LONDONASSEMBLY

Crime and Safety at London's Suburban Railway Stations

January 2006

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The Transport Committee

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Darren Johnson   – Green

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The Transport Committee's general terms of reference are to examine and report on transport matters of importance to Greater London and the transport strategies, policies and actions of the Mayor, Transport for London, and the other Functional Bodies where appropriate.   In particular, the Transport Committee is also required to examine and report to the Assembly from time to time on the Mayor's Transport Strategy, in particular its implementation and revision.

The terms of reference for this scrutiny were agreed by the Transport Committee on 20th October 2005:
- To examine the current situation at suburban stations, including
   o current levels of crime
   o the extent of safety measures already in place (CCTV, staffing levels, lighting)
   o a comparison of how stations are managed by London Underground and Network Rail operators
- To examine what else can be done to reduce crime including
   o what further measures should be put in place
   o who should take the lead and provide funding

The Committee would welcome any feedback on this report. Please contact Bonnie Jones on 0207 983 4250 or via e-mail at bonnie.jones@london.gov.uk if you have any comments. For press queries, please contact Denise Malcolm on 020 7983 4090 or via denise.malcolm@london.gov.uk

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Chairman's Foreword

Roger Evans AM

Chairman of the Transport Committee

This report comes at a time when safety at suburban railway stations is under detailed scrutiny. Recent tragic crimes have highlighted a problem which has prevailed for many years. With 12,360 crimes reported on the London network last year, personal security is clearly an ongoing concern which serves to discourage use of public transport in London.

The committee took evidence from rail operators, users and the police, and we are grateful for their candour. All the stakeholders accept there is a problem and a need for concerted action.

We were disappointed to learn that closed circuit television systems are often not monitored and do not connect to the comprehensive systems now operated by local authorities. Often the technology does not permit them to work together and glaring loopholes are left in the security net. We strongly recommend that the rail operators and local councils coordinate their activities more effectively in future.

The provision of effective lighting, platform barriers and the presence of staff also improve station security. The operators claim that staffing every station would be prohibitively expensive, but the committee can see no good reason to prevent the more imaginative deployment of existing staff, out of ticket offices and into customer facing roles on the platform.

We were also surprised to learn that a relatively small number of police are available to patrol surface rail networks and that their responsibilities extend well beyond the borders of London, as far as Norwich and Poole! We do not comment on the current debate about how the British Transport Police relate to the Metropolitan Police, but the committee are concerned that the resources available for this Herculean task are insufficient.

Executive Summary

70 per cent of all national rail journeys begin or end in London; a third take place solely within the capital. Many of these journeys begin or end at poorly lit, badly designed and inhospitable stations that appear neglected.

The franchising arrangements for rail services in London have failed to deliver an adequate standard of station facilities. This report seeks to establish how the fractured nature of service delivery on the railways has failed to deliver, what standards should Londoners should expect from their train stations and, crucially, how best to achieve these standards.

The crime statistics provided by the BTP and TfL suggest that the station environment is not a safe one. 12,360 crimes were reported at on London's rail network last year and considering that this number may only represent 10-20% of actual crime, the figure is startling.

This report deals with two main issues; how to deal with crime once it has taken place and how to make station environments where passengers feel more secure and crime is less likely to occur.

1. Dealing with crime

The Transport Committee were disappointed at the lack of co-ordination that appears to exist between key stakeholders over the use of CCTV. Train operating companies install stand alone CCTV systems that are not always staffed and which fail to link into local authority control rooms. Consequently, train stations sit outside local CCTV networks. The Committee have asserted in the report that every step should be taken to ensure that local authority control rooms are linked up to station CCTV systems. The Committee are aware that this will place an extra burden on train operating companies and perhaps TfL, but we have yet to hear an argument that contradicts what appears to be simple, common sense.

The Committee were also concerned about the numbers of police the BTP are able to dedicate to policing London's rail network. London Underground funds allow for the BTP to provide 662 officers on its network. The London North area on the railways has 215 officers allocated; the London South area a further 212 officers. The jurisdiction for these two areas extend to Norwich in the North and Poole in the South.

As the BTP stated, resources are overstretched and the Committee cannot fail but to agree. We are therefore asking that the Department of Transport in their review of the British Transport Police ensure that a greater number of officers can be dedicated to policing London's train stations. If extra financing can be levered from London Underground to ensure a greater and more effective presence on the Tube, then the franchising arrangements should demand operators to provide for a similar presence on London's rail network.

