



Rail Safety & Standards Board

Research Programme

Operations

Good practice in station adoption schemes
Final report



T639

Good Practice in Station Adoption Schemes

Final Report



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1 Executive Summary

Background

What is station adoption?

Communities and individuals have taken a close interest in developments on their local railway lines for many years. Over time, this has developed from lobbying for the retention or improvement of rail passenger services or individual stations into more practical activities intended to improve the appearance of stations.

In Great Britain, station adoption takes a variety of forms:

- Schemes initiated by community groups to improve the appearance of their local stations by restoring station gardens, providing planters and hanging baskets, displaying public art and picking litter in public areas.
- Adoption schemes initiated by train operating companies which take a variety of forms ranging from simple reporting of defects to support for a wider range of activities similar to those undertaken by community groups.
- Commercial schemes where a company adopts a station, provides sponsorship or provides contributions in kind.

Many stations have tenants. Some are commercial enterprises serving rail users such as cafés or newsagent, but the majority are companies, organisations, retail enterprises, restaurants or bars occupying otherwise redundant buildings or rooms on a purely commercial basis. Tenants contribute to the appearance of stations through the upkeep of their property and they bring increased activity to a station and its approaches.

A key element of station adoption schemes is that they add value to the work done by station managers and the cleaning and maintenance teams employed by train operating companies. All of the station adoption schemes in Great Britain use volunteers to perform tasks that are additional to the work of paid rail employees or to provide information that allows paid employees to be deployed more effectively.

The Evolution of Station Adoption in Great Britain

Community groups began to adopt stations in the 1980's with the intention of either helping to secure the future of their local stations by making them more attractive through environmental improvements or complementing separate local initiatives such as entry to the Britain in Bloom competition. Organisations involved in early examples of station adoption tended to evolve spontaneously, but required the cooperation of rail industry stakeholders to achieve their aims.

The emergence of Community Rail Partnerships provided further impetus by encouraging activities that made stations more attractive as part of a wider range of activities including promotion of lines, provision of information and lobbying for investment.

Following the first round of rail franchising, a few train operating companies took the view that benefits could be obtained by making use of community interest in

local rail stations. Arriva Trains Northern recruited individuals to visit unmanned stations at regular intervals to report defects or vandalism requiring remedial action. Wessex Trains encouraged groups and individuals to become involved in a wider range of activities to promote stations and make them more attractive for passengers. More recently a greater number of train operators have taken an interest in station adoption.

Station Adoption in Practice

The Objectives of Station Adoption

Station adopters can have a wide range of objectives including securing the future of their local stations, making stations more attractive through environmental improvements and making use of redundant station buildings or rooms in stations for activities beneficial to the local community.

Train Operator Station Adoption Schemes

Train operating companies run two types of station adoption scheme – station inspection and defect reporting and schemes covering a wider range of activities.

The Northern Rail Station Adoption Scheme covers more than 90% of the stations in the franchise. Adopters visit each station regularly, identify defects or vandal damage, and report back to the company. Each adopter has a booklet providing guidance on the terms and conditions of the scheme, safety, the rail industry's alcohol and drugs policy and how to complete the inspection check list. Guidance is also given on procedures to be followed in a range of emergency and non-emergency situations. Adopters must sign a Station Adoption Agreement and are given a complementary travel pass valid only on the company's services. The Arriva Trains Wales and First TransPennine schemes are similar.

The schemes operated by One Railway, First ScotRail, First Great Western and Central Trains go beyond defect reporting by seeking a more active role for adopters including garden restoration and maintenance, provision of planters and hanging baskets, renovation of traditional station seating and promotional activities. The First ScotRail scheme also seeks suitable community uses for otherwise redundant space in station buildings. In all cases, an on-site meeting is held with a station manager to agree the scope of works and provide the safety briefing.

Station Adoption Schemes initiated by train operating companies are characteristically low cost – the Arriva Trains Wales scheme had an annual budget of only £11,000 in 2006.

Third Party Station Adoption Schemes

Most third party station adoption schemes involve station checking, gardening and cosmetic works such as the restoration of traditional station seats or the provision of public art. Some are more ambitious and involve lobbying for investment, seeking funding for capital projects or bringing redundant buildings or rooms in buildings back into use.

Stations have been adopted by a variety of local organisations. Examples include “Friends” of stations whose sole concern is the particular adopted station, local “Britain in Bloom” committees, local branches of the Women’s Institute and groups formed as a result of the Countryside Agency’s Market Towns Initiative. There are a number of adoption schemes involving local schools in rail safety, anti-litter, anti-vandalism, poster and public art projects.

Group adoption of stations is only possible with the consent of the train operating company. The scope of activities to be undertaken must be agreed with the company in advance; all of the people expecting to work on the station must receive a safety briefing from the station manager; and an agreement must be signed by an authorised member of the adoption group.

The existence of a train operator initiated station adoption scheme based on inspection and reporting does not preclude the adoption of stations by groups seeking to improve their appearance. There are examples of Northern Rail and Arriva Trains Northern stations where “Friends” or other groups undertake the reporting role and carry out activities such as gardening.

There are also several types of “commercial” third party station adoptions:

- Tenancies: Most tenancies of “railway” buildings are commercial transactions between tenant and landlord and the only “station” benefits are an increase in activity and a reasonable standard of external appearance of buildings. There are examples where tenants are more proactive in enhancing station appearance.
- Sponsorship: A number of stations benefit from forms of commercial sponsorship ranging from contributions of plants and planters to painting in corporate colours.
- Re-use of redundant station buildings: There are several examples of third party initiatives seeking to make use of redundant station buildings for commercial or community uses. One example is the Central Stations project managed by a project officer appointed by the Association of Community rail partnerships (ACoRP) and supported by local authorities, development agencies and rail industry stakeholders. The project led to the addition by DfT in their 2007 *Review of Community Rail Strategy* of ‘regeneration’ to the objectives for Community Rail Partnerships.

Relationship with Community Rail Partnerships

Community Rail Partnerships are not-for-profit organisations established by members including local authorities, train operating companies and rail user and/or community groups. Community Rail Partnerships may be line specific or they may cover a much wider area.

Whilst the concepts of Community Rail Partnership and station adoption are not identical, there is considerable synergy between them. Community Rail Partnerships are responsible for complete lines or groups of lines and their responsibilities often extend to include publicity and marketing, whereas station adoption is locally based and has a more narrowly defined station-specific remit.

Community Rail Partnerships apply many of the same techniques as station adopters – improving the appearance of stations through gardening and cosmetic measures, seeking investment in station infrastructure and finding tenants for redundant station buildings.

Different Community Rail Partnerships have different levels of engagement in station adoption. The Community Rail Officer of the Chester-Shrewsbury Partnership co-ordinates the activities of station adopters on the line, deals directly with the train operating company and leads on funding matters. The Penistone Line Partnership, although concerned to ensure that stations along their line have a safe and welcoming environment, is not directly active in station adoption but some members are adopters under the Northern Rail scheme.

International Experience

The research has identified station adoption and similar schemes in Australia, the United States, Germany and Switzerland, but the approach is not widely adopted outside Great Britain.

The TransAdelaide Adopt a Station programme in South Australia is the best known station adoption scheme outside Great Britain and, in 2006, covered 73 rail stations and 10 tram stops. Stations are adopted by individual local residents or community groups who carry out tasks including gardening, painting out graffiti and ensuring general station tidiness. Volunteers do not carry out any maintenance or repair work. The activities of adopters are tightly prescribed by a comprehensive and lengthy set of guidelines. TransAdelaide claims that patronage monitoring shows substantial growth in use of adopted stations.

New York has one of the earliest station adoption programmes dating back to 1977. The New York Metropolitan Transport Authority seeks private sector funding to improve lighting, install noise reduction measures and provide public art at subway stations. New Jersey Transit seeks partners to adopt stations and undertake or sponsor litter picking, plant and maintain gardens and provide floral displays. Chicago Transit Authority's Adopt-a-Station programme develops partnerships with community organisations and local firms to commission public art (e.g. murals, sculptures, mosaics, paintings, photographs) reflecting the history and diversity of communities served by the Authority's network.

Two Station Adoption schemes have been identified in Germany. The Rhine-Ruhr scheme covers 60 stations and there are 19 stations in the Stuttgart scheme. Both schemes follow the Northern Rail model with volunteers reporting matters needing attention to local rail management. Most volunteers confine their activities to watching and reporting, but there are a few examples of gardening and litter-picking. In Rhine-Ruhr, 'Quality Scouts' are used to make mystery calls to test information services and 'Citizen Advisers' help to distribute timetables and information.

Swiss Railways (SBB) has a policy of removing staff from small stations and finding tenants to take over responsibility for ticket sales whilst running independent businesses in parallel. In 2006, 12 stations were operated using this

approach. SBB has recently formed a partnership with two retail companies to set up food outlets selling rail tickets at rail stations.

There are two other schemes of interest in Switzerland:

- Pro Rail Suisse represents public transport users and has encouraged the retention of booking offices at stations where the train operator considers them to be uneconomic by encouraging tenants to combine ticket sales with other commercial activities.
- At Thun, volunteers monitor station condition, report defects, provide advice to passengers and encourage good behaviour.

An Assessment of Station Adoption in Great Britain

Extent of Station Adoption in Great Britain

Ten train operating companies operate station adoption schemes covering around 700 stations. The Northern Rail, Arriva Trains Wales and First TransPennine inspection and reporting schemes account for more than 600 of these stations. There are 15 train operating companies that do not have any adopted stations including Eurostar and five operators that do not have any stations. Some train operating companies do not have station adoption schemes of their own, but do have stations adopted by third parties on their networks.

There are no adopted stations on the networks operated by C2C, Silverlink Metro, South Eastern, Southern and South West Trains. There were no adopted stations in Greater London until 2006 when One Railway launched its first station adoptions on its network in the capital. However, some stations in South East England benefit from the activities of Community Rail Partnerships.

It is difficult to establish how many stations are adopted by community groups. Web searches suggest that 100-150 stations are adopted by groups or benefit from the activities of Community Rail Partnerships or the two Railway Development Companies. The majority of these stations are also adopted under train operating company schemes. Hence, the best estimate is that, in total, there are more than 750 adopted stations in Great Britain.

Benefits to train operators

Train operating companies claim that station adoption delivers a number of benefits:

- Increased awareness of problems at their stations through volunteer activity.
- More effective utilisation of maintenance teams through targeting known problems.
- Defects that are easily remedied can be tackled more quickly.
- Increased activity at stations, quicker repair of damage and removal of graffiti, and a more attractive appearance create the perception of a safer environment for passengers leading to increased patronage and revenue.
- Raising the profile of local stations with local communities encourages increased use.

- Working in partnership with community groups and local authorities can provide access to sources of funding for infrastructure projects that would not otherwise be available.
- Relations with local communities are improved and station adoption generates a stream of “good news” stories for the media.

All of this is achieved at little cost and the deployment of few, if any, additional staff to manage the process. Given the low level of expenditure, train operating companies do not consider it worthwhile to undertake any comprehensive monitoring of the costs and benefits to validate their perception of the value of station adoption.

Benefits to rail users

The main benefits to rail users of station adoption are a more welcoming environment, an increased level of activity at stations and an improvement in their perception of personal safety. In some cases, group adoption has contributed to the delivery of more tangible benefits such as installation of CCTV equipment, provision of additional seating and, in a few cases, the restoration of booking offices and station waiting rooms.

Benefits to the community

Station adopters have the satisfaction gained through the results of their work coupled with compliments from station users and favourable coverage in the media.

Local communities benefit from station adoption in a variety of ways – for example, floral displays at stations support entries in ‘Britain in Bloom’ competitions; there are educational and awareness benefits to be gained through involving schoolchildren and college students in rail-related projects; and improving walk, cycle and bus links between town centres and rail stations.

The regeneration of stations by encouraging the re-use of redundant station buildings or unused rooms in stations brings more life to stations whilst also providing wider benefits by providing low cost accommodation for community groups and small commercial enterprises.

Tenancies

At stations where there is a tenancy, particularly if it is accessible to the public (e.g. café, shop, restaurant), the level of activity is increased and the feeling of security is enhanced. Many tenancies are purely commercial arrangements and contribute only to the extent of improving the appearance of the station, given that occupied buildings or rooms always appear to be kept in better order than empty premises. Some tenants are proactive and work with station adopters.

Good Practice in Station Adoption

Good practice for train operators

Station adoption schemes provide benefits to train operating companies at low cost. The initial requirement for the train operator is to decide who is going to

manage the adoption scheme. In all cases, station managers are deeply involved, but central management and the first point of call for prospective adopters is usually the responsibility of the 'customer relations' team or a designated manager who has station adoption and other duties in his/her job description.

A generic risk assessment should be undertaken at the outset to identify all risks associated with a proposed station adoption scheme throughout the operator's network and all types of adopter including children and groups with disabled people. It will need to be reviewed and updated after scheme implementation. Insurance arrangements should be reviewed as part of the risk assessment but, in most cases, the general insurance provided for passengers should suffice as adopters will be working only in areas to which the public have access.

For a station adoption scheme to be successful, it must be able to attract a sufficient number of volunteers of the right calibre. There are three main characteristics that will make major contributions to the success of an adoption scheme:

- Minimal bureaucracy: The evidence from existing station adoption schemes is that greater success will be achieved if bureaucracy is minimised.
- Flexibility: Schemes should not be so prescriptive that they stifle local initiatives.
- Incentives: For a scheme to attract enough volunteers it is helpful to provide a 'reward' system based on free rail travel and recognition in the form of small grants or contributions in kind.

The minimum requirements for a train operator initiated station adoption scheme are an explanation of the adoption scheme and a safety briefing delivered by the station manager at the station to be adopted; an agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the scheme to be signed by the adopter(s); and a simple guidance leaflet setting out the duties of the adopter, the key safety rules, the railway industry alcohol and drugs policy, key contacts and information about claiming complementary rail travel.

The train operator will need to decide how often adopters should inspect the station and submit defect reports. Each adopter will need a supply of the fault reporting *pro forma*. It is helpful for adopters to be given a booklet listing examples of different types of defect, damage or incident and the response that is appropriate in each case – including the degree of priority to be given in each case and details of who to contact to take remedial action.

There is a need for ongoing contact between the train operator and adopters. Where a train operator has a large number of adopted stations, regular meetings with each adopter are not practical. In this situation, a meeting to which all adopters are invited should be held every 6-12 months. It may be necessary to hold several meetings at main centres to minimise travel for adopters. Some train operators have found it helpful to include a 'community' page on their web site which, amongst other things, provides access to information about station adoption.

Train operators should monitor the performance of adopters using station condition reports as the main indicator of satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance. Inadequate completion of these reports should be followed up by a meeting with the adopter to review performance and, if no improvement is noted, a replacement adopter should be sought.

Train operators should also maximise the benefits to be gained from running a station adoption scheme by maintaining a flow of 'good news' press releases to the media.

The approach for group adopters is similar. The main additional requirement is for the station manager and the adoption group to meet to agree the scope of activities to be carried out by the adoption group. If a station adoption group is managed by a steering group including representatives of the local authority and community groups, it is wise for the train operator to be represented. Most adoption groups have working parties on particular days of the week or month making it easy for the station manager to keep in contact and verify that the activities are within the agreed scope and are being carried out safely.

Good practice for station adopters

Individuals who join train operator station adoption schemes are bound by the rules of each scheme. Groups that adopt stations can only function with the consent of the train operator and must agree to be bound by rules and guidance given by train operators.

There are no particular restrictions on who can form a station adoption group. It could emerge from some other group in the community such as a 'Britain in Bloom' committee or through the meeting of like-minded individuals. The key requirement for an adoption group is to agree a clearly defined set of objectives and a clear definition of the tasks to be undertaken before meeting the train operator to agree the scope of activities to be undertaken.

A station adoption group should have a 'management' structure with individual members taking on particular duties – chair, secretary, treasurer, community/media relations. Affiliation to ACoRP provides easier access to advice on good practice and opportunities for networking to learn from the experience of others. Early contact with the local authority is vital as this could open up opportunities to apply for funding for schemes to improve the station.

There are also practical issues to consider – understanding the different capabilities of members of the group, establishing rotas for working parties, recruiting new volunteers to maintain the vitality of the group.

There are now many examples of group adoption of stations that are sufficiently developed to illustrate the impact that can be achieved. Some of these are described in the main report or in the case studies contained in an appendix to the report.

2 Introduction

Background

The purpose of this research is to review the process of station adoption in Great Britain and other countries in order to develop an understanding of schemes and to use the findings to identify good practice. The research has its origins in previous work undertaken by the Rail Safety and Standards Board Ltd (RSSB) in the area of personal safety.

Station adoption is a way of improving the environment at railway stations through the involvement of individuals and local communities. The concept is based on the premise that a well-cared-for station with an attractive appearance and no graffiti or vandalism encourages more people to use the train whereas potential users are deterred if their surroundings appear unpleasant or potentially unsafe. It is also argued that involvement of local communities in caring for their local stations creates greater local awareness of the railway leading to greater use by local people.

The research has taken place in several stages beginning with a literature review that focused on published material, documents issued by the rail industry and other stakeholders, and information found during an internet search. This was followed by a period of consultation with the rail industry, local authorities and other interested parties, and investigation of station adoption schemes in Great Britain and similar schemes in other countries.

The literature review is provided in Appendix A to this report.

Some of the key questions that have been addressed by the research are outlined below:

- How and why are station adoption schemes implemented?
- How are they funded?
- How do agencies outside the rail industry contribute?
- What improvements are delivered?
- Are there ways in which station adoption could have greater impact?
- Is the impact of station adoption measured and evaluated and, if so, how?
- Are there any lessons to be learned in terms of strategy development and good practice?
- Are there differences between rural and urban stations and, if so, how and why?

What is station adoption?

Types of adoption

Northern Rail and its predecessor in Yorkshire and North East England, Arriva Trains Northern, took the view in their station adoption schemes that there were two types of station adoption:

- Level 1: Individual Adoption.
- Level 2: Group Adoption.

During 2006, Northern Rail added a third category (Level 3 Commercial Adoption) to its classification in recognition of the role of commercial activity in caring for and improving the appearance of stations. Commercial activities take a variety of forms including commercial tenancies of surplus space in railway buildings that are beneficial to the passenger (e.g. cafés) or the local community (e.g. use of space in redundant railway buildings to provide a community resource).

The Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 adoption nomenclature is used in this study.

Added value

A key feature of station adoption schemes in Great Britain is that rail industry stakeholders view voluntary activities as providing added value because they are additional to their routine cleaning and maintenance obligations. That added value takes the form of the speedier identification of damage, faults or vandalism enabling both a faster response and more cost-effective targeting of the work of maintenance teams.

Improving upkeep and personal safety at stations

In 2005 the National Audit Office published its report *Maintaining and improving Britain's Railway Stations*. The report noted a low level of passenger satisfaction for the 2,000 medium-sized and small stations that are unstaffed or only staffed for part of the day, and that have minimal facilities. It was also noted that *passengers are most dissatisfied with upkeep, repair and personal safety*, and that more than half of all stations are not fully accessible to disabled people.

Early in 2006, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee published a report under the same title in which concern was expressed that insufficient attention had been paid to the quality of stations and *passengers' needs and priorities*.

The Committee identified a number of factors that had contributed to this situation:

- Few train operating companies had joined schemes to reduce crime and increase personal safety at stations.
- The initial franchising process had not placed sufficient emphasis on the need to improve station facilities. Although the matter had been addressed to an extent during re-franchising, there remained a lack of incentives for train operating companies to take action and a lack of data.

- Network Rail procedures and an unwillingness to share risks were seen as barriers to be overcome.
- Too many bodies were considered to be involved in maintaining and improving stations leading to a lack of leadership and an unfocused approach.

