010

\textsuperscript{9} Taxi trips to stations can lead to the equivalent of four separate trips while annual TfL data shows higher carbon emissions per passenger kilometre than domestic flights.