2. Improving the station environment

London's rail stations, away from Zone 1 terminals and key interchanges, are by and large poorly lit and sparsely staffed. This makes for an unwelcoming, sometimes threatening environment hardly designed to encourage greater use – especially during off peak periods.

The Department for Transport Secure Stations Award was designed to incentivise train operating companies to improve station environment, a tacit acceptance that the current franchise arrangements had provided little or no tangible incentive. The scheme appears well intentioned but the Committee has found it to be misdirected and too concerned with corporate procedure rather than the experience of the passenger.

There are many simple, and inexpensive measures that train operating companies could take to improve London's rail stations. This report has sought to highlight that by providing better and brighter lighting inside and outside the station, better street level real time travel information, more consistent signage, offer more commercial lettings and raise basic design standards, stations can become more welcoming to the passenger.

The Committee have concluded that the Secure Stations Award become a requirement for train operators and that a London specific award be looked into. London's surburban train stations are different from those elsewhere in the country, not only in their higher level of usage, but also in their character; many are key tube and bus interchanges for example.

However, the most crucial component for customers that TfL identified in their research is the presence of staff. For example, it is rare that any tube station is unstaffed during service hours and yet on London rail's network it is common to find stations after a certain time in the evening entirely empty of staff. The Committee accepts that there is no easy or cheap way of solving this problem. Staffing represents a far greater cost over time than some of the improvements we have suggested above.

However, we do feel that a more imaginative deployment of staff could be achieved. Ticket office staff, though essential during peak time, may provide a more visible presence elsewhere in stations during off peak hours.

The Committee have been particularly encouraged by proposals made by TfL in their plans for the North London Line. These include increase staffing levels and the deployment of some of the Met Police's Transport Operations Command Unit, with 45 officers already paid for and in place.

1. Introduction

1.1 70 per cent of all national rail journeys begin or end in London, and one-third of journeys are within the capital. Unlike the mainline stations in Zone 1, where most journeys begin or end, stations outside Zone 1 are largely places to endure rather than enjoy. This report seeks to examine what could be done to make stations outside of Zone 1 safer places and turn them into environments that reflect their commercial worth to the rail industry.

1.2 There were 30,428 offences reported to the British Transport Police across London's transport network outside Zone 1 in 2004. 12,360 of these offences took place on overground railways and just under 7,000 offences took place on overground and underground interchange stations. Figure 1 highlights the upward trend over the last three years of reported crime across London's tube and rail network. 4,500 of these crimes were committed against the person.

Figure 1 – Reported Crimes across London's tube and rail network (excl Zone1)

Category	No of Stations	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
London Underground Stations	248	11,852	13,460	18,068
Overground Stations	354	10,687	12,594	12,360
Underground / Overground Interchange Stations*	34	4,521	6,472	6,943
Total	**602**	**22,539**	**26,054**	**30,428**

*These figures are included in the above two categories

1.3 TfL's Transport and Policing & Enforcement Directorate (TPED) told us that the dramatic rise in crime reported at tube stations was down to a more 'proactive policing' policy on the Underground which has allowed the BTP to 'deal with low level offences such as anti-social behaviour and ticket offences more seriously'. TPED and the BTP advise that the larger numbers of police could also explain the increase in reported crime. For example, they assert that as the perceived and actual effectiveness of policing increases, so does the likelihood of offences being reported, thus driving up reported crime. These arguments would suggest that the actual level of crime has not increased, but crimes are more likely to be reported – an argument we hear often in debates about crime and policing. If these explanations are accurate, we would expect over the coming months and years to see a further tailing off and then decline, as the impact of increased and more proactive policing takes effect.

1.4 The average number of crimes per station outside Zone 1 over the same period is shown below in Figure 2. It is worth noting that the number of crimes per station is substantially higher in the 34 stations outside Zone 1 where there is interchange between overground and underground[1].