Some surprise was expressed in the report that more action had not been taken to improve the level of satisfaction of passengers given evidence that safer and more attractive stations generate increased patronage and revenue.

Passenger needs

The Rail Passengers Council (RPC - now renamed Passenger Focus) commissioned consultants to review passenger requirements for stations. The results were published in *What passengers want from stations* (RPC, June 2005). Six categories of station ranging from national hubs to small unmanned stations were reviewed in terms of a number of characteristics including information provision, security, facilities and disabled access. The findings of this study and the National Passenger Survey were that passengers had low satisfaction levels for facilities and services at smaller staffed and unstaffed stations. In contrast, some smaller stations perform well in terms of satisfaction with environmental attributes.

Crime, safety and personal security

RSSB Report T047 *Fears and experiences of assault and abuse on the railway* identified a number of proactive measures that would reduce the risk of incidents and improve passenger perceptions of personal security. They included clean, well lit, accessible stations; greater staff visibility; better information; and working more closely with communities.

The Secure Stations Scheme

The Secure Stations Scheme was launched in 1998 and revised in 2005. It is a national scheme covering all surface and underground rail networks that are policed by the British Transport Police (BTP). The scheme is intended to provide an incentive to station operators to improve security for passengers and staff through partnership working with the BTP and local authorities or other partners. For a station to be accredited as a Secure Station it must satisfy a number of criteria:

- Station design must conform to standards that prevent or reduce crime and improve passenger perceptions of personal security.
- Station management must take steps to prevent crime, respond to incidents and communicate effectively with passengers.
- A year-on-year reduction in crime must be demonstrated.
- A user survey must show that passengers using the stations must feel more secure.

Accreditation is for a period of two years after which it must be renewed.



Secure Station Scheme plaque, Carnforth Station (JMP Consulting)

Take-up of the Scheme remains disappointing – data for April 2007 tabulated by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) using data supplied by DfT showed that only 261 stations on the national rail network were accredited and there were 32 lapsed accreditations. A further 35 stations, including some with lapsed accreditation, were known to be the subject of future plans for accreditation or re-accreditation.

In addition, there were nine accredited Secure Stations on the London Underground and 35 on Docklands Light Railway. However, accreditation had been allowed to lapse on 35 previously accredited stations on the London Underground network.

Most, if not all of the stations with Secure Station accreditation are staffed full time or part-time and there is a good spread of stations geographically and between train operating companies although no First ScotRail stations are accredited. The few adopted stations that are also accredited as Secure Stations are on the Arriva Trains Wales, First TransPennine, Merseyrail and Northern Rail networks.

Objectives of station adoption

In carrying out the literature review and research on station adoption in Great Britain and elsewhere, a number of themes emerged in terms of the objectives of rail industry stakeholders and station adopters:

Rail industry stakeholders:

- A better flow of information about the condition of stations enables more timely remedial action and more effective deployment of paid staff.
- More activity at a station creates a safer and more secure environment for passengers leading, in turn, to retention of existing users and the attraction of new passengers.
- An improved station environment with speedy action to remedy vandal damage and graffiti is also expected to lead to increased patronage and revenue.

- A positive benefit is gained in terms of improved community relations and favourable media coverage.
- Developing working relationships with local communities that add value to train operator and Network Rail activities at stations.

-

Station adopters:

- Seeking to secure the future of local stations by making environmental improvements, commonly as part of wider initiatives to promote increased use.
- Improving the appearance of stations to complement other local initiatives including market Towns projects and entry to the Britain in Bloom competition.
- Exploiting redundant buildings or surplus space in buildings to accommodate small businesses or provide a community resource for local or charitable groups.

The evolution of station adoption in Great Britain

The concept of formalised railway involvement with the community in Britain dates from the late 1980s. The British Railways Board Annual Report 1989/90 included for the first time a section on *British Rail in the Community* (p27). Two references to nascent “adoption” principles were made:

- Collaboration on Merseyside between the British Transport Police and a number of local schools to introduce a “rail watch” scheme for unmanned stations, which had attracted £2 million funding from the Merseyside Development Corporation and other external sources to enable the scheme to run until 1993.
- British Rail had established a Community Unit, which had developed an Urban Renaissance Initiative, examples of whose successes included converting redundant railway premises into “managed workspace for new small businesses” and “involving artists and craft workers in the design and enhancement of the railway environment”. The concept of voluntary involvement at stations was not part of the Community Unit’s work plan although they did work in partnership with local authorities and government agencies to improve the environment at many railway stations, via joint funding mechanisms.

Communities have taken a close interest in developments on their local railway lines for many years. Over time, this has evolved from lobbying for the retention or improvement of rail services or stations into more practical activities intended to help secure the future of those services or stations. A variety of types of organisation has evolved – rail user groups; “Friends” of individual stations; Community Rail Partnerships involving community groups, local authorities and train operating companies; and Railway Development Companies formed to develop the potential of particular lines (e.g. Esk Valley, Settle and Carlisle).

Early examples of station adoptions included Penmere and Handforth where “Friends” organisations evolved spontaneously and pioneered involvement in

improving the appearance of local stations. The motivation for early examples of station adoption was either a desire to secure the future of a station or concern that the physical condition of a station would continue to deteriorate without community involvement. Activities included inspection, reporting of defects to train operating companies, cleaning, environmental improvements such as gardening, minor repairs and, sometimes, renovation of redundant buildings.

The first Community Rail Partnerships (e.g. the Penistone Line Partnership) developed as a result of concern that local railway lines would be threatened with closure unless performance could be improved by attracting more passengers. The “toolkit” used included promotional activities to increase awareness of lines; lobbying for investment in infrastructure and services; and improvements at stations using techniques shared with station adoption.

During the first round of rail franchising, some train operating companies concluded that there were benefits to be obtained through particular forms of station adoption. After Arriva Trains Northern took over the franchise covering Yorkshire, Humberside and North East England, a system of station adoption was introduced based on the recruitment of adopters to report faults for rectification. This approach is now followed by Northern Rail, Arriva Trains Wales and First TransPennine Express.

Wessex Trains took a different approach encouraging individuals or groups to participate in activities such as gardening, “station watch” schemes, litter picking, fault and vandalism reporting, minor decoration, publicity distribution and cleaning. First Great Western is continuing with a similar approach to station adoption.

Station adoption is now widespread. A number of train operating companies have their own adoption schemes whilst increasing numbers of stations are being adopted by community groups or through Community Rail Partnerships.

The great majority of adopted stations are unstaffed and are in rural locations. There are adopted stations in market towns, metropolitan areas and, since early in 2006, there are several in Greater London.

Structure of report

The report continues in Chapters 3 and 4 with reviews of station adoption by individuals and groups in Great Britain. Chapter 4 also addresses the issues of tenancies, sponsorship of stations and the relationship between Community Rail Partnerships and station adoption. Chapter 5 indicates the extent of station adoption in Great Britain. International experience is reviewed in Chapter 6 whilst Chapter 7 sets the context for a series of British and international case studies. These case studies are available as a separate document. Research findings are summarised in Chapter 8.

There are four other documents that relate to this project; these are:

- The literature review
- Adoption scheme details and case studies
- Good practice in station adoption - groups
- Good practice in station adoption – train operating companies

3 Train operator station adoption schemes

Overview

Discussion with train operating companies and adopters has shown a range of benefits that can arise through station adoption:

- Helping to bring unstaffed stations back to life.
- Helping train operating companies to respond effectively and more speedily to maintenance issues and vandal damage or graffiti.
- Reducing anti-social behaviour and vandalism through working with the British Transport Police (BTP) – adopters are encouraged to contact the BTP to report incidents.
- Improving the appearance of stations by floral displays or landscaping.
- Improving links with local communities.
- Improving the perception of local stations to encourage use of the station by local people.

A key feature of train operating company station adoption schemes is that the duties or work undertaken by adopters is additional to audits and inspections undertaken by station managers and the activities of station cleaning and maintenance teams. The result is that employed staff can be deployed more effectively and have a greater impact on the appearance of stations.

How and why schemes are implemented

Typically, station adoption schemes initiated by train operating companies have originated through a desire to improve the management and environment of unstaffed stations that would otherwise only receive occasional visits from the operators' mobile station teams. The basic purpose of such adoption schemes is to act as the company's "eyes and ears" by detecting and reporting faults, maintenance requirements or other issues such as undesirable people loitering at stations.

Some companies confine their proactive role in adoption to inspection and reporting whereas others seek to involve adopters in wider aspects of station upkeep, typically gardening activities.

The operation of a station adoption scheme is a franchise requirement only in the case of Arriva Trains Wales and the Devon and Cornwall area of First Great Western. Arriva Trains Wales was well placed to embark on such a scheme given the extensive experience in running the adoption scheme at Arriva Trains Northern. Similarly, First Great Western benefited from inheriting an adoption scheme from the former Wessex Trains.

A number of train operating companies have chosen to operate voluntary station adoption schemes. They are Central Trains, First Great Western (outside Devon and Cornwall), First ScotRail, Northern Rail, One Railway and First TransPennine.

Northern Rail Station Adoption Scheme

The Northern Rail Station Adoption Scheme developed from a scheme launched by Arriva Trains Northern during the previous franchise covering lines in Yorkshire, Humberside and North East England. The scheme has two main objectives:

- Strengthening links with local communities.
- Providing a mechanism for frequent/regular inspections of stations to enable speedy detection of problems and programming of remedial action.

Stations are adopted either by individuals or through group adoption. All adopters visit each station weekly, report any problems requiring immediate attention and submit monthly reports identifying all other matters to Northern. Group adopters are allowed to undertake a wider range of activities provided that the tasks to be undertaken are agreed in advance with the station manager and they adhere to the company's fault reporting regime. Individual adopters are discouraged from undertaking any work other than inspection duties at stations.

Adoption schemes where stations are staffed part-time or full time tend to be different to those on unstaffed stations because station staff tend to fulfil the fault reporting function and adopters focus on improving the general ambience of the station.

Northern Rail carries out risk assessments on all Level 1 individual station adopters and Level 2 adoption groups, but does not vet the individual members of adoption groups or carry out Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Training is given to all individual adopters and all members of adoption groups who are going to work on a station. The training includes definition of the areas where adopters have access and the range of tasks permitted.

All adopters are covered by the company's public liability insurance. The insurance will cover injury to a volunteer in the course of his/her duties or to a passenger or employee if injury is a consequence of an adopter's actions. The guidance to adopters requires that any incidents involving injury are reported immediately to Customer Relations. Up to May 2007, there had been no incidents involving adopters that have led to an insurance claim.

Guidance for station adopters is provided in the form of a booklet with different sections for individual and group adoptions. The guidance includes a safety briefing, an explanation of the rail industry's alcohol and drugs policy, what to do when visiting the station, advice on completing the monthly report (Service Quality Log) and details of the terms and conditions of the scheme. Extracts from the Northern Rail guidance to adopters, Station Adoption Agreement and Service Quality Log are included in Appendix B to this report.

Adopters are also supplied with a Fault Reporting and Responsibilities booklet that contains the following information:

- A summary of priorities into categories requiring responses within 2, 4, 24 and 36 hours.

- A list of emergency situations (e.g. debris on the track, fallen trees, loose coping stones) is provided together with instructions on who to contact and the procedure to be followed.
- An illustrated list of more than 50 station features indicating the responsibility for their maintenance and repair.

Adopters are provided with a number of additional items – a metal lapel badge, a photo identity card, a card containing contact phone numbers and a laminated fault reporting instruction sheet. All adopters must sign a Station Adoption Agreement accepting the terms and conditions of the scheme. The company maintains up-to-date records of contact details for adopters.

Individual adopters receive a complementary travel pass valid only on rail services operated by Northern Rail. Members of adopting groups also benefit from complementary travel on Northern Rail services, but must apply to their adoption group leader for complementary tickets.

A number of Northern rail stations are adopted by schoolchildren or young people (e.g. Barton-on-Humber and Goxhill, Lincolnshire). School schemes are commonly of short duration involving the completion of a specific project. School schemes involving children with learning difficulties entail a higher risk that is compensated for by greater control measures agreed between the school and the company.

Annual turnover of station adopters is of the order of 1%, equating to 5-7 individuals leaving the scheme each year. Most of the turnover takes the form of resignations as a result of moving home, retirement or ill health. A few adopters have had to be removed from their posts because they did not perform their assigned tasks well enough.

In summer 2006, 497 stations were adopted under the Northern Rail scheme and only 21 stations remained available for adoption. The company does not allocate a substantial budget to station adoption. Station managers undertake much of the adopter liaison as part of their routine work whilst the two managers that operate the scheme spend an average of only 12-15% of their time on station adoption. A small budget is needed for items such as printing and small grants to group adopters.

On Northern Rail a quarter of station defects are reported to the company by station adopters representing a high rate of return for a small outlay. Some examples of problems highlighted by adopters in the first four reporting periods in 2006/07 are given below:

- Vandalism: 14 stations.
- Safety signs not visible: 2 stations.
- Graffiti: 18 stations.
- Youths gathering at night: 20 stations.
- No lights: 6 stations.

Reporting under the scheme also provides positive messages. In the same four reporting periods 346 stations were recorded as tidy, 340 as being in good decorative order, and 380 had up-to-date timetable displays.

Arriva Trains Wales Adopt a Station Scheme

The Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) Adopt a Station scheme is very similar to the Northern Rail scheme. The scheme focuses on station inspection and regular reporting of damage, vandalism or disrepair using a standard survey form.

The adoption scheme was a key franchise commitment designed to supplement station audits carried out by station managers and litter clearing and maintenance visits by the ATW cleaning team. The additional annual cost of the scheme in 2006 was estimated to be £11,000. This includes a share of the cost of a member of headquarters staff, funding for small grants and help in kind, printing and adoption plaques.



Station adoption plaque at Chirk (JMP Consulting)

The guidance provided by ATW is in a simpler format than that used by Northern Rail. Adopters are provided with a folder containing an explanation of the duties of a station adopter, a safety brief, contact information (e.g. ATW, British Transport Police), terms and conditions, and an adoption agreement to be signed by the adopter. All material is provided in English and Welsh language versions. Extracts from the briefing material are provided in Appendix C.

The procedure for a prospective adopter is to identify an unadopted station on the Community section of the ATW web site and to make initial contact with ATW Customer Services to obtain the Adopt a Station pack and arrange a meeting with the relevant station manager at the chosen station. At that meeting, the station

manager explains the scheme and provides a safety briefing before the adopter signs the ATW agreement. In the case of a group adoption, any proposed activities in addition to the basic reporting regime must be agreed in advance with the station manager. Adopters are advised to make early contact with the British Transport Police.

As adopters are only permitted to work in areas that are accessible to the public, no special insurance arrangements are considered necessary and the normal ATW insurance arrangements for third parties apply. The company has adopted a policy of not allowing anyone aged under 16 to work as an adopter without supervision. Parental consent is required before anyone aged 16-17 years is allowed to join an adoption scheme.

A report drawn from the ATW web site indicated that, in June 2007, 152 stations were adopted and 44 remained available for adoption.

Although the ATW scheme is focused on individual adoption and the reporting of problems, it does not preclude more ambitious forms of station adoption. Some examples are given below:

- Dolau: This station benefits from a continuing award-winning (Keep Wales Tidy, Wales in Bloom) adoption scheme launched in the mid-1990s based on gardening, landscaping and cleaning.
- Mountain Ash: Mountain Ash Comprehensive School formed a "Crime Reduction Group" to combat anti-social behaviour by children at the station through peer pressure. Training in landscaping skills has been given to 16 students supervised by ATW staff. Funding included an award of £10,000 from the Barclays New Futures scheme.
- Dinas Rhondda: "Valley Kids" is a day care and after school centre providing learning skills for children. Regular contact with the local BTP raises awareness of rail safety.
- Penarth: The station is adopted by "Sorted", a group that is part of the Vale of Glamorgan Community Service for Adults with Learning Disabilities and provides work based activities.
- Llantwit Major: The local Chamber of Trade and Commerce adopted the new station at Llantwit Major under the Adopt a Station scheme. A local resident will undertake the routine station inspections.

The activities of adopters are additional to the work of cleaning and maintenance teams. They do not undertake any decorating or improvement work.

Station adoption on First Great Western

Wessex Trains Adopt Your Station Programme

The majority of the 125 stations on the former Wessex Trains network were unstaffed and a large number were in rural or semi-rural locations. They had the potential to enhance the tourist experience in the South West that is so important to the local economy by improving the station environment for visitors and providing a welcoming and secure environment all year round for local residents. Not all of the stations served by Wessex Trains were in rural settings. For example, the Severnside Partnership in Bristol covers the Severn Beach Line with adopted stations in urban and rural settings.

In seeking to improve the management of station adoption through its “Adopt Your Station” programme, Wessex was very conscious of the fact that “one size does not fit all” and that putting an improved management structure in place should not jeopardise more innovative approaches to station adoption that could be key to its long term success. Activities covered by the scheme included gardening, “Station Watch” schemes, litter picking, fault and vandalism reporting, minor decoration, publicity distribution and cleaning. All activities needed to be agreed in advance and compliant with safety guidance.

The desire to expand the number of stations with adopted status led to the realisation that there was a need to significantly improve the processes to ensure safe and efficient management of the programme. Potential recruits could record an interest via cards handed out at community events or on line on the Wessex Trains website.

Adopters and potential adopters had access to a specific Community Rail section on the Wessex Trains website where they could learn more about Community Rail, station adoption in general and specific case studies.

The First Great Western approach

First Great Western (FGW) has developed a policy on station adoption building on the scheme inherited from Wessex Trains in the context of the DfT Community Rail initiative and the franchise requirement for a station adoption scheme covering Devon and Cornwall. FGW considers that the key benefits of volunteer activity at rail stations are an improved station environment and good local public relations.

In broad terms, the main activities that are expected to be undertaken are gardening, information and cleaning and painting. The work of adopters includes fault reporting at unstaffed stations, rubbish clearance, graffiti removal and the provision of community notice boards at stations and rail information boards in the towns and villages served.

The FGW station adoption scheme was launched early in 2007. The scheme covers the entire FGW network and is not confined to the area required in the franchise.

The FGW approach is different to the approach taken by Northern Rail and Arriva Trains Wales in that a higher proportion of stations are staffed, station inspection and fault reporting is less of an issue and more attention is paid to the environmental elements of group adoptions. The scheme is not greatly different to that formerly operated by Wessex Trains.

FGW works with partnerships in sourcing plants and planters, renovating station seating and providing matching funding. Partners are allowed to paint stations in heritage colours (e.g. GWR chocolate and cream at St. Erth, L&SWR brown at Crediton). Stations on the Exeter to Barnstaple line participate in an annual station gardens competition.

Potential station adopters are required to download an application form from the FGW web site for completion and return to FGW Customer Services. All potential adopters are required to meet their local station managers to receive a formal safety briefing and agree the scope of their activities.



Flower bed and seat at St. Erth Station (JMP Consulting)

One Railway Adopt a Station Scheme

The Anglia Railways scheme

One Railway operates an Adopt a Station scheme derived from a similar scheme introduced by Anglia Railways, one of the predecessors of the present company. The Anglia Railways scheme was introduced around 2001 following consideration of the scheme introduced by Arriva Trains Northern. The Anglia objective was to go beyond the “eyes and ears” approach by seeking a more active role for adopters including contributing to station upkeep. The scheme was publicised to seek adopters and, over time, most Anglia Railways stations were adopted.

Scheme expansion by One Railway

Since One Railway took over the franchise, the scheme has been extended to stations in the wider franchise area. Most of the “new” adoptions are on the former Great Eastern lines (Liverpool Street-Chelmsford-Colchester-Clacton and branches). Less adoption has taken place on West Anglia lines, although some stations have been adopted on the Cambridge line (e.g. Broxbourne, Harlow Town, Newport (Essex)). Adoption has featured more strongly in outer/rural areas, with only a small number of adoptions including Emerson Park, Highams Park and Maryland on the urban (Metro) sections in London.

One now has more than 80 active volunteers and more than 60 of its 168 stations have been adopted. The Adopt a Station scheme is a company initiative and is not a franchise requirement.

One now intends to concentrate efforts to find adopters for stations on the Metro and West Anglia routes. The company is aware of the need for a form of adoption that reduces the incidence of graffiti, damage, poor environment and sense of insecurity in urban areas. One is also exploring options for increasing the number of commercial sponsorship schemes. Existing examples are in operation at Norwich (Norwich Union), Ipswich (AXA) and Diss (Blooms of Bressingham).

The initial Anglia Railways priority was to secure the adoption of unstaffed stations in order to increase surveillance from the basic level achieved by the Stations Upkeep Team. Some applications were received to adopt staffed stations. The company decided to accept these applications in order to provide assistance to station teams. The concept of additionality applied, there was no intention to reduce staffing and no industrial relations problems were encountered.

The current scheme is designed to improve links with communities living near railway stations. There is a reporting system at all adopted stations based on adopters completing and returning a station health check questionnaire at regular intervals. The questionnaire used for reporting is designed to establish how well station facilities are meeting customers' needs. Additional activities undertaken by adopters at some locations include gardening, litter clearance, provision of public art, renovation of seats and minor repairs.

Benefits identified by the train operator are summarised below:

- Helps improve the appearance of stations.
- Greater community involvement with stations.
- More manageable stations.
- Good for public relations - schemes are popular and provide “good news” stories for the media.

The company has no separate budget for station adoption, but the cost of schemes is perceived to be minimal, limited to the cost of publications and the cost of an annual reception for adopters. No separate staff are employed to manage the scheme and adoption matters are fitted in with the wider range of duties of managers. Work with adopters on One Railway’s rural network is estimated to occupy around 15-20% of the time of the Assistant Buildings Manager, a proportion that is growing as the number of adoptions increases. The principal point of contact for adopters is the Buildings Department.

Strict instructions are issued to volunteers to ensure that they perform their work safely and do not undertake tasks outside their remit or beyond their skills. The Safety Brief for volunteers stipulates, for example, that they must not carry out any maintenance or decorating work unless with the written permission of an authorised person; that visits are restricted to public areas of the station buildings and platforms only; that it is prohibited to enter any areas marked “private” or “no unauthorised access”; that access to the railway track is strictly prohibited; and that it is a requirement of “One” that no volunteer shall carry out station visits having just consumed alcohol or being under the influence of drugs. Any volunteer who, in “One’s” judgement, appears to be in breach of this rule will be excluded immediately from the Adopt a Station initiative.

Each volunteer is also issued by One Railway with a Memorandum of Understanding setting out the background and rationale for station adoption; summarising how a volunteer can become involved; setting out the terms and conditions under which an adopter is taken on; and specifying the duties they are asked to carry out and how to report to the company. The prospective adopter is required to sign an adoption agreement which, in addition to confirming acceptance of the terms of the adoption, specifically requires signature of the company’s drugs and alcohol policy.

Volunteers receive no payment, but are rewarded with free rail tickets on services operated by One Railway. They receive newsletters issued by One to keep them up to date with adoption progress and to ensure that they believe that their contribution is appreciated. An annual Adopters’ Reception is held for Norfolk and Suffolk. A second Reception is to be held in Essex as the programme is extended throughout the company. Turnover of adopters is stated to have been minimal.

The company views the success of adoptions in terms of internal and external perceptions. There is no statistical monitoring of outcomes, although management is convinced that the “bottom line” has improved as a direct result of

station adoptions. A specific benefit is the improved productivity of the company's maintenance teams, whose attention can be concentrated where it is needed. Benefits are further considered as qualitative "intangibles" (e.g. reduced vandalism) that all concerned recognise, but there is no quantification of costs and benefits.

Some examples of station adoption on One Railway are given below – Wymondham and Brandon are discussed elsewhere in this report:

- Diss: Gardening done by a local resident using plants and materials provided by Blooms of Bressingham.
- West Runton: Adopted by the Runtons and District WI who have enhanced the former station gardens and created a new woodland garden. Children at a local special needs school have visited the station as part of their gardening lessons. The WI hold an annual Station Gardens Tea Party at the station.
- Sheringham: Sheringham Evening WI has adopted the station, provided new hand-made wooden planters and members have tended the gardens for 21 years.

First ScotRail Adopt a Station Scheme

First ScotRail launched an Adopt a Station scheme in summer 2005 with the intention of inviting individuals and community groups to submit plans for improving their local stations. When launched, the initiative was expected to include projects ranging from simple introduction of floral baskets to the re-use of unoccupied rooms or buildings at railway stations. The objective is stated to be to increase confidence in rail travel through community involvement and environmental improvements to make stations more attractive to users.

The First ScotRail web site contains a registration form that prospective adopters can submit on-line, downloadable instructions for adopters and an explanation of the scope for local communities to help plant and maintain station gardens. The web site also contains a form to be used by community groups to register their interest in making use of surplus accommodation at stations.

A number of schemes making use of redundant space in station buildings have been launched as part of the Adopt a Station scheme. First ScotRail will allow the use of redundant buildings to be rent free, but will make no other financial contributions. Some examples are given below:

- A new visitor centre was opened at the unstaffed station at Rannoch in September 2005 including a tea room, gift shop and natural history and railway history displays.
- Unused space at Pitlochry Station has been used to accommodate a charity book shop and store as a result of a joint initiative between First ScotRail and Pitlochry Station Liaison Group. Similar schemes include a florist at Nairn, a coffee shop at Uddingstone, a refreshment kiosk at Kilmarnock, a professional ironing service at Dunblane and a reminiscence (oral history) centre at Renton.

- Provision of floral displays at Linlithgow Station as part of a Linlithgow Civic Trust initiative for entry to the Scotland in Bloom 2006 competition.
- The train operating company is working with Garrowgill Community Council to provide floral displays, bird feeders and nesting boxes at Garrowgill Station.
- Floral displays have been provided at more than 20 stations including Spean Bridge, Dalmeny, and Carluke.



Florist at Nairn Station (© John Furneal)

Works of art have been installed at four stations – a wrought iron porter at Pitlochry, murals of WW1 soldiers at Invergordon, new murals to add to those existing at Perth, and Japanese stained glass windows at Edinburgh Park.

All of the stations on the Aberdeen to Inverness line are staffed on a single-shift basis with booking offices closing at about 14:00. There is a potential role for volunteers at these stations at times when booking offices are closed.

There is a limited amount of commercial sponsorship – the Gleneagles Hotel supplies the flowers at Gleneagles and the Clydesdale Bank supplies flower tubs at Lanark.

Central Trains Adopt a Station Scheme

Central Trains launched an Adopt-a-Station scheme in January 2006 in order to take advantage of local enthusiasm and knowledge to complement the cleaning, maintenance and promotional work of company staff. It has not instituted a comprehensive fault reporting programme, but it does encourage all passengers and members of the public to report issues of concern, regardless of whether they are formally engaged in adoption. A total of 65 expressions of interest had been received from groups and individuals by late March 2006.

The company has its own presence through professional cleaners that visit each station at least weekly and, in some cases, daily and routinely report issues of maintenance. Central Trains has run a campaign to get passengers to report criminal activity directly to the Police.

The company is seeking volunteers to improve the station environment and assist with promotional activities. Adopters must agree the scope of their activities and receive a compulsory safety briefing before undertaking any work at their chosen stations. Some adopters have formal agreements, but others do not wish to be involved with any paperwork. There is a code of practice that the company considers to work well and is adhered to by adopters. No specific insurance is provided over and above existing policies held by Central Trains.

Central Trains does not offer any money “up front” to adopters but, if adopters can show access to their own or other external funding, the company does have a fund available to provide contributions in response to requests if the proposals are feasible and appropriate.

The main focus of the Central Trains scheme is environmental improvement through activities including gardening, the provision of planters and floral displays, and the provision or restoration of bench seats. Station adopters are expected to contribute to fault reporting.

Some staffed stations are adopted. The company view is that people will adopt a station if they want to regardless of staffing. This is in line with company philosophy on adoptions which is to support any appropriate additional activities that adopters want to do that adds to the station. The view is that volunteers should enhance the service already provided and should not be used to undertake tasks that replace the work of paid station or cleaning and maintenance staff.

Central Trains has found some additional benefits emerging from the Adopt-a-Station scheme. Adopters often make sensible suggestions on a wide range of issues and can use their local knowledge to provide useful feedback on rail services and timetables. The company finds the general positive promotion of rail travel through adoption is helpful in commercial terms.

Three examples of adoption of Central Trains stations are provided below:

- Beeston: The station has been adopted by the Beeston Express, a community newspaper in Nottingham. The newspaper promotes use of the station, provides information about rail services and has recruited volunteers to join the adoption team.
- Collingham: The Friends of Collingham Station want to encourage commuters to make more use of the station. Group activities include lobbying for improvements to services and installation of flower boxes and information boards on the platforms.
- Widney Manor: This station has been adopted by the Solihull and District branch of Soroptimist International. Members of the Soroptimists help out with gardening and improving the general appearance of the station.

Central Trains is also a partner in the Central Stations Project which contributes to the company’s overall objective for stations by increasing the level of activity and ensuring that station buildings look well cared for rather than derelict. More

information on the Central Stations Project is contained in Chapter 3 and the case study in Appendix D.

First TransPennine Station Adoption Scheme

First TransPennine Express has a Station Adoption Scheme that falls into the fault monitoring category. At the end of April 28 of the 30 stations operated by the company had adopters in place and suitable candidates were awaited for the two remaining stations – Manchester Airport and Warrington Central.

Benefits to train operating companies

The adoption of stations has a number of key benefits for train operating companies:

- Faults are identified and rectified more speedily leading to an improvement in the appearance of stations.
- An effective fault reporting system allows more cost-effective use of paid maintenance staff.
- Where volunteers do more than simple inspection and fault reporting, they provide a human presence at stations at stations that are unstaffed or manned only for a single shift.
- Any form of commercial activity at a station (e.g. a café or community or commercial use of space in railway buildings) also adds to the human presence.
- The profile of the railway is raised in local communities leading to an increased awareness of rail travel options.

Group adopters raise awareness of their station(s) with local communities by organising and publicising events and the regular issue of press releases to ensure that positive developments associated with the station receive as much media coverage as possible.

The value added by individual adopters may be less publicly obvious, as it typically involves ensuring that the station is in its *normal* state for as much of the time as possible with lights working, information and signage present and in good condition, and without graffiti or vandalism. These are features that tend to pass unnoticed unless they are **not** correct.

It is incumbent on the train operator to make sure local rail users and the community at large are aware of the role of adopters. All of the train operating companies with substantial numbers of adopted stations distribute news releases to the media to announce the appointment of new adopters, particularly where the local community or a local school or organisation is involved. This gives adopters a sense of worth and involvement whilst also improving the relationship between train operating companies and the communities that they serve in a cost effective way.

An example is provided below of a media release by One Railway that announces the appointment of a new individual adopter, recalls previous appointments and provides a reminder on the concept of station adoption.

One Railway News Release 24 October 2006

Highams Park station is to receive some extra TLC after being adopted by local man, Sandeep David Christian, under 'one's Adopt-A-Station initiative.

Perry Ramsey, West Anglia Business Director for 'one', said, "I am delighted to welcome Sandeep into the scheme. We are already seeing stations benefiting from the involvement of the adopters in other parts of the 'one' network. Their suggestions for station improvements help us to better understand our customers' needs and to improve the station environment to the benefit of the whole community."

So far, over 55 of the train operator's 167 stations have been adopted and more volunteers are being sought across the franchise area (contact 01206 363948).

Adopt-A-Station volunteers report to the train operator about the standard of facilities at the station and many have also worked hard to bring their own schemes to fruition – such as acquiring new benches for the platform, planting gardens and filling flower tubs, and helping to keep the platforms free from litter.

The Adopt-A-Station initiative is aimed at improving lines of communication between 'one' and railway station users, promoting and encouraging feedback about the station buildings and facilities to help ensure that they meet the high standards expected by those who use them.

Adoption involves no financial contributions. The only criteria is that volunteers are regular users of the station and are willing to fill in an occasional 'health check' questionnaire to help keep 'one' informed of how well the station facilities are meeting customers' needs (in addition to the regular inspections already carried out by 'one').

In return, volunteers receive a complimentary travel pass for leisure use on 'one' train services.

Scheme costs

The main resource requirement station adoption places on train operators is managerial and administrative time. Most train operators subsume this time within the portfolios of members of staff with wider responsibilities. At Northern Rail, station adoption is covered by the Head of Community and Regional Strategies and members of the Service Quality Team. At First Great Western responsibility lies with the relevant area General Managers in the Customer Services function. At One Railway, station adoption is the responsibility strategically of the Head of Corporate Affairs and locally as a function of Business Directors such as the Business Director Rural Services.

Some train operating companies employ staff with particular responsibility for community relations, whose duties include managing and administering station adoption schemes. For example, at Northern Rail, this includes maintaining statistics on the performance of the company's "eyes and ears" fault reporting system and ensuring that adopters' reports are acted upon in accordance with a prioritisation system based on severity of incident and degree of risk to public or staff. As part of their duties, station managers are responsible for providing safety briefings for and routine liaison with adopters.

Other companies (e.g. One Railway, First Great Western) rely on members of their customer relations or business/commercial management teams to recruit adopters and take overall responsibility for station adopters. Station managers remain key to the success of adoption schemes through their role in delivering safety briefings, agreeing the scope of activities of adopters and undertaking routine liaison with adopters.

At the basic level of fault identification and reporting, the cost of a Station Adoption scheme is limited to staff time, free travel concession for adopters and the cost of annual receptions or meetings. The annual Arriva Trains Wales budget for their station adoption scheme is around £11,000 including a proportion of the cost of the manager whose duties include overall responsibility for the scheme. There are other costs that are not identified separately – particularly time spent by station managers on adopter briefing and liaison. These costs may well be offset by the benefits of more cost-effective use of employed staff.

Where station adoption schemes involve more than the basic detection and reporting of faults, there will be a need for some additional funding in the form of small grants to enable adoption groups to buy items such as plants, gardening equipment, planters, hanging baskets and information display boards. The total annual cost of these grants is small.

Where Level 2 Group Adoption Schemes have more ambitious objectives and involve partnerships with local authorities, the scale of train operator contributions will be larger and may require the provision of matching funding to "lever in" local authority funds. Train operator contributions to security improvements such as enhanced station lighting or the installation of CCTV surveillance equipment represent improvements to infrastructure and should not be thought of as a cost of station adoption.

A potential additional cost associated with station adoption is that more cost-effective use of maintenance and cleaning staff as a result of effective fault reporting by volunteers could lead to an increase in the costs of materials. No data exists to ascertain the balance between any such increased spending and reductions in the need for repairs (e.g. remedial action following vandalism) or increased revenue attributable to improved station security.

The general attitude of all of the train operating companies that run station adoption schemes is that, because costs are thought to be so low, there is little point in expending time and money to identify costs more precisely or to quantify benefits. The common view is that more attractive stations, more cost-effective use of paid staff, benefits to relationships with communities served and the generation of a succession of “good news” stories for the media justify the modest costs of running station adoption schemes.

Some train operators monitor their adoption schemes at a general level comparing numbers of “satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory” reports. At Northern Rail, monthly charts and summary reports are produced categorising station condition under headings including tidiness, condition of seating and fencing, help phone and public address system working, decorative order, existence of graffiti or vandal damage, provision of safety signs and up-to-date information displays, and reports of “youths gathering”.

Differences between urban and rural stations

For various reasons, station adoption is more common in rural than in urban areas:

- Strong community spirit.
- Concern that a small, rural station (or route) may be in danger of closure if not well used.
- Most rural stations are unstaffed.
- Attractive station environment.
- Attractive station premises.
- Potentially attractive station gardens.
- Availability of redundant buildings suitable for low-rent tenancies.
- Tourism or other commercial potential.

The features listed above make many rural stations an attractive proposition for group adoption schemes. The structure of rural populations also mean the presence in the local area of a suitable cohort of potential volunteers and group organisers including retired people with fewer time constraints than many people in employment.

The need for adopters at some urban and suburban stations may be similar to that in rural areas, but often emphasis on fault remediation and the prevention of acts of vandalism and graffiti may assume greater importance. This may suit individuals as much as or more than group adopters.

Adopting an urban station is more likely to necessitate developing a relationship with station staff than in rural areas. Train operators may need to pay particular attention to the development of complementary roles for staff and adopters when seeking adopters for urban stations. Levels of train services and passenger use are also typically higher at urban than rural stations affecting the nature of the adopter's job and the environment in which the work is carried out.

4 Station adoption by third parties

Group adoption

Station adoption by third parties usually embraces a wider range of activities than the simple adoption schemes based on regular inspection and defect identification promoted by some train operating companies. The great majority of third party station adoptions result from local concern about the appearance and future of stations. In some cases, stations are adopted by existing groups already active in community or environmental work in the locality or by schools, colleges or parish or town councils. In other cases, groups form with the primary objective of improving the appearance of their local station. These often adopt the title “Friends of XXXX Station”.

Many station adoption groups go further than basic station checking, gardening and cosmetic improvements. At some stations adoption groups have played a role in bringing redundant buildings or unused space in existing buildings back into use. The more ambitious the plans of a station adoption group, the greater will be the need for organisation and resources – both people and money.

There is no limit to the types of group that may wish to adopt a station. Usually, they are local organisations although, in some cases, there may be some connection to a national body such as the National Trust (e.g. Bodmin Parkway is connected to Lanhydrock House by a 1.75 mile driveway). In Norfolk, there are long-standing arrangements with local branches of the Women’s Institute, who tend the gardens at Sheringham and at West Runton, where an annual tea party has been held for each of the past ten years. Benefiting from the railway industry tradition of Best Kept Station and Station Garden competitions, the adoption of stations by local Britain in Bloom committees has evolved (e.g. Clacton and Frinton). The relationship is strengthened in East Anglia by One Railway’s sponsorship of the regional Britain in Bloom competition and the introduction of a Best Station category into the contest.

Structure and organisation

In 2005 Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPT) and ACoRP produced a “Toolkit” for station adoption (*Station Adoption, A Guide for the local community*). The Toolkit was aimed at local groups wishing to achieve more than just reporting of faults requiring rectification to train operating companies. Issues addressed included the formation, organisation and potential activities of station “Friends” groups.

Many of the key organisational features suggested in the “Toolkit” form the basis for the operation of station adoption groups. These key features are summarised below:

- Establish a new adoption group by publicising and holding a public meeting to establish interest, identify volunteers; determine the scope of activities to be undertaken; elect a chair, secretary and treasurer; and agree a membership fee (some adoption groups are understood to have a membership fee and some not).

- Arrange a meeting with the train operating company to discuss and agree the activities that can be undertaken at the station.
- Set up a bank account, draft and agree a simple constitution and issue a press release.
- Develop a simple action plan outlining the activities to be undertaken and revise/update it at regular intervals. If the planned activities are ambitious it may be necessary to set a budget and develop a business plan.
- Arrange a rota for working at the station and for all volunteers to be given a safety briefing at the station.
- Establish links with other local groups, schools and colleges in order to broaden opportunities for getting new recruits to join the group.

Relationship with the train operating company

Station adoption is only possible with the consent of the train operating company. The scope of activities to be undertaken must be agreed with the company in advance; all of the people expecting to work on the station must receive a safety briefing; and an agreement must be signed by an authorised member of the adoption group.

Group adoptions tend to be stable. For example, Northern Rail is not aware of any adoption groups that have ceased to function.