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[1] Amersham, Balham, Barking, Blackhorse Road, Brixton, Chalfont and Latimer, Ealing Broadway. Finsbury Park, Greenford, Greenwich, Harrow and Wealdstone, Harrow on Hill, Highbury and Islington, Kensington and Olympia, Kentish Town. Lewisham, Limehouse, New Cross, New Cross Gate, Queens Park, Richmond, Seven Sisters, South Ruislip, Stratford, Tottenham Hale, Upminster, Walthamstow Central, Wembley Central, West Brompton, West Ham, West Hampstead, West Ruislip, Willesden Junction, Wimbledon

Figure 2 - Average number of crimes per station outside Zone 1

Average number of crimes per station[2]	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
London Underground Stations	48	54	73
Overground Stations	30	35	35
Underground / Overground Interchange Stations	133	190	204

Profile of Victims

1.5 During 2004/05, there were just over 4,500 crimes against the person recorded by British Transport Police (BTP) at stations outside Zone 1. There are four categories under which the BTP recorded these crimes; violence against the person, sexual offences, theft of passenger property and robbery. Figure 3 outlines the breakdown of the offences into these four categories.

Figure 3 – Offences reported to the BTP during 2004/05

Offence Group	Public	Rail Staff	Grand Total
Violence against the person	1024	302	1326
Sexual offences	139	3	142
Theft of passenger property[3]	2129	44[4]	2173
Robbery[5]	914	7	921

1.6 There is a roughly 60/40% male/female spilt as to the victims of these crimes. Of those reported incidents where the age of the victim was known (around 75%), around 83% were under 40 with 45% of these victims being between 17 and 30 (see figure 4, below). Other notable statistics were that:
- of all robberies reported to the BTP where the age profile was known (86%), 46% of the victims were under 17 – the equivalent percentage across all offence categories for the under 17s is 18%
- victims of 'violence against the person' and 'robbery' were largely male; 75% and 86% respectively
- 9 in 10 victims of sexual offences were female and victims of theft were roughly 45/55 female/male
- Approximately 4 in 10 of crimes reported to the BTP did not record the ethnicity of the victim –consequently an analysis of the ethnic breakdown of victims is unreliable.

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[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number
[3] Defined as 'Stealing property from another person, with intent to permanently deprive him or her of it', http://www.crimestatistics.org.uk/output/page77.asp
[4] Theft of staff property is included within this category
[5] Defined as 'The actual or threatened use of force during or immediately before the theft of personal property', http://www.crimestatistics.org.uk/output/Page75.asp

Figure 4
Age Profile of Victims of offences reported to the BTP in London during 2004/05
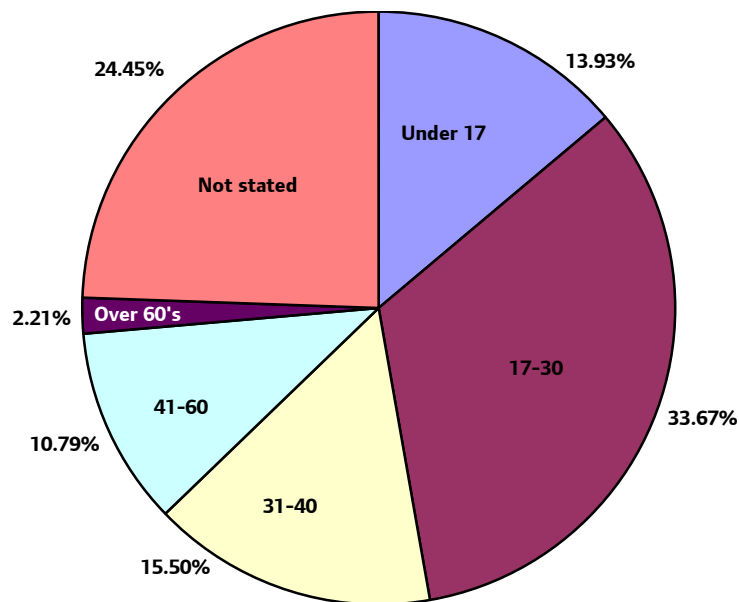
1.7 The BTP highlighted in its written submission to the Transport Committee that in addition to these statistics, they are able to report that in the corresponding period of April 2004-November 2004, the number of sexual offences has dropped 12%, and the theft of property is down by 13%. Detection rates over the same period have shown notable increases.

Perception of Passenger Safety

1.8 TfL TPED in its submission to the Committee highlighted that perceived safety at LU/DLR stations has hovered either side of 80% for the past two years, with a notable rise in perceived safety in the first quarter of 2005/06. Subjective perceptions of crime and personal safety should be treated with care and can be very difficult to shift. For example, some people dislike using anything other than door-to-door transport because of perceived safety risks, and this is outside of operating companies' control.

1.9 There is an average of one crime a week at each station in London. The Underground, and to a slightly lesser extent, the overground rail system, is in fact a very safe environment. Nonetheless, passenger perceptions are important, and play a significant part in ridership numbers. Customer surveys have shown that a number of factors significantly affect passenger perceptions of safety, and the Committee considers that these are not being adequately addressed.

1.10 Figure 5 shows the twenty stations in London with the highest crime levels. Half of the twenty stations are tube interchanges, and stations that are not, such as Clapham Junction and East Croydon are particularly busy, as they serve several lines. Interchange issues are discussed further in chapter 3.

Figure 5
Total notifiable and non-notifiable crimes at stations outside zone 1

| Total Crime 2004	
Overground Station	**No. of Reported Crimes**
EAST CROYDON	328
CLAPHAM JUNCTION	273
WALTHAMSTOW CENTRAL *	189
FINSBURY PARK *	187
BARKING *	186
ORPINGTON	179
SURBITON	166
BICKLEY	161
EALING BROADWAY *	156
LEWISHAM *	140
WIMBLEDON *	137
ILFORD	104
STRATFORD *	98
BROMLEY SOUTH	96
PECKHAM RYE	96
RICHMOND *	96
PURLEY	92
UPMINSTER *	92
WILLESDEN JUNCTION *	90
ROMFORD	89

Source: TfL TPED
* Denotes interchange station

1.11 The map on page 8 plots this data to show the crime hotspots across the capital. This data shows crimes specifically occuring at stations, whereas the larger numbers discussed earlier in the chapter show total crime on the network[6]. 'Repeat incidents' refers to the occurance of crimes at a static location, ie a station.

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[6] Numbers should be taken as indicative rather than exact, as the information was processed in a test environment.

Total Crime (Notifiable and Non-Notifiable) 2004
Overground Station Crime

Transport for London
Transport Policing and Enforcement Directorate
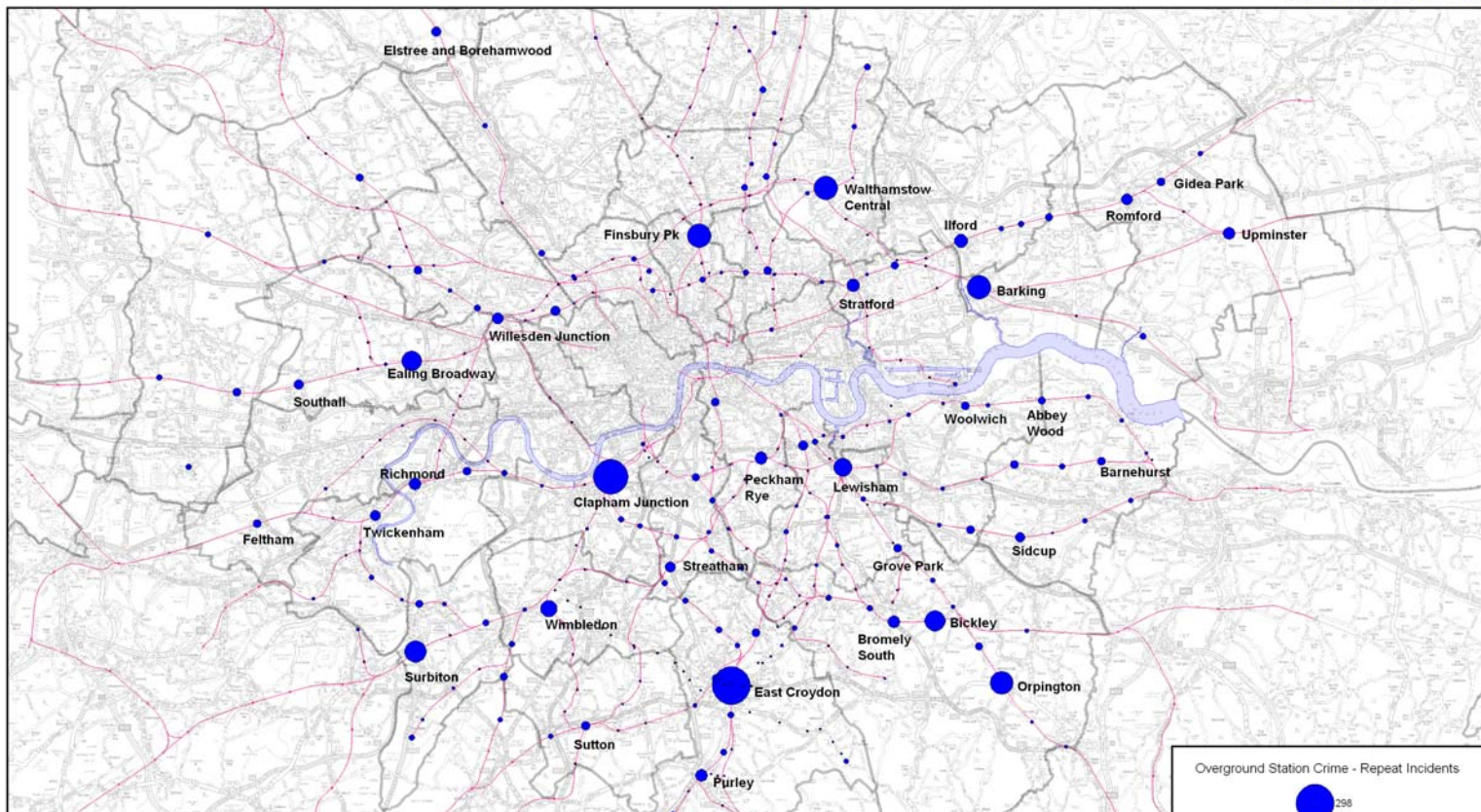
Drawn By: Mandy McGregor
Date: 18 January 2006
Using SMART-CaT v1.2
Reproduced by permission of Geographers A-z Map Co Ltd.
This product includes mapping data licensed from Ordanance Survey.
Crown Copyright 2002. Licence No. 100017302