Where an adopted station is on an electrified line, special considerations apply and are included in briefings from station managers:

- Third/fourth rail electrification: As adopters are only allowed in areas where the public have access, they should never be on or near the line. Nevertheless the hazard of live third and/or fourth rails will form an important part of the safety briefing.
- Overhead electrified wires: These present a greater hazard and a greater constraint on working at stations as there is a risk of electric shock if someone moves within a few feet of a live overhead wire. The station manager's safety briefing will stress the consequent constraints on working using ladders, poles, long-handled cutters and water hoses.

A key element of any briefing is ensuring that individual and group adopters are aware that they must never give the impression of being a railway employee.

ACoRP takes the view that station adoption should be local, informal and not tied into contracts and bureaucratic processes in order to ensure the continued availability of enthusiastic local volunteers. Train operating companies may welcome the support provided by adopters, but they also have health and safety responsibilities that require a degree of control of the activities of adopters in order to ensure their safety and the safety of passengers and railway staff.

Examples of group adoption

Friends of Penmere Station

The “Friends of Penmere” look after Penmere station on the Maritime Line (Truro – Falmouth) and have been in existence since 1993. They are one of the earliest station adoptions and provide an excellent example of a well established scheme. The work undertaken involved several years of heavy clearance of the site after years of neglect under British Rail ownership. An initial appeal for volunteers delivered an overwhelming response and ensured the project got off to an excellent start. They were supported by Cornwall County Council, the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and Wessex Trains. Their work has been well recognised both locally and nationally and the station was short listed for Best Small Station at the 2002 National Rail Awards.

The train operating company and, working through the company, the adopter, are responsible for the station and Network Rail for the track. The need for close co-ordination between the parties to ensure consistent standards of presentation is indicated by the caption to this photograph on the Penmere website: “Penmere is a suburb of Falmouth, and its station is cared for well by the Friends of Penmere Station. The platform (though sadly not the track) is tidy and clean”.



Penmere Station is unstaffed and consists of a single platform with waiting shelter, seating and lighting; a small car park; a path for use by pedestrians; and a number of information displays. Adoption has delivered a very attractive station with prize-winning gardens surrounding the car park and beside the platform and pedestrian path. The shelter has been repainted and refurbished; station signs in Great Western style have been installed; several traditional bench seats complement modern station seats; and progress and plans are charted on a “Friends” notice board. More information can be found in a case study in Appendix D.



(Photograph © Owen Dunn)

Friends of Crediton Station

The catalyst for establishment of the Friends of Crediton Station (FOCS) came in 1999 when Linda Rogers leased and renovated the redundant Grade II listed station building at Crediton on the Exeter to Barnstaple “Tarka” Line and opened a tea room and craft shop in the former booking office. The former waiting room now serves as the meeting room for the Friends and also contains the “Story of Crediton Station” museum.

Crediton benefits from comprehensive local and community interest, including the involvement of two other third party stakeholders, the North Devon Rail Users Group and the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership.

Crediton Station was selected as one of the locations to be included in the Gateway Stations pilot programme launched by the Countryside Agency in July 2003 and managed from April 2005 by the Commission for Rural Communities, an operating division of the re-organised Countryside Agency. This provided access to advice from the Agency’s Gateway Stations Officer for the duration of the pilot programme.

Initial activity by FOCS focused on cosmetic improvements to the station environment – improved flower beds, stand-alone flower tubs, installation of running-in boards, refurbishment of London & South Western Railway and Southern Railway seating, and refurbishment of a store room.

As part of the Gateway Stations project, FOCS joined with local authorities and other interested bodies and individuals to form the Crediton Station Development Forum (CSDF) with the objective of preparing an action plan for future development of the station. A number of objectives were agreed including improving linkage between the station and town centre through investment in transport and signage, and raising the profile of the station by exploiting its historic status.

CSDF developed an ambitious action plan covering promotional activities and short, medium and long term schemes for investment. Measures proposed included CCTV installation, station lighting, information at the station and in the town centre, improvements to the car park and improvements to the pedestrian route and public transport between town centre and station. Funding opportunities are now being explored.

FOCS and CSDF stress that the work being done at the station is over and above the limited routine/periodic maintenance and renovation carried out by the train operating company and Network Rail.

FOCS won the 2006 Community Rail Award for Best Heritage/Conservation Scheme. Further information can be found in the case study in Appendix C.

Crediton also exemplifies the benefit of membership of a nationally-supported station management and enhancement programme, the Countryside Agency’s Gateway Stations pilot programme. Crediton’s selection in 2003 as one of the locations to be included in the programme provided access to advice from the

Agency's Gateway Stations Officer for the duration of the programme. This facilitated formation of the Crediton Station Development Forum (CSDF) and preparation of an action plan for the station's future development, which includes improved links between the station and town centre, investment in transport and signage, and raising the station's profile by exploiting its historic status.



Garden at Crediton Station (Martin Higginson)

Looe Station

The Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership operates a ticket and information office at Looe Station during the summer holiday season. The booking office is closed at all other times of the year.

Old Roan Station

Members of the Old Roan Residents Association and children from Holy Rosary Primary School adopted Old Roan Station in March 2006 with the support of Merseytravel and Merseyrail. Children from the school are being educated about dropping litter and have created posters, some of which are on display at the station. Members of the Residents' Association give the station regular spot checks, remove litter and carry out gardening.

The adoption of Old Roan Station, Merseyside, shows how adoption schemes can bring wider community and social benefits. In particular, this scheme also shows how children can be encouraged to contribute to and take pride in their local railway. The Old Roan Residents Association and children from Holy Rosary Primary School adopted the Station 2006 with the support of Merseytravel and Merseyrail. Children from the school are being educated about dropping litter and have created posters, some of which are on display at the station. Members of the Residents' Association give the station regular spot checks, remove litter and carry out gardening.

Chandlers Ford Station

Chandlers Ford Station was re-opened in 2003 as a result of the work of a partnership comprising Hampshire County Council, the Strategic Rail Authority, Network Rail and South West Trains.

The organisational arrangements are unconventional: Network Rail is the station landlord for the platforms, the County Council is the station landlord for the buildings and car park and South West Trains is the Station Facility Owner. Other new stations also have unconventional ownership (e.g. Warwick Parkway, Burscough Bridge Interchange, Horwich Parkway) as a result of the contributions of different partners.

Clitheroe Station

When the station at Clitheroe was reopened, Lancashire County Council provided the adjacent bus interchange and a Customer Service Office. Whilst responsibility for the station remains with Northern Rail and Network Rail, the County Council is responsible for the Customer Service Office and Bus Station. The Customer Service Office provides information on all local public transport services and sells the full range of national rail tickets. Clitheroe Station is also adopted under the Northern Rail station adoption scheme.

Carnforth Station

The former booking office and buildings on the platform between the West Coast Main Line and Barrow Line at Carnforth Station are now owned and managed by Carnforth Station and Railway Trust Company. The building now accommodate a range of uses including a visitor centre building on the connection with the film *Brief Encounter*, a café, a small museum, a meeting room and several units leased to shops and small businesses.



Carnforth Station: *Brief Encounter* Café, museum, shop and meeting room (JMP Consulting)

Friends of Handforth Station

Handforth is a relatively modern two platform station on the electrified Manchester to Crewe line not far from Manchester Airport. Local fears that their dilapidated and vandalised station would close led to the formation of the Friends of Handforth Station in the mid-1990s. Although members of the Handforth in Bloom gardening group formed the original nucleus of the group, membership now covers a broader range of interests. Gardening remains a core activity, but wider community involvement has been secured through the “platform for art” display of paintings, woodcraft, sculptures and flags at the station. Groups involved in the creation of artwork displays include occupants of a residential home, local schoolchildren and local clubs and societies. The more substantial achievements of the Friends include securing investment in a new ticket office and improvements to the shelters.

The background to setting up the Friends of Handforth Station in the late 1990s and the group’s subsequent success are summarised in the following extract from the BBC News website (2005):

Some disgruntled rail passengers have taken matters into their own hands. Residents in Handforth, Greater Manchester, decided to act when the ticket office at their local station was boarded up because it was deemed unsafe.

“We feared the station would be closed down altogether”, says Mike Bishop.

The Friends of Handforth Station managed to get £35,000 in grants, transforming the station and even building a sculpture park. The group has won many awards for its work.

It has made sure not to take over work that the train operating companies and Network Rail should do, spending the grants on extras. But it has lobbied hard to make sure the rail companies stick to their contractual obligations.

Its success has prompted a region-wide station adoption scheme, recently launched by the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority (GMPTA).

Wider community involvement that has been secured at Handforth includes the “platform for art” displays of paintings, woodcraft, sculptures and flags at the station. Groups involved in the creation of artwork displays include occupants of a residential home, local schoolchildren and local clubs and societies. The success of the Handforth scheme prompted Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority (GMPTA) to launch a region-wide station adoption scheme.



Temporary booking office, planters and seating at Handforth) JMP Consulting)

More information can be found in a case study in Appendix D.

[Friends of Levenshulme Station](#)

Levenshulme, between Manchester and Stockport, is another station on the electrified line linking Manchester and Crewe that has benefited from adoption. The Friends of Levenshulme Station were formed in 2003 with the objective of securing improvements to the station. Projects include work with ethnic minorities and a local school for the hearing impaired to provide artwork at the station and postcards and posters advertising the line.

[Friends of Saunderton Station](#)

The Friends of Saunderton Station were formed early in 2004 with the objective of improving the appearance of the station and bringing the disused station waiting room back into use. The group has been successful in achieving its objectives. The station waiting room was reopened in January 2005 following restoration using funding secured from the local authority, the train operating company and ACoRP.

A local example of partnership working to generate funding is provided by the Friends of Saunderton Station. The station waiting room was restored and reopened with funding from the local authority, the train operating company and the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP).

[Friends of Altrincham Interchange](#)

Altrincham Interchange is a bus station, an intermediate station on the line from Manchester to Chester, and the terminus of a Manchester Metrolink light rail line. The Friends of Altrincham Interchange were launched in May 2004. One of the first tasks was a “clean up week” during which 80 members of the Friends and the local Baptist Church undertook an extensive cleaning operation and painted parts of the station. More recently, the bus station manager funded planters for the railway station and Altrincham in Bloom provided floral displays.

Shiplake Station

In 2006 Oxfordshire County Council provided funding for a £38,000 scheme to refurbish Shiplake Station on the First Great Western branch to Henley on Thames. Whilst not a station adoption in the usual sense, the work has delivered improvements of similar scope including clearance of vegetation, provision of new plants and shrubs, levelling of the platform, new fencing, an anti-graffiti coating on all brickwork, new cycle racks and restoration of a large British Rail symbol at the station entrance.

The National Trust Rural Stations Project

The National Trust had an involvement in station adoption schemes in South West England through the activity of an enthusiastic officer. This project started in 2001 at Bodmin Parkway and St Austell stations involving Scope and other disability groups. It extended to include over 25 stations on the Wessex Trains network and around 40 volunteers across the South West, with most volunteers spending one day a week assisting for about three hours. The scheme has received a Queen's Award for Voluntary Community Achievement.

The scheme continues to operate at stations across a wide area of the First Great Western franchise. The Rural Stations Project is a group of volunteer gardeners caring for station gardens in the West Country and affiliated to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). Volunteers receive training, a safety briefing, expenses and reimbursement of the cost of any courses attended. Some stations have only 1-2 volunteers whilst groups of up to 7-8 people may work at other stations.

Public liability insurance is provided and any volunteers using power machinery or motorised tools possess appropriate certificates of competence to meet insurance requirements. The use of chain saws, ladders and steps is not permitted.

Partnerships between several stakeholders are often vital to the success of Station Adoption schemes. The National Trust's involvement in station adoption schemes in South West England included over 25 stations and around 40 volunteers, most of whom assist for about three hours one day a week. The project also involved several other partners including local authorities, Community Rail Partnerships and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

Activities include tending of station gardens, planters and hanging baskets; provision of station lawns; restoration of existing traditional station benches and provision of replica GWR seating; and provision of station murals and picnic tables.



St. Erth Station: Garden restoration by the Rural Stations Project (JMP Consulting)

The scheme is funded from a variety of sources including an annual grant from the train operator (£5,000 from First Great Western in 2006 and a commitment to provide similar funding in 2007); grants and donations of flowers and planters from local authorities and community organisations; sponsorship and donations from the private sector.

Several examples of stations benefiting from the project are provided below:

- Leamington: B&Q have sponsored a wooden toy train with each carriage bearing the name of a school involved in growing plants for the station from seeds.
- St. Erth: Restoration of flower beds, provision of hanging baskets, provision of tubs with palm trees, repair and repainting of station furniture, provision of new seating in traditional style.
- Penzance: Flower beds cleared and replanted using plants supplied by Penwith Council and by the local Civic Society through the Adopt-a-Plot scheme.
- Gunnislake: Flower beds being restored through joint action by BTCV and the local Womens' Institute.
- Liskeard: On Community Rail Day in May 2007 volunteers from the University of Plymouth "Active in Communities" project and BTCV volunteers spent the day improving the garden on the Looe Valley Line platform at Liskeard Station.
- Kemble: Replanting of the garden using shrubs donated by Wyevale Garden Centres.



Penzance Station: Adopt-a-Plot, Penzance Civic Society (JMP Consulting)

Tenancies and commercial sponsorship

The role of tenants

The great majority of station tenants do not have a formal adoption role. Some tenants, mainly small businesses, may assist on a voluntary basis by providing floral displays or clearing litter. Food outlets on rail stations can generate additional litter. In such cases, rent may include an allowance to cover additional cleaning costs.

Many station tenants rent accommodation for their businesses, but make no direct contribution to the operation and maintenance of the station (e.g. operators of bookstalls, convenience stores), although their presence may increase station footfall. Some tenants have a synergy with rail travel (e.g. a bookshop or café). For others, the sole objective may be the availability of accommodation. Examples include a software firm at Attleborough, Norfolk, and a retailer of fireplaces at Knaresborough, North Yorkshire. The use of redundant former station houses as residential or office accommodation (e.g. at several stations on the Newcastle-Carlisle line) usually affords no link with the railway apart from the coincidence of the property's location.

Wymondham is an example of “business adoption” of a station. The tenant is a member of the One Railway station adoption scheme and uses the station buildings to accommodate a piano workshop, a café (the Brief Encounter Café) and a small museum. The tenant has provided space for One Railway to convert a former store room into a small ticket office that is staffed on weekday mornings and Saturdays when there are Norwich City home matches.

Overseas, we found examples of links between tenancy of station accommodation and an obligation to fulfil certain duties at the station. This option might be pursued in Great Britain, although the separation between property no longer required for railway purposes and the franchised train operator (i.e. “off-lease” property remaining under the control of Network Rail) would render this more difficult to achieve than on a fully integrated railway.

At several stations there are links between tenancies and social provision, which helps maintain and strengthen the railway's position in the community. For example, at Southminster, Essex, a health facility occupies part of the station, and at Thetford, Norfolk there are plans for community and low rental business use of parts of former station premises. The potential for conflict between Network Rail's duty to secure a commercial rental from its property portfolio and social objectives may be seen. The Network Rail perspective is that commercial rental has the top priority, as required by law, followed by preparedness to let redundant "off-lease" premises at a low ("peppercorn") rental for social purposes which is preferable to having property remain empty.

The Central Stations Project

Central Stations is an ACoRP project intended to make redundant station buildings available for use by local charities and not-for-profit community groups. The aim is to revitalise stations through additional non-railway related activities in order to increase the level of activity and deliver a safer environment for passengers.

The project has the support of East Midlands Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands, Central Trains, Network Rail, Passenger Focus (formerly Rail Passengers Council Midlands) and the Countryside Agency. These agencies have formed a Steering Group that is administered by ACoRP and have also appointed a Project Officer.

Central Trains identified 12 stations where it is willing to let surplus space to community groups at a "peppercorn" rent – possibly making schemes eligible for local authority regeneration funding. They include Wellington, Great Malvern, Droitwich Spa, Stamford, Oakham, Melton Mowbray, Spalding and Sleaford. The role of the project officer is to identify suitable uses and tenants, and to provide assistance and guidance in planning renovation and improvement works.

The criteria used to judge applications are summarised below:

- What benefit will the proposed use bring to the local community?
- What value will the applicant gain from occupancy of the station building in terms of achieving their objectives?
- What benefit will the proposed use bring to station users?
- Are the proposals sustainable and viable?

By the end of 2006, a number of tenants had signed leases and the first tenant had completed renovation work and moved into rooms at Stamford Station. The buildings are leased "as seen". Advice on sources of funding is provided to tenants as part of the Central Stations Project, but the Project does not provide any direct funding.

Organisations or groups planning the re-use of redundant station buildings at medium-sized and smaller stations have encountered difficulties in securing leases. The main obstacles have been the short duration of train operating company franchises and the cost and time involved in finalising lease

agreements. A short lease does not provide sufficient security of tenure to justify investment in a building.

As part of the Central Stations project, ACoRP has developed a standard 25 years lease for station tenancies by community and not for profit groups in order to avoid detailed legal negotiations over individual clauses. This standard lease is signed by the tenant and both Network Rail and the train operating company, thereby providing continuity when responsibility for station management changes at franchise renewal. It also provides a template that does not require renegotiation every time it is used. The standard lease does not, at present, include any provision for station adoption requirements to be placed on tenants.

Once a long lease is agreed, it becomes easier to secure external capital funding from sources including Railway Heritage Trust grants, and local authority grants. Because revenue funding streams are more difficult to attract, the virtually rent free tenancy provides a first step towards financial self-sustainability for community and other groups.

More information can be found in a case study in Appendix D.

Surrey Pathfinder

Surrey County Council is concerned about the condition of railway stations in Surrey and has investigated the potential to take some responsibility from Network Rail for running some stations. A particular issue was the gap in quality between the best stations in the County and those with unacceptable facilities – poor quality shelters and waiting facilities, absence of CCTV surveillance and inadequacy of cycle parking facilities. Three reasons were identified for the continued existence of stations with poor facilities – short franchises, franchises nearing the end of their life, and organisational and partnership building difficulties.

This led to the idea that the County Council could become the Station Facility Operator to enable it to invest in improvements and maintenance, and to take advantage of development opportunities presented by redundant space in buildings. Funding to investigate concept feasibility was obtained from the DfT/LGA Pathfinder programme.

The County Council compiled a feasibility study and business case and commissioned consultants to investigate two topics:

- Non-Standard Station Ownership Models – some of the findings of that study by Jacobs are referred to elsewhere in this report.
- Opportunities for local authority involvement in rail stations.

The business case analysis suggested that the potential for revenue gain through attracting new passengers was limited. Hence, the rationale for the project would be the benefits to existing passengers through better facilities and a higher quality service.

Laing Rail provided advice on local authority involvement in railway stations. Their report (*Manual for Local Authority Involvement in Railway Stations*) was completed in 2006. The conclusions were that the 80 stations examined broadly met their operating and maintenance costs; that there were some opportunities for increasing income through commercial sub-leasing and advertising; that there are some opportunities for the use of building space by local authorities or community groups; and that a few stations provided redevelopment potential. Six stations were recommended as candidates for pilot projects.

Short franchises and tenancy issues were identified as barriers to bringing redundant station buildings back into productive use.

No industrial relations issues were identified. Booking offices were to be let back to train operators who would retain their staff thereby avoiding any TUPE – Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations - or other employment issues.

Although the initiative is stated to have the support of Network Rail, it may not progress further as train operating companies are concerned about the potential loss of revenue from car parking charges and because the transport advantages are offset by legal and risk management concerns for the County Council. Fragmentation is also an issue as the County Council would become yet another player in the rail industry.

Sponsorship of Stations

There are a number of examples of commercial adoption of stations in Great Britain. This can take a variety of forms including straightforward advertising through sponsorship of flower displays or painting in the advertiser's corporate colours (e.g. Cadburys, Bournville).