Overground Station Crime - Repeat Incidents
298
149
29.8

Boroughs
Region

National Rail Network
Line
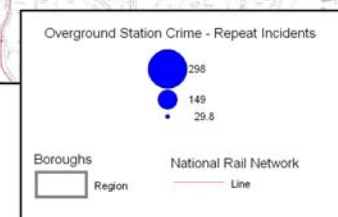
2.   Who is responsible for keeping London's stations safe?

2.1   There is no single organisation or overarching strategy for the management of London's rail stations. 'Responsibility for stations and trains security lies with the Train Operating Companies (TOCs), British Transport Police and Department for Transport (following abolition of the SRA)'[7]. TfL and local authorities also fund and help co-ordinate crime and safety reduction strategies, but do so on a voluntary basis. Figure 5 illustrates the somewhat complicated lines of responsibility for safety at London rail and tube stations.

Figure 6

Safety at Railway Stations: Chain of Responsibility
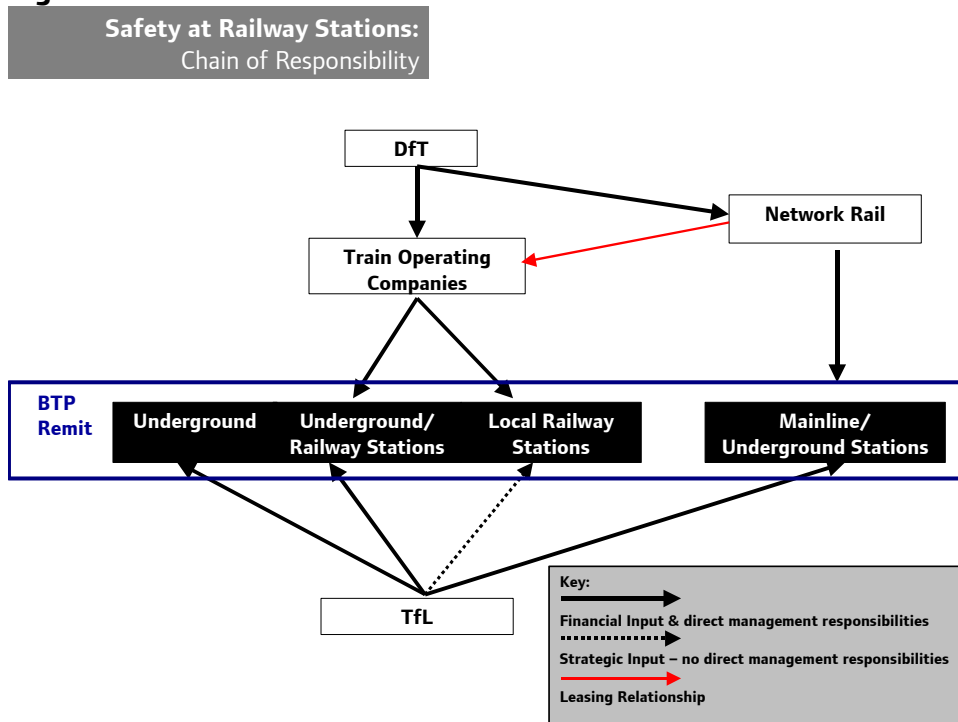
Train Operating Companies