Church and Oswaldtwistle is an intermediate station on the Preston to Colne line in east Lancashire where there is a unique partnership between the train operating company, the local authority and Oswaldtwistle Mills Shopping Village. Oswaldtwistle Mills has adopted the station and implemented three sets of improvements:

- Provided new seats and planting at the station.
- Installed CCTV remotely monitored by Mill security staff.
- Provided rail information on a display at the Mill.



Church & Oswaldtwistle Station (JMP Consulting)

More information about Church and Oswaldtwistle is provided in the case study in Appendix D.

Station adoption and Community Rail Partnerships

Community Rail Partnerships are not-for-profit organisations established by mutual agreement by members including local authorities, train operating companies and rail user and/or community groups. They are usually staffed by a paid officer and a committee of stakeholders. The partners provide the funding and assist the paid officer in seeking sources of additional external funding. Community Rail Partnerships may be line specific or they may, as in the case of the Devon and Cornwall Partnership, cover a much wider area.

What is now the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) has its roots in the early 1990s. Paul Salveson, working with the London-based organisation Transnet, obtained funding from British Rail's Regional Railways, the Countryside Commission and the Rural Development Commission for *New Futures for Rural Railways*, a series of case studies which cited pioneering examples from the West Country including the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and local business people selling rail tickets at Ledbury.

The concept of Community Rail Partnerships received its national launch when the study was presented at a conference at the National Railway Museum in 1992. Following the launch, a new organisation, the Transport Research & Information Network (TR&IN) was formed, headed until 2006 by Paul Salveson. In 1996 ACoRP was set up as a sister organisation to take on the increasing workload as the concept spread throughout Britain.

Whilst the concepts of Community Rail Partnership and station adoption are not identical, there is considerable synergy between them. Community Rail Partnerships are responsible for complete lines or groups of lines and their

responsibilities often extend to include publicity and marketing, whereas station adoption is locally based and has a more narrowly defined remit.

Railway Development Companies have been established to promote two railway lines – the Settle and Carlisle Line and the Esk Valley Line. They have more extensive powers and responsibilities than Community Rail Partnerships in that they can employ staff, lease or own or sub-let property, and undertake trading activities including retailing, catering and property restoration and management.

Station adoption, works to improve the environment at rail stations and initiatives to exploit the potential of redundant station buildings are part of the toolkit of both Community Rail Partnerships and Railway Development Companies.

Activities

Station adoption is only one of a wide range of activities that may be undertaken by Community Rail Partnerships that include train operating companies and local authorities. The range of activities is summarised below:

- Seeking improvements to the level and quality of service on the line.
- Improving integration with local bus services through timetable co-ordination, new links and fares initiatives.
- Improving stations through cosmetic environmental improvements to appearance; renovating and finding new uses for redundant buildings; improving car parks, facilities for cyclists and pedestrian access routes; and investing in safety measures such as improved lighting or CCTV surveillance.
- Promoting increased use of lines through the production and distribution of publicity material and initiatives such as “jazz trains”, guided walks from stations, “rail ale trails” and links with nearby visitor attractions.

There may be scope for Community Rail Partnerships to undertake some forms of maintenance work for train operating companies on a contractual basis. For example, the Penistone Line Partnership is paid an annual fee by Northern Rail for the gritting of platforms at unmanned stations on the line in winter. There are two benefits – a speedy response time at more remote rural stations when adverse weather is forecast and the opportunity for the train operating company to concentrate its resources on fewer stations.

The responsibilities of Community Rail Partnerships (CRP) are different from those of Station Adopters. Partnerships are concerned with raising the profile of a line, which may include the production of publicity material, mounting events such as “beer” and “music” trains and offering guided walks from stations. Many benefit from funded full or part-time Partnership officers, who work with the local communities in support of their lines. Some Community Rail Partnerships, such as the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, whose responsibilities cover all the branch railways in the two counties, do also run station adoption schemes. The Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership adopts stations in its area (e.g. on the Manningtree-Harwich *Mayflower Line* and Sudbury-Marks Tey *Gainsborough Line*).

The Community Rail Strategy

The Community Rail Development Strategy (SRA, 2004) is based on the concept of a different category of local railway, separately specified, with standards appropriate to its use building on the wishes of local communities to be actively involved in the development of their railway (Network Rail web site, 2006). The objective is to make the lines more sustainable by bringing costs and income closer together. A continued need for subsidy is expected, justified by economic development, accessibility, inclusion and environmental benefits.

A substantial number of lines have been designated Community Railways and a small number have been identified as pilot schemes to demonstrate what can be achieved. A Community Rail Partnership may exist on a line that is or is not designated as a Community Railway.

The Strategy recommends two meetings a year between train operating companies and adopters of their stations. ACoRP considers this to be appropriate as it avoids frequent and often unproductive contact whilst providing an opportunity for enthusiastic volunteers to air their opinions at controlled and time-limited events.

The Gateway Stations Project

The programme

The Gateway Stations project emerged from the Countryside Agency's Market Towns Initiative where Market Town Partnership health checks revealed a common need to improve railway stations. The Agency established the Gateway Stations programme to help market towns develop integrated transport networks and exploit the potential of their stations as gateways and business opportunities.

The programme was launched in July 2003 and ran for two years. A Gateway Stations Officer was appointed to provide advice, support and modest funding through a small delegated fund. Responsibility for the concluding stages of the project passed to the commission for Rural Communities when reorganisation of the Countryside Agency took place early in 2005. A total of 13 stations were included in the project

Success and barriers to success

The report on the project (*Gateway Stations : A Partnership Story*, Commission for Rural Communities, 2005) identified the reasons for success and barriers to success outlined below:

Reasons for Success:

- The existence of a sound partnership formed of all the key stakeholders – including train operating companies and Network Rail.
- Existence of links to town centres – public transport, taxis, signed pedestrian routes.
- Embedding of plans to develop stations in Local Transport Plans and Development Plans as policies and proposals for funding.
- An understanding of commercial realities in the rail industry by all parties.
- Good ideas and the enthusiasm and tenacity to pursue them.

Barriers to Success:

- Coping with change – franchise changes and changing external and internal policy agendas in the railway industry implies a lack of continuity and is a reason for slow progress.
- Dependence of some schemes on a small number of enthusiastic individuals – their loss could threaten the continuation of a project.
- The complexity of property issues in the rail industry and the time taken in negotiating with the Network Rail Commercial Property Division, Spacia (which is the brand of Network Rail responsible for managing the letting of railway arches and other surplus property) and agents of Network Rail. Experience in the Gateway Stations projects suggests that it is far easier to negotiate with train operating companies.
- More ambitious schemes at stations will take a long time to deliver whereas capital funding opportunities are often short term – even the five year Local Transport Plan period may not be long enough.
- Securing revenue streams for maintenance and running costs may be problematic - train operating companies are under pressure to drive costs down and Network Rail has strict guidelines on investment.

Some examples are drawn from the Gateway stations projects – Crediton is a Gateway Station that was considered earlier in this report:

Brandon Station

Brandon is an unstaffed station managed by One Railway on the line between Norwich and Ely. Brandon Communities Partnership (BCP) drew down some £7 million of regeneration funding through the Countryside Agency's Market Towns Initiative in the period from its establishment in 1998. The Market Towns Initiative health check identified the station building and the poor station environment as major issues to be addressed.

BCP wished to lease the station building for refurbishment and re-use as a bunk house managed by the Youth Hostel association (YHA). A feasibility study was completed in December 2002 providing the basis for preparation of an action plan for implementation. Subsequently, negotiations were opened with Network Rail and Spacia. The Gateway Stations report indicates *some reluctance* to enter into negotiations on the part of Network Rail prior to renewal of the train operating franchise and the consequent possibility of a change of station leaseholder.

In September 2004, the last occupant vacated the station building. In October 2005, when the Gateway Stations final report was produced, discussions were continuing with the rail industry about leasing the station building.

In the last year, the situation has been transformed following the formation of the Friends of Brandon Station (FOBS) and joint action by the local authorities, Network Rail and One Railway. Improvements to the station environment have been implemented; new signage has been installed on roads approaching the station; FOBS notice boards have been placed at the station and in the town square; local buses are now scheduled to call at the station; and the local community bus (Brecks Bus) collects from the station. FOBS members cleared the station car park, which had been badly affected by rubbish, and painted the railings. As an example of safety management in action, One Railway ensured that this work was carried out from the public side of the railings, with no infringement of access conditions.

Local people including children aged 4 to 13 from Breckland Middle School in Brandon have created murals for the station with the help of a local artist, Suffolk County Council, Norfolk County Council and Forest Heath District Council. The mural consists of ten panels painted in acrylics and depicting scenes from the history and life of the town and surrounding countryside. Funding sponsors included the train operating company and local businesses.

Progress remains slow with the re-use of the station building, but the Chairman of Network Rail has appointed an officer to restart the Station Action Group. More information on the project is contained in the case study in Appendix D.

Craven Arms Station

Craven Arms is an unstaffed station managed by Arriva trains Wales on the line between Shrewsbury and Hereford. The Craven Arms Market Towns Initiative (MTI) Partnership carried out a health check of the town in 2002 and subsequently secured £8 million of funding for a range of projects including regeneration, environmental and community schemes. The MTI partnership consulted the Craven Arms Rail Users Association and passengers at the station before developing proposals to enhance the station's appearance. The proposals for the station consisted of three main elements:

- Relocation of an old public weighbridge building to a site owned by a housing association adjacent to the station car park: Shropshire County Council agreed to own and maintain the building which is to be used as a community resource (i.e. a one stop shop, a credit union and an office for the town clerk) managed by the Town Council).

- A number of minor improvements have been implemented including a £23,000 project to clear vegetation and provide lighting on the footpath linking the station with the town; provision by Network Rail of a new fence on the northbound platform; the felling of dangerous trees; and provision of a new bus shelter in the station car park.
- Relocation of a rail maintenance contractor's storage compound to enable an area by one of the platforms to be used for expansion of the station car park at a cost of £175,000: Although Network Rail agreed to relocate the site as long as it was at no cost to themselves, discussions were protracted and the MTI partnership reallocated funding to competing projects that were progressing more smoothly.

Helsby and Frodsham Stations

Helsby and Frodsham are unstaffed stations managed by Arriva Trains Wales on the line from Ellesmere Port and Chester to Warrington. Both stations have been adopted by members of the North Cheshire Rail Users Group for some years and both are now formally adopted under the Arriva Trains Wales Adopt a Station scheme.

Helsby was first adopted in the 1997 by members of the North Cheshire Rail Users Group (NCRUG). Their early work took the form of clearing undergrowth, restoring and replanting flower beds and installing flower tubs using funds from a variety of sources including a Landfill Tax grant and contributions from 3C Waste and First North Western. The station is now visited weekly by the adoption group who work on the station gardens and other ways of improving the appearance of the station.



Helsby Station (JMP Consulting)

Helsby was the winner of the “Best Unstaffed Station” category in the 2000 Railtrack “Station of the Year” competition and was also the first winner of the “Best Kept Station in Cheshire” award in 2003.

NCRUG started to hold working parties at Frodsham Station in 2001 to cut back vegetation and plant the flower beds. Impetus was provided by the decision of Vale Royal Borough Council to enter the North West section of the “Britain in

Bloom” competition. The Council provided bedding plants free of charge and First North Western painted seats and removed graffiti. The town won first prize in the “Small market Towns” category of the competition in 2001 and the appearance of the station received a specific commendation.

In 2002 grants from First North Western and Railtrack funded the first stage of an artwork project by students of Frodsham High School. The objective was to make plaques to be attached to the iron railings at the station.

NCRUG is affiliated to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) which advises on risk assessment models and good working practices. NCRUG relies on Arriva Trains Wales for insurance purposes. The NCRUG supervisor provides a safety briefing to new volunteers, but people who intend to work at either station regularly must receive a safety briefing from Arriva Trains Wales.

Spacia is responsible for managing and securing tenants for the station building at Frodsham, but it remains without a tenant.



The boarded up station building at Frodsham (JMP Consulting)

Further examples

Settle and Carlisle Line

The Friends of the Settle and Carlisle Line were formed in 1981 to campaign against a proposal to close the line. After the Government decision to keep the line open, the organisation evolved into a user group to improve facilities and services for passengers. The Friends also operate a station adoption scheme under which some of its members tend flower beds and look after station welfare. The Settle and Carlisle Railway Development Company manages unmanned stations on the route and is responsible for group bookings at the two staffed stations, Settle and Appleby. There is also a Settle & Carlisle Railway Trust,

which is responsible for architectural conservation along the route and has resident caretakers at Ribblehead and at Kirkby Stephen stations.

Some of the activities of the Friends and the Company are listed below and more information is provided in the case study in Appendix D:

- Refurbishment of station buildings.
- Installation of Victorian-style lamps.
- Restoration of two disused signal boxes.
- A line specific station adoption scheme in which members tend flower beds and carry out other tasks to improve the station environment.



Lazonby Station used as offices

Penistone Line Partnership

The Penistone Line Partnership (PLP) has 300 members living in communities spread along the 37 miles of line. PLP is not active in station adoption, but some of its members are adopters under the Northern Rail scheme and some also undertake paid gritting activities in winter months.

Stockmoor Station has been adopted by a local Womens' Institute group with support from other residents of the village. The main achievements to date are the creation of a station garden and the installation of traditional railway signs and bench seating.

SwaleRail

SwaleRail, part of the Kent Community Rail Partnership (KCRP), campaigns to support the level and quality of service on the Sheerness branch. Neither SwaleRail nor KCRP formally adopt any stations on the branch, but SwaleRail has been involved in a number of activities intended to improve the appearance of stations:

- Encouraging the involvement of schools in an anti-litter campaign.
- A local school provided paintings for redundant upstairs windows and the booking office at Queenborough Station. Biffa, the waste disposal and recycling company, sponsored hanging baskets at the station.

- Sittingbourne Community College has undertaken landscaping work at Kemsley Station.
- Sheppey College provided some short term art displays at Sheerness Station.

Abbeyline Community Rail Partnership

Abbeyline is the Community Rail Partnership for the electrified suburban branch line from the West Coast Main Line at Watford Junction to St. Albans Abbey operated by Silverlink Trains. The area served is a mix of urban and urban/rural fringe. The Partnership is managed by a Community Rail Partnership Officer funded by Hertfordshire County Council. The lead partners are the County Council, Silverlink Trains, Network Rail, the local rail users group, and local District and Parish Councils.

The Partnership has an action plan that outlines activities to be undertaken by the Partnership at stations along the line:

- All stations on the line are adopted on the basis of fault reporting to Silverlink Trains and Network Rail. The Partnership is in identifying opportunities at each station and intends to provide small grants to kickstart projects.
- Safety: A programme of small scale improvements has been implemented based on the findings of a Crime Prevention Survey.
- Education and safe railway promotion - there is an on-going programme of school visits to the line and a programme of visits to schools has been completed.
- Community gardens: Land has already been designated at one station.
- Community notice boards have been installed at stations and are kept up-to-date.
- Tenants have been confirmed for Bricket Wood Station following negotiations on a lease with Network Rail and Silverlink Trains.

Consultation with the Partnership Officer identified a number of key issues:

- Station adoption and volunteer support must not undertake work on and around the station that are the duties of rail industry staff or other bodies (e.g. highway authorities). All work must be additional to that undertaken by paid staff.
- Achieving progress is important to maintain volunteer enthusiasm.
- Public liability insurance is becoming an issue for the Partnership even though adoption “work” is only in public areas. Issues have been raised about the liability of people “working” on the station.
- The relationship with Network Rail is good, but specific issues can take a long time to resolve (e.g. identification of an area for planting requires establishment of ownership and proof that the plot was not crossed by underground services).
- Relationships with Local Authorities are good once appropriate contacts are made.

- A need is seen for involving community associations, residents associations, schools and colleges. It is anticipated that the involvement of children will result in a need for additional safety requirements.

Chester – Shrewsbury Community Rail Partnership

The Chester – Wrexham – Shrewsbury line is supported by the Chester – Shrewsbury Rail Partnership which employs a full time Community Rail Officer. Virtually all stations on the line are adopted under the Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) fault reporting scheme. Chirk and Gobowen Stations have more extensive adoption schemes.

Chirk: The station is owned by Network Rail and is entirely within the ATW station lease area. It is therefore relatively easy to decide who to contact about any particular issue. One of the early activities was the establishment of the Friends of Chirk Station, a local community group formed with the objective of making the station a more attractive gateway to the village, Chirk Castle and the Ceiriog Valley. Group activities, part funded by a grant from the Welsh Assembly Rural Scheme, have included renovation of the gardens on Platform 2, the provision of planters and new fencing on Platform 1, and tidying of vegetation around the adjacent bus stop.



Plaque marking the contribution of partners to a CCTV scheme at Chirk (JMP Consulting)

Gobowen: Ownership is particularly complex – ATW controls the platforms, the disused buildings belong to Advantage West Midlands (the Regional Development Agency), the car park is leased from Network Rail by Oswestry District Council, and the station building is leased by Severn Dee Travel, a travel agency that also sells rail tickets in the former booking office. Severn Dee Travel has provided match funding for planters and has given permission for hanging baskets to be attached to the walls of the building. More information about Gobowen is provided in the case study in Appendix D.



Traditional sign and planter at Gobowen (JMP Consulting)

The station adopters work through the Community Rail Partnership which, in turn, deals directly with ATW. This is considered to work well in terms of consistency of approach and contact, and avoids the train operating company dealing with a range of different volunteers other than for the purposes of safety briefing. Friendly media and press coverage has is considered vital in order to secure new volunteers and local authority support.

There has been substantial expenditure at Chirk. The environmental improvements were part funded by a grant of £4,800 from the Welsh Assembly Rural Scheme; there has been some capital expenditure by Wrexham Borough Council; Cadburys have used the Business in the Community programme to provide working parties of up to 12 people to undertake some of the bigger jobs at the station; and £19,000 has been raised from a variety of sources for the installation of CCTV.

There has been a substantial increase in patronage on the Chester – Shrewsbury line in recent years as a consequence of a variety of causes including new and enhanced services, investment in stations and strong marketing. It is not possible to isolate the impact of station improvements on patronage.

The re-use of railway property

Rail property at stations falls into two main categories – property within the area leased by the train operating company and property outside the station franchise lease that is the responsibility of Network Rail. Arranging leases for small buildings or areas at small stations is a less cost-effective use of staff resources by Network Rail and its property agents than securing occupants for large or commercially well-located properties. Hence, leasing small properties attracting low rents may get a low priority.

Discussion with Community Rail Partnerships and organisations involved in station adoption indicates that arranging property leases can be a very time consuming and frustrating process. Standard Network Rail agreements and procedures have been described as difficult and complicated. In the case of

Brandon, high level intervention was needed to move proposals for improving the station and finding a new use for the redundant station building.

One possible way forward is the approach being used in the ACoRP Central Stations initiative where the concept has been developed of tripartite 25 year leases agreed by Network Rail, the train operating company and tenants. This could assist with projects extending beyond the franchise period or that require land within and beyond the franchise station lease. ACoRP has also developed a standard lease agreement for the occupancy of otherwise redundant station buildings by community groups. The more widespread use of these leases would be helpful in other areas of the country.

There can be obstacles to more simple projects. Consultation with the Abbeyline Community Rail Partnership revealed the extent of work on establishing ownership and the existence or otherwise of underground services needed to secure the use of a plot of land for a station garden

Where possible, it is preferable for former railway station premises to be let for purposes having some synergy with the passenger railway including, for example, a third party retailer of rail tickets, a café or a tourist office. It is also preferable for premises to be occupied by tenants who will maintain them to a standard suitably high to complement the continuing rail passenger business. This may suggest commercial, social, community or residential use rather than industrial activities.

Station car parking may be at a premium. In such circumstances, it is preferable if tenants of station premises do not have a high demand for parking space. There are cases where conflict has arisen if part of a former station car park has been let to a tenant, resulting in a shortage of space for rail users. This can be seen at several stations on the Norwich-Ely route. The consequence is that rail user parking may spread on to adjacent roads and, possibly, creating tension between the train operator and local residents.

Stakeholder roles

Group adoption schemes permit adopters to carry out work at stations and to become involved in the development of the railway business. Group adopters typically carry out or procure station renovation and enhancement schemes, carry out local marketing and business generation activities. They may be involved in wider transport activities such as encouraging bus-rail integration. The key value of such groups is their single-minded dedication to one specific station. Their membership typically comes from the local community and many will be regular users of the station who know it well and are pleased to devote time to it.

The train operating company is the key stakeholder. Adopted stations are generally the responsibility of the train operator that holds the franchise and leases the station. Adoption groups can only operate with the consent of the train operating company and must agree the scope of their activities with the company. Adopters must work within safety and other guidelines set by the train operating company and, with few minor exceptions, can only work in areas accessible to the general public.

Network Rail is funded to deliver a defined set of outputs through the access charges review process. The Community Railways section of their web site states that generally *we are funded to operate, maintain and renew the network at the lowest cost possible whilst maintaining the required capacity*. All investments ranging from major capacity improvements to extra seats at small rail stations have implications for maintenance budgets. The implication is that improvements may not be sanctioned if a revenue stream to fund maintenance and cleaning or the deployment of external resources (e.g. adopter-provided staff or funding) is not available.

Public authorities can play an important role in resourcing station adoption schemes, including the provision and staffing of facilities such as a booking office or information centre. Many county, district, borough and even parish councils are involved as co-funders of Community Rail Partnerships and station adoption schemes.

The example of Lancashire County Council is cited to identify good practice. The Council, along with the West Lancashire Community Rail Partnership and other local authorities, funded the new Burscough Interchange, staffs the booking offices at Carnforth and Clitheroe Stations, and provided much of the funding to support the private-sector initiated proposals for the station at Church and Oswaldtwistle. The location of public facilities at stations (e.g. health facility at Southminster, tourist office at Haltwhistle) strengthen the role of a station in the community.

The private sector can play a role in station adoption by investing in the station, as at Church and Oswaldtwistle, or through commercial sponsorship as at Blackpool Pleasure Beach which is sponsored by the Pleasure Beach operator.

ACoRP supports the concept of station adoption, and is the joint author with Northern Rail and Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive of *Station Adoption: a guide for the local community* (2006). The *Guide* sets out why you should want to adopt your local station, what responsibilities you would be undertaking and provides step-by-step guidance on how to go about it.

5 The extent of station adoption in Great Britain

Geographical extent

There is a wide geographical spread of station adoption schemes in Britain, from Cornwall to Scotland and East Anglia to Wales, but schemes are not spread uniformly across the country. About half of all train operators have some stations adopted, proportions varying from a small number of stations to 96% by Northern Rail. Many more stations are adopted by individuals who monitor and report defects under Level 1 Schemes, than are adopted by groups undertaking a different and usually wider range of tasks under level 2 Schemes. Level 3 commercial sponsorship or adoption is in its infancy.

Overall, nearly a third of the 2,500 stations on the national rail network are adopted, of which the majority are under individual Level 1 adoption schemes. The percentages are dominated by schemes operated by Northern, Arriva Trains Wales, One Railway, First TransPennine Express, First Great Western and First ScotRail who, between them, account for more than 700 adopted stations, representing fewer than 30% of all stations in Great Britain. The number of stations benefiting from group adoption schemes is much lower, representing 4-5% of the stations on the network.

Adoption is most common at smaller unstaffed stations in rural areas and is less common so on inter-city and London and South Eastern area networks. There are examples of adoption of larger stations with staff and of stations in urban areas including schemes in Passenger Transport Executive areas.

There is little station adoption in South-Eastern England and Greater London, although the practice is advancing at stations franchised to One Railway in North/East London and metropolitan Essex. There is no station adoption on the former Southern Region network (South Eastern, Southern and South Western franchises) even though there are Community Rail lines in this area.

None of the stations leased by long distance InterCity franchise holders GNER, Virgin and Midland Main Line are adopted. First Great Western has, however, inherited adopted stations from the former Wessex Trains and is extending the practice more widely across its operating area including stations inherited from the Thames Trains franchise.

Adoption by train operating companies

Figure 1 illustrates the extent of station adoption by train operating company. By late 2006 approximately half of Train Operating Companies had Station Adoption schemes at one or more of their stations (Source: RSSB unpublished project T667 Research into Security at Stations, Work Package 2 : Survey of Station and Train Operators and the BTP).

The largest cohort of adopted stations by far is those of Northern Rail, 96% of whose stations are covered mainly by individual adoption schemes. The next

largest group of adopted stations is at Arriva Trains Wales (35% of stations adopted), One (20%) and Silverlink County (20%).

First TransPennine, MerseyRail and First Great Western each have adoption schemes at 5% of their stations. First Great Western is noteworthy as the only InterCity train operator with adopted stations, although these mainly represent its inheritance of former Wessex Trains stations. Nevertheless, FGW is an enthusiastic supporter of the concept, which it intends to extend to more stations in due course.

Figure 1: Station Adoption by Train Operating Companies

Train Operating Company	Adoption Scheme (Yes/No)	No. of Stations in Franchise		Stations Adopted		Comments
		Total	Unstaffed	No.	%	
Arriva Trains Wales	Yes	237	195	132	56	Franchise commitment. TOC Adopt a Station defect reporting scheme. Includes group adoption schemes with wider range of activities.
C2C	No	24	0	---	---	
Central Trains	Yes	199	104	n/a	n/a	Adopt a Station scheme launched January 2006
Chiltern Railways	No	31	10	2	0	
Eurostar	No	2	0	0	0	
First Capital Connect	Yes	74	13	Yes	n/a	
First Great Western	Yes	210	121	40+	20+	Franchise commitment. Wessex Trains scheme and Rural Stations Project continuing. FGW scheme to be launched early 2007. Figures derived from Wessex Trains and Rural Stations Project sources.
First ScotRail	Yes	340	201	c.30	9	TOC Adopt a Station scheme launched 2005. Scheme based on improvements to station environment and re-use of redundant space in station buildings. Not a fault-reporting scheme.
First TransPennine Express	Yes	30	7	28	93	
Gatwick Express	No	0	0	0	0	No stations of its own
GNER	No	c.30	0	0	0	
Heathrow Connect	No	0	0	0	0	No stations of its own
Heathrow Express	No	0	0	0	0	No stations of its own
Hull Trains	No	0	0	0	0	No stations of its own
Island Line	n/a	7	5	n/a	n/a	There is a Community rail partnership for the line.
Merseyrail	Yes	65	4	3	5	
Midland Mainline	No	7	0	0	0	
Northern Rail	Yes	472	322	497	96	TOC Station Adoption defect reporting scheme. Includes group adoption schemes with wider range of activities.
One Railway	Yes	167	69	c.30	18	TOC Adopt a Station scheme
Silverlink County	Yes	30	n/a	5-6	20	Mainly on the Watford junction to St. Alban's Abbey line.
Silverlink Metro	No	54	n/a	0	0	Scheme was under consideration prior to refranchising
South Eastern	No	182	37	0	0	
Southern	No	160	33	0	0	
South West Trains	No	176	25	0	0	
Virgin Cross Country	No	0	0	0	0	No stations of its own
Virgin West Coast	No	17	0	0	0	

Sources: Research undertaken for this study supplemented by information from as yet unpublished work on RSSB project T667 Research into Security at Stations.

Central Trains has a small number of stations adopted under its scheme launched in 2006. ScotRail has recently commenced a programme of station adoptions and First Capital Connect has a number of adopted stations. GNER, Midland Main Line, Virgin West Coast, Southern, South Eastern, Silverlink Metro, South West Trains and C2C do not have any adopted stations.

Impact of Station Adoption

Passenger Focus provided access to National Passenger Survey data on passenger experience of journeys made by rail. A number of the standard questions asked in the interviews have the potential to provide an insight into passenger satisfaction with the station environment and the level of personal security. As part of this research, data has been analysed for responses to the following six questions:

How would you rate XXXX station for:

- the upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms?
- cleanliness of the station?
- the overall station environment?
- the facilities and services at the station?
- connections with other forms of public transport?
- your personal security whilst using the station?

The questionnaire required passengers to respond using a five point scale ranging from “very good” to “very poor” with a sixth option “did not use / no opinion”.

Several comparisons were made to try to identify whether there was any correlation between improvements in passenger satisfaction and the introduction/growth of station adoption schemes:

- Northern Rail:
 - A comparison for 2003/04 and 2005/06 between stations on the former Arriva Trains Northern network where station adoption was in operation and stations on the former first North Western network where station adoption was only introduced with the new franchise.
 - Arriva Trains Northern 2003/04 – 2005/06 to show the impact of the expanding station adoption scheme.
 - First North Western 2003/04 – 2005/06 to give a comparison with a situation without a network-wide adoption scheme.
- First TransPennine: A comparison of passenger satisfaction between 2001-03 and 2004-06.

Insufficient data were available to enable a “before and after” comparison to be made to assess the impact of the Arriva Trains Wales Station Adoption Scheme.

The findings of the analysis are summarised in the remaining paragraphs of this chapter. It should be noted that no assessment has been made of other factors that could also have a bearing on passenger satisfaction.

Impact of the Arriva Trains Northern and Northern Rail Station Adoption Schemes

Figure 2 provides a comparison of passenger satisfaction in 2005/6 between small and medium sized stations on the former Arriva Trains Northern (ATN) and First North Western (FNW) networks. The objective was to determine whether there were any differences in satisfaction in Yorkshire and the North East where a Level 1 station adoption scheme had been in place for a number of years and North West England where Northern Rail was in the process of introducing its adoption scheme.

The analysis shows that satisfaction with station cleanliness, upkeep and overall environment was higher at former ATN stations than in North West England where station adoption was only just being introduced. In contrast, satisfaction with personal security was a little lower in Yorkshire and the North East.

Figure 2: Comparing passenger satisfaction at former First North Western and Arriva Trains Northern stations 2003/4-2005/6

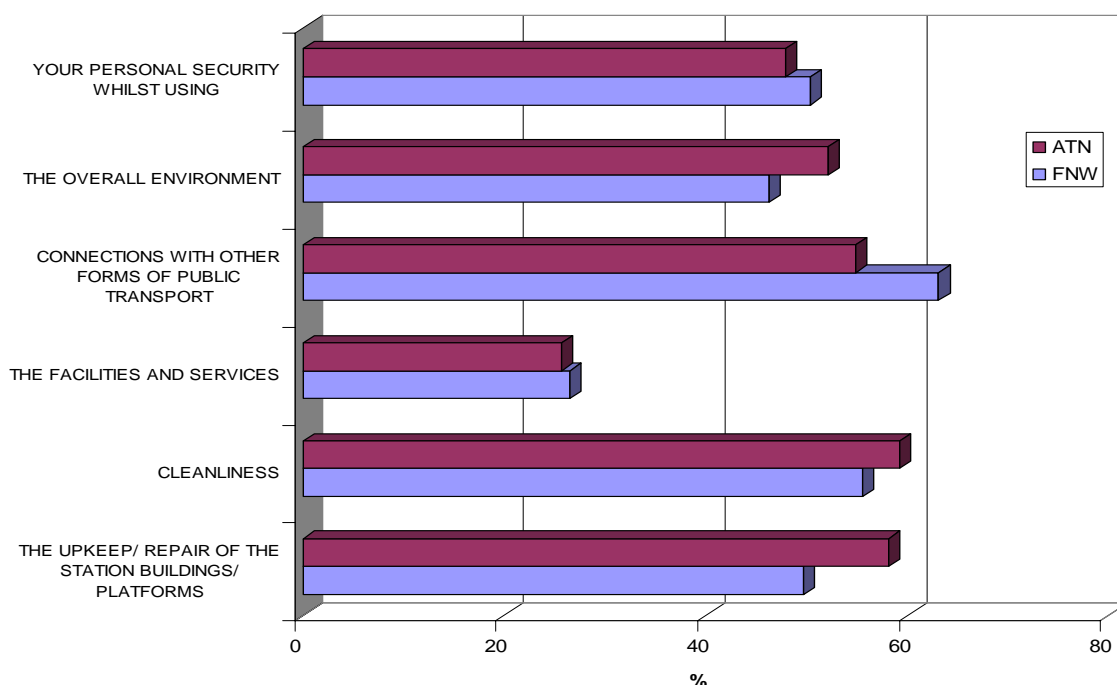
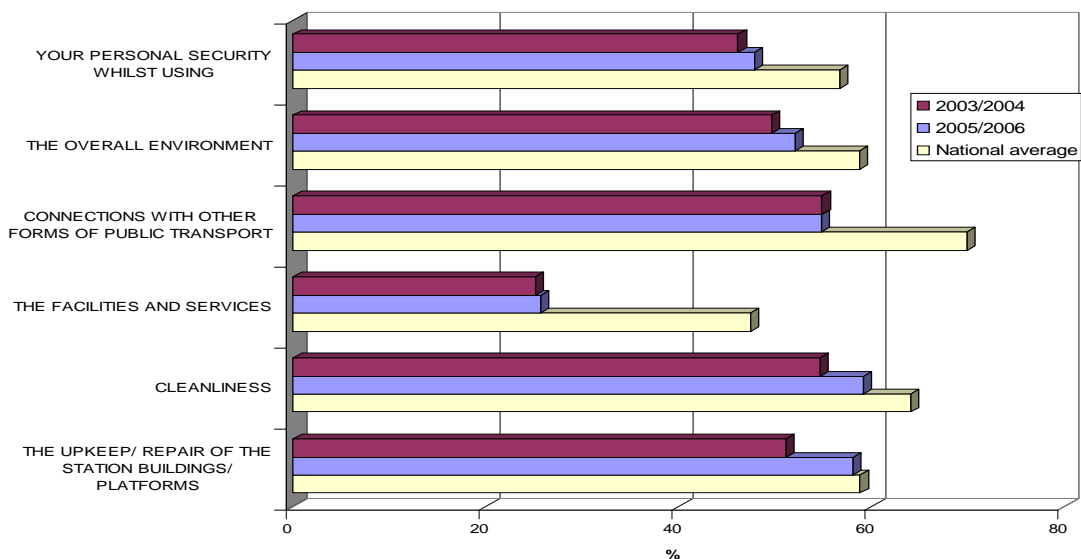


Figure 3 provides a comparison between passenger satisfaction with small and medium sized stations on the former ATN network in 2003/4 and 2005/6. The purpose of this comparison is to detect any improvement in satisfaction that could be at least partly attributed to the impact of station adoption. A comparison is also made with 2005/6 national averages.

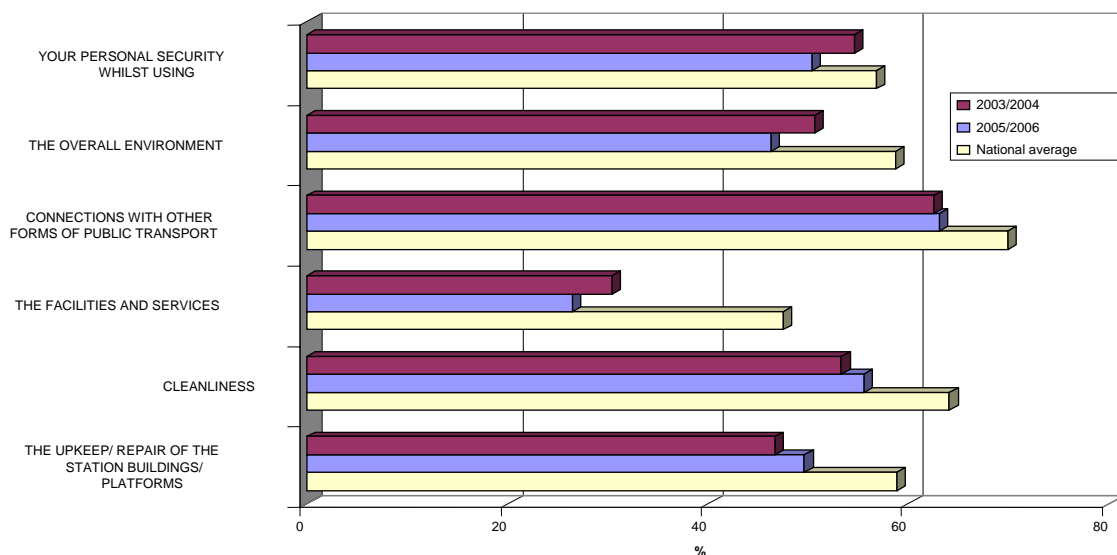
Figure 3: Comparing passenger satisfaction at former Arriva Trains Northern stations in 2003/4 and 2005/6



The key conclusions to be drawn from Figure F4.2 are that passenger satisfaction with personal security, overall environment, cleanliness and upkeep all increased between 2003/4 and 2005/6. However, national average satisfaction remained higher for all of the criteria considered.

Figure 4 makes the same comparisons between satisfaction in 2003/4 and 2005/6 for small and medium sized stations on the former First North Western network where a train operator-led network-wide station adoption scheme did not exist until after transfer of the franchise to Northern Rail.

Figure 4: Comparing passenger satisfaction at former First North Western stations between 2003/4 and 2005/6



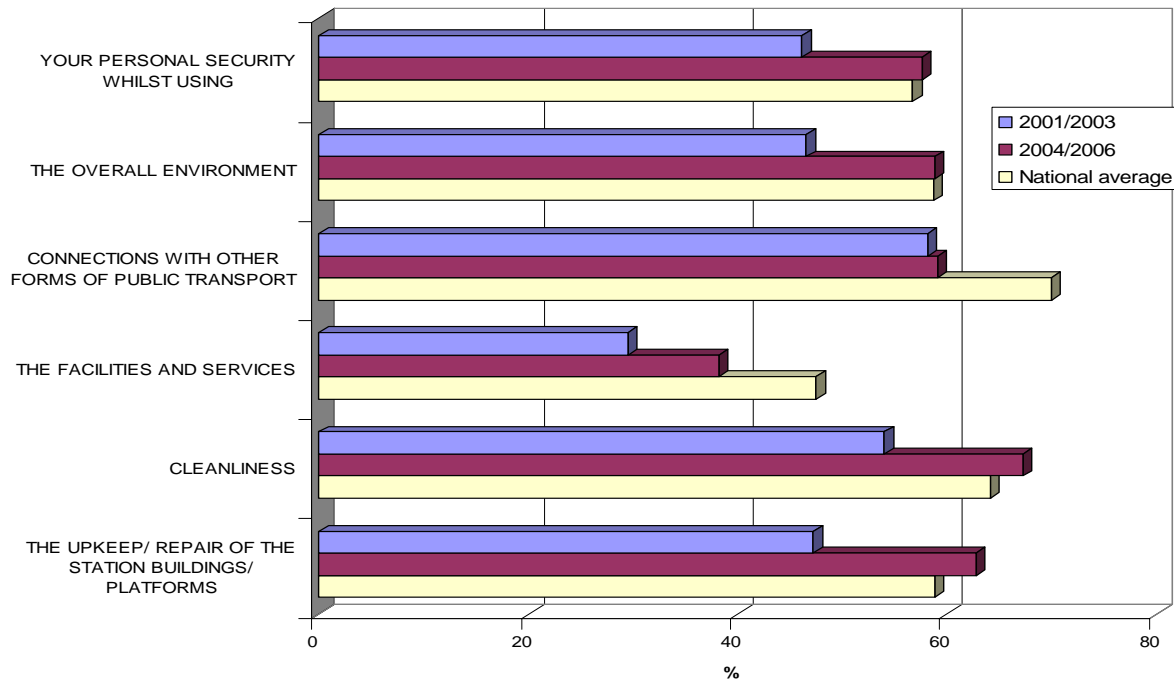
The results of this analysis are mixed – satisfaction with station cleanliness and upkeep improves but satisfaction with personal security and overall environment declines. National average satisfaction was again higher than local performance.

Passenger satisfaction – First TransPennine Express

Figure 5 gives a comparison between passenger satisfaction at stations in the current First TransPennine Express (FTPE) franchise in 2001-2003 and 2004-2006. The picture is complicated because much of the current TransPennine network was part of the ATN franchise where a station adoption scheme was in force. In this case the launch of the new franchise was followed by the introduction of new rolling stock over a period of time. The consequent change in the standard of journey experience could have contributed to an overall uplift in the level of satisfaction with all areas of the journey experience.

Satisfaction with personal security, overall environment, cleanliness and upkeep all improved markedly when comparing the two time periods. In 2004-2006 satisfaction with all four criteria also exceeded the national average figures. The improvement in satisfaction between 2001-2003 and 2004-2006 was marked in five of the six categories analysed – the improvement was marginal when considering connections with other forms of public transport.

Figure 5: Passenger satisfaction with TransPennine Express stations 2001-2003 and 2004-2006



6 Station adoption – international experience

Station adoption outside Great Britain

Station adoption is not widespread in other countries. A few examples taking different forms have been identified in Australia, the United States of America, Switzerland and Germany.

The Adopt-a-Station programme in Adelaide takes a similar format to group adoption in Great Britain with adopters recruited by the transport authority to monitor the condition of rail stations and tram stops, undertake graffiti removal and minor repair work, and improve the appearance of stations through cosmetic measures.

In Germany there are adoption schemes that are broadly similar to the Northern Rail model in the Rhine-Ruhr Passenger Transport Authority area and the Stuttgart Region. Swiss Railways has a policy of de-staffing stations and finding tenants for station buildings who are willing to operate ticket offices on a part time basis.

There are several very different examples of station adoption in the United States ranging from private funding to improve subway stations in New York to station cleaning in New Jersey and provision of public art in Chicago.

Before discussing these, the alternative approaches to ensuring quality and maintaining a sense of belonging to the community in other countries are considered.

In many European countries, smaller stations are often, like those in Britain, un-staffed. This may be either because they have never had staff, or because former staff have been removed. Tickets are either purchased on the trains, or – most typically on urban lines, including metros and light rail systems – from machines on the platforms.

However, a typical characteristic of continental European stations is that they are more open than those in Britain. British stations tend to retain a single entrance as an inheritance from the days when the station was staffed and tickets had to be purchased before entering the platform. In contrast, it is common on mainland Europe for a station to be accessible from several directions and thus to be more closely integrated with the local community. A station may even form part of the community's network of internal footpaths.

An additional feature in mainland Europe may be the strong role of the station buffet, which often serves as an important local bar and meeting point (e.g. at many French stations, at La Tour du Carol on the Franco-Spanish border, and at stations on Swiss regional railways such as the Regionalverkehr Berne Solothurn (RBS). In Britain, station refreshment facilities that encourage a wider clientele than rail passengers are comparatively uncommon. Examples include the *Head of Steam* pubs at Dewsbury and Huddersfield, the buffet bar at Stalybridge Station, and the well-known public house at Denmark Hill.

In Denmark, and to some extent also in Holland, many railway stations feature convenience stores, which bring another means of ensuring the station's local relevance and encouraging its use throughout the day by a wide range of customers. In Great Britain there are examples of small shops and cafés at stations.

Each of the above types of provision serves to increase footfall at stations and helps integrate the railway into its local community. Tenants of the station premises do not,

however, play any role in the station's upkeep or management. Hence, it is not a full station adoption.

Examples of both individual and group adoptions are found outside Great Britain.

Australia

Adelaide, South Australia

The TransAdelaide Adopt-a-Station programme in South Australia allows community minded people to have a say on how their local railway station should look. Stations are adopted by local residents and groups such as service clubs (e.g. Lions, Rotary), schools, train enthusiasts and organisations working with the unemployed. TransAdelaide reports that it has had no problems with its volunteers.

TransAdelaide has 82 railway stations and 21 tram stops and, in 2006, had 73 stations and 10 tram stops adopted. Volunteers cover various tasks including establishing garden areas, painting out graffiti and ensuring general tidiness of the station.

TransAdelaide has an agreement with the trade union that volunteers do not carry out maintenance and repairs. Staff were a little nervous at first about volunteers taking over some of their work but, after the agreement was made with the union, staff were reassured that their jobs would not be affected.

TransAdelaide is a self insured Government department and all volunteers are covered by the authority's insurance. In addition, a dedicated coordinator is appointed to look after the volunteers needs. This person must be very flexible in the hours they work as most volunteers carry out their work at weekends and meetings with service groups are held at night

Although the TransAdelaide Adopt a Station scheme is described by its Co-ordinator as "simple", the scheme is subject to very precisely determined Programme Guidelines (Adopt-A-Station Programme Guidelines Including Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare for Volunteer Groups, July 2001). Key aspects covered by the Guidelines are:

- General Application and Conditions
- Guidelines for Volunteer Activities
- Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare

The TransAdelaide Guidelines are extremely comprehensive, with each part setting out in full detail, the procedures to be adopted and the tasks to be undertaken. It is perhaps a matter for debate whether the Guidelines go too far in prescribing how some quite simple tasks are to be carried out. They are, nevertheless, a model of clarity and comprehensiveness.

TransAdelaide monitors patronage at all stations; the authority's Adopt-a-Station Project Officer reports that "as a result of Adopt-a-Station activity we generally notice some increase in patronage and we also have some great results with patronage increasing so much we had to increase the size of the car parks three fold". More information about the scheme can be found in Appendix E, where a summary of the guidelines is provided, and in the case study in Appendix F.

The TransAdelaide scheme is noteworthy for the inclusion of tram stops as well as railway stations, a practice which has yet to occur in Britain. The Australian adopters keep stations tidy, undertake graffiti removal and tend station gardens but, under an agreement to guard against job losses, do not carry out maintenance work.

South Australia, Keep South Australia Beautiful (KESAB)

South Australia has a further volunteer programme known as KESAB - Keep South Australia Beautiful. KESAB has volunteers adopting highways and main roads as well as other schemes to generally improve the environment of the region. Details of the programme are included in this report as they provide useful information on how to set up and operate an adoption scheme in a comparable business, even though its area of application lies outside the rail industry.

KESAB's mission is:

"To inspire the South Australian Community to restore, preserve and improve the total environment through active participation in dynamic programmes."

The objectives of KESAB are as follows:

- To implement programmes that preserve, improve and restore the entire South Australian environment.
- To provide information, support, and resources to the South Australian community encouraging best environmental practices.
- To research and implement strategies to transform community behaviour in the environment.
- To undertake research and monitor community impacts in the environment.
- To recommend and influence legislation and regulations that improve and protect the environment.
- To assist, co-operate and liaise with other organisations, to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

KESAB operates through a number of specific programmes, all of which either specifically include adoption schemes, or involve analogous activities such as competing for awards and participating in related activities. A selection from the programmes is summarised below.

Clean Site Programme

The Clean Site Programme has been licensed to Keep Australia Beautiful National Association in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Information resources were designed to embrace local regulations in consultation with Government Agencies, local government, and the building and construction industry in the participating States.

The programme was Winner of the Environment Australia 2002 HIA National Greensmart Program Partnership Award and the education and training video was Winner of the 2004 US International Film & Video Festival Award for Creative Excellence.

Waterwatch

KESAB Patawalonga and Torrens Waterwatch (KPTW) is South Australia's leading catchment water education programme. In 2004 KPTW project officers delivered lessons and teacher training workshops to 115 groups monitoring water quality at 180 sites in the catchments.

Snapshots are conducted six times each year encouraging increased awareness and understanding of catchment care issues. During May 2004 more than 1500 "Gutter Guardians" swept up 3400kg of leaf litter, soil and rubbish, preventing it from washing into the storm water system and polluting nearby creeks and rivers.

Teacher information packs developed by KPTW are being used throughout Australia and are available through KESAB.

Litter, Waste, and Recycling Education

KESAB is Australia's leading community litter pollution education organisation. Integrated programmes are delivered to schools and community groups demonstrating best practice litter management, recycling, and waste reduction action in the household and work place. In 2005 thousands of students and community members visited the KESAB Education Centre located at the State-wide re-cycling facility which processes hundreds of millions of CDL beverage containers (Container Deposit Legislation beverage containers are aluminium cans, glass and plastic bottles) each year.

Road Watch

Over 200 groups now take part in regular Road Watch sessions across South Australia. These groups remove several tons of litter from the roads and highways of South Australia and assist in the protection of some of the rare and threatened species that now occur only on roadside verges.

Information supplied by Road Watch groups assists in building a litter profile of roads and highways across the State, and is a valuable aid in the development of litter prevention initiatives.

The "Outback Pack", which is designed to support groups prepared to clean up littered roadside rests stops they encounter while travelling to the more remote areas of the State, is a Road Watch Programme initiative.

United States of America

Chicago

In 1997, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) launched the Adopt-A-Station Program to develop partnerships between community organisations, local businesses and individuals. The programme helps create rail stations that reflect the history and diversity of the communities served by the CTA.

Adopting organisations are offered an opportunity to enhance and revitalise the appearance of CTA rail stations by commissioning local artists to create murals, sculptures, mosaics, paintings or photographs. The Program is designed to create a unique gateway to the communities served by the CTA.

Currently, 20 CTA stations are under adoption including the Red Line's Cermak-Chinatown station which highlights masks and statues that capture the area's Chinese roots; the Green Line's Conservatory-Central Park Drive station adorned with mosaic murals created by neighbourhood youth; and the Brown Line Merchandise Mart station which displays photography by Columbia College students.

In addition, Chicago Cubs baseball team have commissioned a local gallery to create two pieces of art for Sheridan Red Line station that depict the culture of the Cubs and the surrounding neighbourhood. Besides improving the appearance of the station, the paintings are designed to help promote the Sheridan station as an alternative station for getting to and from the Cubs' playing ground, Wrigley Field.

In addition to the Sheridan station adoption, Cubs fans heading to Wrigley Field can also enjoy the Red Line Addison station's gallery of baseball lore. Chicago artist Steve Musgrave adopted the Addison station in 1998, decorating it with his murals of popular Cubs players.

In support of both station adoptions, CTA provides convenient, affordable bus and rail service to Wrigley Field during the baseball season. The Red Line Sheridan station is a convenient option for Cubs fans getting to and from games because it is within walking distance of Wrigley Field. Fans also can get to the ballpark via the accessible Red Line station at Addison. Additional rail services are provided for weeknight Cubs games via southbound Purple Line Express trains which stop at Addison station and Yellow Line trains that operate two hours later than the regular schedule from Howard station.

New York

New York has one of the oldest Station Adoption programmes, with Rotary Club involvement in such schemes dating back to 1977.

The New York Metropolitan Transport Authority (NYMTA) Adopt-A-Station Program uses private funds to improve subway stations through projects ranging from mural paintings to complete overhauls. Work at the stations includes replacing tiles, re-piecing mosaics, improving lighting and installing equipment to lower noise

Astor Place subway station was renovated following a station adoption by the Committee for Astor Place, a community group co-sponsoring the programme alongside Chemical Bank.

This adoption followed other successful schemes undertaken by neighbourhood groups at Wall Street, Hunter College and 14th Street Stations.

New Jersey

New Jersey Transit (NJ TRANSIT) introduced its Adopt-A-Station Program in 1998, modelling it on the New Jersey Department of Transportation's successful "Adopt-A-Highway" programme.

In spring 2006, Belmar Station became the 19th station to be adopted in the state, which also coincided with the beginning of NJ TRANSIT's "Spring Cleaning Station Sweep" Program.

Sovereign Bank's Belmar branch agreed to adopt the train station for two years, which involves picking up litter around the facility at least four times a year, with representatives from the bank also planting and maintaining flowers on the property.

At the same time, NJ TRANSIT also partnered with New Jersey Clean Communities Council, a non-profit organisation, to sweep and pick up litter around rail stations in New Brunswick, Elizabeth and Atlantic City.

At the launch of both schemes, all three partners planted flower pots, swept around the station and power-washed the pavements in an effort to engage the community to enhance pride and change the attitudes that cause littering.

Germany

Rhein-Ruhr Bahnhofspatenschaften

In Germany the North Rhine Westphalia Regional Authority (Land Nordrhein-Westfalen), **Rhine-Ruhr Passenger Transport Authority** (VRR) and German Railways (Deutsche Bahn) have jointly set up a Station Adoption scheme (Bahnhofspatenschaften) with the objective of having every local rail (S-Bahn) station in the area adopted. The scheme began in 2000 at Recklinghausen and currently 60 stations of all sizes are adopted.

Adoption follows the Northern Rail model, whereby adopters keep a watchful eye on “their” station and report matters requiring attention to local rail management. The mission of adopters is “Watch and Report”. Volunteers support professionals in their work, to ensure that defects are remedied as quickly as possible to ensure that passengers feel safe and content while travelling on public transport. Reports are submitted on matters such as clocks not working, failure of the public address announcement system, ticket vending machines out of order, rubbish bins full, graffiti, vandalism (e.g. broken windows) and undesirable people loitering. Volunteers do not carry out any other tasks at stations other than, in a few cases, litter removal and gardening. Many of the volunteers are railway employees or people working at stations (e.g. in cafés).

VRR co-ordinates the scheme, assuming responsibility for the recruitment and motivation of volunteers, whilst day to day operation rests with German Railways’ Stations & Service division. There is a wide diversity of adopters including, at Dusseldorf-Garath, a group of 14-15 year-olds with learning difficulties from Alfred-Herrhausen School who, in 2004, were rewarded by VRR with a flight in a hot air balloon. Partners include commuters, families, school classes and clubs. Adopters report to a named member of VRR staff by telephone or e-mail and are encouraged to submit ideas for improvements to stations and the station environment, in addition to reporting faults and maintenance requirements.

Each year VRR holds a big “Thank You Party” for all its volunteers, who include, in addition to Station Adopters, “Quality Scouts”, who make mystery calls to test products such as information services, and “Citizen Advisers”, who give out information on timetables and local events. Further information on the VRR Station Adoption scheme, including a map showing adopted stations, is available at www.vrr.de. More information is provided in the case study in Appendix C.

In Germany, volunteer station adopters in the Rhein Ruhr area are guided by the mission statement “Watch and Report”. Volunteers support the work of professional staff, to ensure that defects are remedied quickly and that passengers feel secure and content when they use public transport. Volunteers remove litter and tend station gardens, but do not otherwise carry out work at stations. In some cases, adopters are also employed in other capacities at stations.

Additional information on this scheme is provided in the case study in Appendix F.

Verkehrs und Tarifverbund Stuttgart

In the **Stuttgart Region** of Southern Germany, there are 19 station adoptions, run by 26 adopters. The scheme is jointly managed by German Railways, who initiated the scheme, and the Stuttgart Regional Transport and Tariff Authority (Verkehrs und Tarifverbund Stuttgart: V V R). The adoptions are located in five different districts within the wider Region, including four adoptions in Stuttgart itself. In recognition of the valuable service provided by the voluntary adopters, DB recently hosted a reception at Stuttgart main station for them. Further evidence of official enthusiasm for adoption schemes in the locality was the presence at the official press launch in October 2006 of the Kirchberg scheme of the Chief Executive of V V R, DB Stuttgart's Head of Stations & Service and the Mayor of Kirchberg.

Ireland

Each of the three Iarnrod Eireann (Irish Rail) divisions (North & East, South & West, DART) has a Regional General Manager. Contact has been made with DART, the Irish Rail-owned Dublin suburban electric railway, from whom a different perspective on station operation has been received.

All DART stations are staffed and it is seen as a responsibility of local station managers to achieve good relationships with their local communities by, for example, attending residents' and Chamber of Commerce meetings. DART participates in IE's national Station Award Schemes, including that for Best Community Involvement. Art competitions are held with local schools for posters to display on DART stations. DART takes pride in keeping its stations in a good state of repair and cleanliness itself. DART's response to the concept of appointing volunteers to report faults and defects was different from that of most other companies contacted during this study: "We would not want our customers to report problems to us that we should have known about and dealt with ourselves."

Switzerland

Stationshaltermodell

In Switzerland, Swiss Railways has a programme of removing staff from perhaps half the current 450 stations. Where possible, tenants are being found to take over responsibility for ticket offices. Often the tenants run parallel businesses at their stations (e.g. small shops, printers).

Initially, the *Stationshaltermodell*, which translates roughly as "station tenants model", was set up to take the project forward. Under this system, private persons operate a station on their own risk that would not otherwise have been staffed or might have closed altogether. The scheme started at St Gall-Bruggen in 1991 and currently extends to twelve stations. There are hints in website discussions that the evolution of privatised stations schemes is moving forward faster than some commentators would wish.

The shopping chain *Avec*, a consortium of Swiss Railways (SBB), Migros and Valora (Kiosk SA), has been formed to set up a series of food outlets (including coffee bars and kiosks) at Swiss Railways stations to sell rail tickets on 365 days a year basis. A key marketing benefit is that the outlets are open from at least 0600-2000 daily. A total of forty *Avec* stores are proposed at stations within five years, with the brand also operating at non-rail locations such as petrol stations. *Avec* staff are trained by the SBB. Whilst the Swiss system is closer to

commercial tenancies than to voluntary partnerships, it fulfils a similar role to British adoptions and *Gateway Stations* in ensuring a human presence at the station, in encouraging its greater use and in strengthening its importance to the local community.

Pro Bahn Schweiz

Pro Rail Suisse/Pro Bahn Schweiz is an officially constituted organisation representing public transport passengers in Switzerland. It is active at fifteen stations in nine local authority areas. It facilitates the continued operation of booking offices at stations where the railway operators deem them to be uneconomic. Pro Rail recognises that ticket sales alone will usually be unviable, so other services are also offered by the station tenants, such as travel agency, kiosk, cafeteria, bookshop, cycle repair and extra tuition for children. Information about each scheme, including businesses conducted (with links to websites where appropriate), contact details and opening hours is available on Pro Rail's website www.pro-bahn.ch.

Station Adoption - Thun

The Station Adoption scheme at Thun is a scheme of adoption by volunteers, and is mainly concerned with ensuring good behaviour on the station, condition monitoring and reporting. The scheme was founded by a group comprising SBB's Department for Public Safety, the town council, and the social organisation *Swiss profis&kids*. Under this scheme, volunteers may come from any walk of life, including pensioners, mothers, employed and unemployed people.

Unemployed persons successful as station volunteers are given references that will ease their way back into paid employment. Volunteers present at Thun station – and the scheme has already been extended to other Swiss stations – patrol the station between 1700 and 2200 each weekday evening and typically speak to around 100 people on the station each month. Their responsibilities are wide-ranging, including assisting passengers with luggage, providing basic advice, having a friendly word with anyone who might take their advice (e.g. not to smoke or cycle on the station – or in one instance not to set up a barbecue). Partners do not get involved in potentially difficult situations, but are advised to contact the relevant authorities.

Perceived benefits of the scheme for SBB are reduced station and patrolling costs. For passengers and station businesses the benefit is a more welcoming and secure environment. The volunteers gain personal satisfaction and a possible route into paid work.

Identification of transferable good practice

The close links between transport authorities and volunteers in Rhein Ruhr, Germany and Adelaide, South Australia are similar in concept to those found in Britain at, for example Arriva Trains Wales, One Railway and Northern Rail. It is important for volunteers to be able to contact a named officer and to be able to make suggestions and discuss issues, although the over-optimistic expectations to which this may give rise will sometimes have to be tactfully contained.

The parallel formation of other adoption and analogous schemes alongside those of station adoption is reported from Germany and Australia. To some extent, this already occurs in Britain, for example in relationships between station adoption and Britain in Bloom competitions and in the adoption of stations by social, community and charitable bodies.

Some station adoptions are linked in with the activities of Community Rail Partnerships. Whilst there may be opportunities to strengthen such links in Britain, we also consider the Community Rail Partnership link a concept that could usefully be exported to other countries.

Opportunities for linking station adoption schemes to other forms of adoption can be sought. Where a station adoption scheme is linked to a local authority, synergy between the station adoption and other local initiatives could be sought, as practised in Germany and Australia. Other links might be with local organisations such as Civic Trusts, amenity societies, Town Centre Management groups, or branches of transport campaign groups.

The experience of the two largest overseas station adoption programmes identified in Adelaide and Rhein Ruhr places these in the top echelons of good practice. Each authority has a high number of adopted stations, which represent a significant proportion of the total under their control. The TransAdelaide scheme extends to tram stops as well as heavy rail stations. Each of these schemes includes a close relationship between each adopter and a named official of the Authority. Adopters are permitted to carry out work at stations, in addition to their fault monitoring and reporting role, and in accordance with comprehensive guidelines.

Station adoption schemes are paralleled by other, similar activities covering areas such as making mystery shopper calls, information provision and adoption schemes relating to roads, water and the environment.

The overall conclusion is that adoption of railway stations is a mainly British practice with only a few examples of a similar approach overseas.

7 Case studies

Selection of case studies

Rationale

In selecting case studies in Great Britain, there was a clear need to ensure that they were representative of as many different situations as possible. Hence, our choice of case studies includes examples of individual adoption in a train operating company adoption scheme, group adoption and tenancies. We have also sought to include examples that cover adoption on lines benefiting from a Community Rail Partnership or the activities of a Railway Development Company.

Consultation with the DfT Community Rail Development Team suggested a need to consider examples of station adoption on different types of railway. The categories suggested were:

- Overhead electrified railway.
- Third rail electrified railway.
- Diesel operated lines.
- Stations on lines in Passenger Transport Authority / Passenger Transport Executive (PTA/PTE) areas.
- Main lines where there is a mix of stopping and non-stop trains.
- Lines with freight traffic.
- Passenger only lines served by trains stopping at all stations.

Clearly, given the number of selection criteria outlined, it was not possible to provide one example to illustrate each individual characteristic. Hence, some of the stations selected as case studies represent a combination of criteria. The availability and quality of information was also a consideration in the selection of case studies.

We also felt it worthwhile to include two overseas examples for comparison – the long established adoption scheme in Adelaide and a scheme in the Rhine-Ruhr area of Germany.

The case studies

The following examples were selected as case studies:

- The Northern Rail Adoption Scheme.
- Settle and Carlisle Line: A set of adopted stations, some with tenants, on a line with a Railway Development Company.
- Central Stations: A project to make use of redundant buildings at a number of stations in the English Midlands.
- Penmere: A long established group adoption.
- Crediton: A group adoption of a station with a tenant on a line with a Community Rail Partnership.
- Gobowen: A station with a tenant adopted under the Arriva Trains Wales scheme.
- Brandon: An adopted station that was in the Countryside Agency's Gateway Stations project.
- Handforth: A group adoption of an urban station in a Passenger Transport Executive area on a line with overhead electrification.

- Maghull: A staffed station on a third rail electrified line in a Passenger Transport Executive area.
- Church and Oswaldtwistle: A station in the Northern Rail adoption scheme that also benefits from commercial adoption.
- The TransAdelaide Adopt-a-Station Programme: A scheme based on a similar approach to schemes in Great Britain.
- The Rhein-Ruhr Bahnhofspatenhaften: A fault reporting scheme in Germany with the option for adopters to undertake minor improvements such as gardening.

The case studies are provided in a separate document as part of this project.

8 Findings

The concept of station adoption

What is station adoption?

Station adoption is a way of improving the environment at railway stations through the involvement of individuals and local communities in caring for their local stations. The concept is based on the assumption that a well-cared-for station with an attractive waiting environment and no graffiti or vandalism will encourage more people to use the train whereas potential users will be deterred if they consider their surroundings to be unpleasant or unsafe. It is also argued that involvement of local communities in caring for their local stations creates greater local awareness of the railway leading to greater use by local people.

Objectives of station adoption

All of the different stakeholders in station adoption share the overall objective of improving the appearance of stations. Although all of the stakeholders share a set of common sub-objectives such as increased patronage and improved personal security, their primary objectives are different. The train operating company responsible for an adopted station will have a particular interest in the more cost-effective deployment of paid staff that can be achieved using a better flow of information and in the opportunities for improving community relations. Adopters and station user will want a more attractive and safer environment.

Types of adoption scheme

There are three broad categories of station adoption:

- Adoption by individuals (Level 1): This form of station adoption takes place almost exclusively within adoption schemes initiated by train operating companies.
- Group adoption (Level 2): Adoption of stations by groups can emerge in one of two ways – as a local community-based initiative requiring the consent of the train operating company responsible for the adopted station or by a family or group of people volunteering to join a train operator's adoption scheme.
- Commercial adoption and sponsorship (Level 3) Adoption of a station by a commercial organisation is rare, but requires agreement between the adopter and the train operator. Sponsorship is usually, but not always, a purely commercial transaction between a train operator and the sponsor although there are cases where sponsors donate money or help in kind to group adopters.

Train operator station adoption schemes

The development of train operator station adoption schemes

When Arriva Trains Northern took over the franchise covering Yorkshire, Humberside and North East England, a system of station adoption was introduced based on the recruitment of adopters to visit stations regularly and report faults for rectification. After Northern Rail took over the enlarged Northern franchise, this adoption scheme was expanded into North West England. First TransPennine Express also inherited a number of adopted stations from Arriva Trains Northern and expanded the scheme to cover most of their stations. Arriva Trains Wales launched a similar fault identification station adoption scheme after taking up the Welsh rail franchise.

Anglia Railways and Wessex Trains established a slightly different form of station adoption scheme with the emphasis placed as much on improving the station environment as on the reporting of defects, damage or graffiti. The type of activities undertaken included the restoration of flower beds, the provision of planters and hanging baskets, and the restoration of traditional station seats. The activities undertaken in these schemes had more in common with community-based group adoption of stations.

The Anglia and Wessex schemes were inherited by One Railway and First Great Western at franchise renewal and both companies decided to expand their schemes. More recently Central Trains and First ScotRail launched station adoption schemes based on both environmental improvements and fault reporting.

Station adoption is a franchise requirement only for Arriva Trains Wales and the Devon and Cornwall area of First Great Western. All of the other train operator initiated adoption schemes are entirely at operator initiative.

Management

All of the train operating companies operating station adoption schemes provide guidance for adopters, but at different levels of detail. All adopters must receive a safety briefing, an explanation of the rail industry's alcohol and drugs policy, guidance on the terms and conditions of adoption scheme, and instructions for defect and damage reporting.

Station managers are the usual point of contact with train operators for station adopters – their role in station adoption dovetails with their other activities thereby minimising additional staff resource requirements for train operators. Adoption scheme central management costs are minimal because management tasks are not onerous and can be performed as part of the activities of one or two individuals.

Train operating companies view the activities of station adopters as providing added value because they are additional to their routine cleaning and maintenance obligations. That added value takes the form of the speedier identification of damage, faults or vandalism enabling a faster response and more cost-effective targeting of the work of maintenance teams.

Group adoption of stations

The development of adoption groups

The early examples of station adoption in the early and mid-1990s were community initiatives that evolved spontaneously as a result of fear for the future of stations or concern about their physical appearance. At Penmere on the Falmouth branch, the station was in poor condition and uncontrolled growth of vegetation in the station gardens created a sense of poor personal security. At Handforth in Greater Manchester, the station booking office was closed for safety reasons there were vandalism and litter problems. In both cases "Friends" groups were formed to address the problems and to promote the use of the stations.

In some cases, the motivation for station adoption came through community-wide initiatives. In many locations the "Britain in Bloom" competition has provided the initial impetus to improve the appearance of stations to complement efforts elsewhere in the community. The health checks undertaken as part of the Countryside Agency's Market Towns initiative often

revealed negative information about local stations (e.g. poor appearance, underused buildings) that precipitated action.

There is no limit to the types of group that may wish to adopt a station. There are examples of stations adopted by the Womens' Institute, local "Britain in Bloom" committees, residents' associations, schools and colleges, the Soroptimists, and local trusts and organizations working through national bodies such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

Activities undertaken by "Friends" and similar groups include reporting of defects and vandalism to train operators, creation or restoration of flower beds, provision of planters and hanging baskets, and litter picking at stations and on approach routes. In some cases, "Friends" groups have provided public art or even renovated small buildings that would otherwise have been left to deteriorate further.

Some adoption groups have a wider agenda that includes lobbying for investment in "their" stations and promoting use of the stations in their local community. In such cases, partnerships are often formed including local authorities providing access to more sources of funding and enabling more ambitious projects to be considered.

Management of group adoption

All group adopters must agree the scope of their activities in advance with the train operator's station manager. Train operator responsibilities are similar to those in individual adoption schemes – briefings on matters such as safety, alcohol and drugs policy, areas of the station that are accessible to adopters and any constraints that may apply where there are special risks (e.g. at stations on electrified lines).

Many pre-existing adoption groups have joined train operator fault reporting station adoption schemes and continued to perform their wider range of activities. The publicity given to schemes by train operators in order to secure volunteers to adopt stations has attracted the formation of new groups who have signed up as fault reporting adopters and expanded their range of activities into environmental improvements.

There are a number of station adoption schemes that involve schoolchildren or young people. These schemes usually have an educational purpose – for example, projects concerned with community issues, awareness of rail safety and travelling by train. Such schemes are usually of short duration and relate to the completion of a particular project. Where a school group is involved, train operators require adult supervision to be provided by the school or adult supervision. School schemes involving children with learning difficulties entail a higher risk that is compensated for by greater control measures agreed between the school and the company.

Train operators undertake risk assessments at the generic level and, in some cases, at local level where group adopters undertake more than defect detection and reporting or where special circumstances, such as the involvement of schoolchildren, apply. There are no special insurance requirements as adopters are allowed to work only in areas that are accessible to the public and they are not allowed on or near the line.

Tenants and sponsorship

Tenants

Tenants at rail stations lease their property from the train operating company responsible for the station or from Network Rail or its agents. The great majority of tenancy agreements are purely commercial arrangements that do not impose any “station adoption” obligations. The presence of tenants at stations brings an increased level of activity, particularly if the station is unstaffed or staffed only on a part time basis. In most cases, the additional activity is confined to daytime on weekdays but increased activity can result in evenings and at weekends if space in a station building is occupied by a café, restaurant or bar.

Station buildings occupied by tenants are usually well-maintained and make a positive contribution to the appearance of a station. This report contains examples of stations where tenants make a more substantial contribution to the appearance of a station – for example, the florist at Nairn Station provides floral displays.

There are also examples of stations where difficulties in agreeing leases have led to station buildings remaining empty and continuing to deteriorate. In a few cases, the time taken to agree leases has resulted in the loss of potential funding opportunities in favour of projects that have proved to be easier to implement. The Central Stations project and the standard tripartite 25 year lease agreement between tenant, train operator and Network Rail shows what can be achieved in terms of securing occupants for surplus space in station buildings by overcoming the obstacle imposed by short leases associated with short franchise periods.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship usually takes on of two forms:

- A commercial arrangement with the station operator that may involve sponsorship of signs, floral displays or public art or, as in the case of Bournville, it may involve a paint scheme in the sponsor’s brand colours.
- The provision of minor funding or help in kind for station adopters.

Direct commercial involvement in station adoption is rare. The best known example is Church & Oswaldtwistle where a nearby retailer joined with the train operator, Network Rail and the County Council to fund improvements including a CCTV system that is monitored from the retailer’s security control room.

Community Rail Partnerships and Railway Development Companies

Community Rail Partnerships are not-for-profit organisations with membership including local authorities, train operating companies and rail user and/or community groups. They are usually staffed by a paid officer and managed by a committee of stakeholders. Their activities are akin to those of group adopters of stations at the level of the whole line or lines – some partnerships such as that in Devon and Cornwall cover more than one line. Their activities and ambitions are usually wide and include lobbying for investment and activities to promote increased use of the line. The fact that their membership includes local authorities helps in leveraging in funding for projects.

Railway Development Companies have more extensive powers and responsibilities than Community Rail Partnerships in that they can employ staff, lease or own or sub-let property,

and undertake trading activities. There are only two in existence on the Esk Valley and Settle-Carlisle lines.

In both cases, the techniques applied to individual stations are the same as those used by group adopters to improve the environment and personal security. Many stations on Community Railways and most of the stations on the Esk Valley and Settle-Carlisle lines are adopted under train operating company schemes.

Benefits of Station Adoption

The table in **Figure 6** illustrates the main benefits of station adoption for all of the different stakeholders.

Maintaining the Standards

Train operating companies report little difficulty in recruiting suitable volunteers for their own station adoption schemes. Some individual adopters have to be replaced each year for reasons such as ill health or moving house, but there have been few cases of adopters being asked to stand down for reasons of inadequate performance. Train operators are not aware of any adoption groups that have ceased to function.

Some train operating companies have become involved in sponsoring or supporting competitions to provide incentives for adopters in the tradition of Best Kept Station and Station Garden competitions. For example, One Railway sponsors the regional Britain in Bloom competition and secured the inclusion of an award for Best Station.

Figure 6: Benefits of station adoption

Benefits	Train operators	Adopters	Station users	Local community
Better information enables more cost effective maintenance and repair	√			
More effective use of staff resources	√			
A better standard of maintenance and care at stations	√	√	√	√
Improvements to the appearance that would not otherwise take place		√	√	√
An improved waiting environment			√	√
Environmental improvements to complement other local initiatives		√		√
An increased level of activity at stations (by adopters, tenants)			√	√
A safer waiting environment (actual and perceived)			√	√
Increasing patronage and revenue	√			
Securing the long term future of stations		√		√
Making the best use of buildings and space at stations	√	√		√
More favourable media coverage – station adoption is a good news story	√			√
Improving working relationships with local authorities	√			√
Improving relations with local communities	√			
Raising the profile of local railways	√	√		√

The extent of station adoption

About half of all train operators have some stations adopted, proportions varying from a small number of stations to 96% by Northern Rail. Many more stations are adopted by individuals who monitor and report defects than are adopted by groups. Commercial sponsorship or adoption is in its infancy.

Nearly a third of the stations on the national rail network are adopted, the majority are individual adoptions under train operator schemes. Northern, Arriva Trains Wales, One Railway, First TransPennine Express, First Great Western and First ScotRail account for more than 700 adopted stations, representing fewer than 30% of all stations in Great Britain. The number of stations benefiting from group adoption schemes is much lower, representing 4-5% of the stations on the network.

Adoption is most common at smaller unstaffed stations in rural areas outside London and South East England. There are examples of adoption of medium and large staffed stations under train operator schemes. Group adoption schemes tend to focus on smaller stations that are either unstaffed or only staffed part time. There is little station adoption in South-East England and Greater London and no station adoption on the former Southern Region network (South Eastern, Southern and South Western franchises) even though there are Community Rail lines in this area.

None of the stations leased by GNER, Virgin and Midland Main Line are adopted, but First Great Western is extending station adoption throughout its operating area.

Relationship with the Secure Stations Scheme

The Secure Stations Scheme is a national scheme intended to provide an incentive to station operators to improve security for passengers and staff through working in partnership with the BTP, local authorities and other partners. In order to secure accreditation it is necessary to demonstrate a year-on-year reduction in crime and an improved level in station user perceptions of personal safety. Investment in the station and changes in station management practices are usually required to deliver these improvements.

Accreditation is only valid for two years before the process must be repeated, implying the need to deliver continual improvement. In April 2007 there were 296 stations accredited under the scheme and 67 lapsed accreditations on the national rail network, London Underground and Docklands Light Railway.

Only a few accredited Secure Stations also benefit from adoption. Although there is a wide geographic spread of accredited stations in England and Wales, the majority are in the South and South East whereas the few adopted stations that are also accredited as Secure Stations are on the Arriva Trains Wales, First TransPennine, Merseyrail and Northern Rail networks.

It could be argued that station adoption has similar objectives to the Secure Stations Scheme in terms of improving actual and perceived personal security. Secure Stations accreditation is a more costly and time consuming approach that can be justified when applied to medium and larger staffed stations whereas adoption may be a more appropriate tool for small and medium sized stations that are unstaffed or only staffed part-time.

International Experience

Research has shown that station adoption is a predominantly British concept although there are comparable schemes in Australia and Germany. The Adopt-a-Station Program in Adelaide recruits adopters to monitor the condition of rail stations and tram stops, undertake graffiti removal and minor repair work, and improve the appearance of stations through gardening and other cosmetic measures. In Germany there are adoption schemes that are similar to the Northern Rail model in the Rhine-Ruhr Passenger Transport Authority area and the Stuttgart Region.

There are examples of station adoption in the United States, but they take a different form to that in Great Britain. The Chicago Transit Authority and the New York Metropolitan Transport Authority operate similar station adoption schemes with the objective of enhancing the appearance of stations by encouraging community organisations and local businesses to sponsor public art for display at stations. New Jersey Transit has an adoption scheme that focuses on litter picking at stations in partnership with local organisations and businesses.

The impact of station adoption

As far as train operators are concerned, station adoption is a low cost way of delivering more cost-effective use of resources to keep stations in a good state of repair whilst also having the potential to deliver a modest increase in patronage and better community relations. The amount spent is relatively small and it is not thought worth allocating additional resources to monitor the impact.

To an extent, the annual survey of customer satisfaction provided by the National Passenger Survey indicates whether passengers are more or less satisfied with the cleanliness, state of repair, waiting environment and personal security at rail stations at an aggregate level. There are other factors in addition to the environmental and infrastructure improvements delivered by station adoption that influence the results of satisfaction surveys. Indeed, a poorly performing train service is likely to drag down the level of satisfaction with stations. The key point is that a positive performance in terms of satisfaction with the quality of stations shows that a train operating company is going in the right direction.

List of acronyms

ACoRP	Association of Community Rail Partnerships
ATN	Arriva Trains Northern
ATW	Arriva Trains Wales
BCP	Brandon Communities Partnership
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
BTP	British Transport Police
CCTC	Closed Circuit Television
CDL	Container Deposit Legislation, South Australia (re-use of beverage containers)
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CRP	Community Rail Partnership
CSDF	Crediton Station Development Forum
CTA	Chicago Transit Authority
DART	Dublin Area Rapid Transit
DB	Deutsche Bundesbahn
DfT	Department for Transport
FGW	First Great Western
FOBS	Friends of Brandon Station
FOCS	Friends of Crediton Station
FTPE	First TransPennine Express
GMPTA	Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority
GMPTE	Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive
GNER	Great North Eastern Railway
GWR	Great Western Railway
IE	Iarnrod Eireann (Irish Railways)
KCRP	Kent Community Rail Partnership

KESAB	Keep South Australia Beautiful
KPTW	KesabPatawalonga & Torrens Waterwatch
L&SWR	London & South Western Railway
MTI	Market Towns Initiative (of the Countryside Agency)
NCRUG	North Cheshire Rail Users Group
NJ	New Jersey
NYMTA	New York Mass Transit Authority
PLP	Penistone Line Partnership
PTA	Passenger Transport Authority
PTE	Passenger Transport Executive
RBS	Regionalverkehr Berne Solothurn
RPC	Rail passenger Council (role now taken over by Passenger Focus)
RSSB	Rail Safety and Standards Board
SBB	Swiss Railways
SRA	Strategic Rail Authority
TR&IN	Transport Rail & Infrastructure Network (the predecessor of ACoRP)
TOC	Train Operating Company
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations
VRR	Verkehrsverbund Rhein Ruhr (Rhine-Ruhr Passenger Transport Authority)

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