2.2   Network Rail owns all rail stations, operating and managing the ten largest stations in London[8], whilst the remaining stations are leased to TOCs. The TOC leasing the station is responsible for day-to-day maintenance, cleaning and operating the station as part of their franchise agreements. Franchises are managed by the Department for Transport.

2.3   The original franchise agreements set out basic station requirements for TOCs to uphold. These included provision of information, lighting, accommodation and cleanliness standards. The expectation of this approach was that TOCs would go beyond these requirements to maximise passenger usage as a commercial interest. However, the expected outcome was not achieved, and so the SRA subsequently established more specific criteria such as ensuring facilities and equipment were not damaged or broken and standards for the provision of toilets, seating, and the removal of graffiti.

2.4   Thameslink states that its franchise agreement 'obliges us to carry out our obligations as required in all aspects of Health and Safety legislation as affects railway stations under our control'. South Eastern Trains explicitly state that their franchise agreement does not specify any obligation to upkeep station maintenance or station safety. Therefore the focus is set by minimum health and safety standards rather than passenger security and environmental factors.

Transport for London

2.5   TfL has no statutory obligation to maintain stations other than those platforms and stations on the London Underground network[9]. It does however provide funding to fill the gaps left by the TOCs and the SRA, whom TfL argues have 'paid insufficient attention to the ideal of passenger security'[10].

2.6   TfL has identified, through its own market research, the following passenger preferences for a 'safe' station:

- o   Increased staffing
- o   CCTV staffed and monitored (stations and trains)
- o   Help points
- o   Real time information
- o   Lighting
- o   Waiting accommodation

TfL is currently funding the rollout of a programme to install some of these facilities at non-LU stations, though they are not in a position to provide staffing cover.

2.7   In light of the Railways Act 2005[11], TfL is currently negotiating with the Department of Transport over the Silverlink Metro franchise. If the responsibility for the franchise is passed to TfL, it will install the above features as minimum standards at all stations on the North London Line. CCTV will also be installed on all Silverlink trains.

2.8   Already, in advance of any handover, TfL is undertaking a £2m per annum investment programme on Silverlink, providing 45 extra police officers targeted at stations where fear of crime is highest. They will be deployed most heavily after 3 p.m., as this is the time when passengers feel most insecure about their personal safety.

2.9   Ticket gates are being installed at 10 stations, which serve a three-fold purpose – providing a more controlled station environment, increasing revenue through reducing ticketless travel and maintaining a staffing presence.

DfT & Local Authorities: Defining and Implementing Best Practice

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[9] Responsibility for the upkeep of DLR stations lies with Secro Docklands Ltd, who hold the franchise
[10] TfL Written Submission
[11] The Act provided the Secretary of State for Transport with powers to potentially give TfL a much greater role in managing rail services that operate within London

2.10   Apart from awarding the rail franchises, the DfT provides accreditation for the voluntary Secure Station award scheme. In order to qualify for accreditation under the scheme, TOCs must demonstrate they have a variety of safety measures in place. These include CCTV provision, monitoring and recording crime, responding to incidents, passenger information and station maintenance.

2.11   The DfT and Home Office also set the parameters by which local authorities could co-ordinate safety issues around stations through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships[12]. These partnerships seek to establish regular communication between key stakeholders. However, evidence received from local boroughs would suggest that securing active TOC involvement at this level is proving difficult because of the 'fragmented nature of public transport in all its forms.'[13]

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CRDPs)

2.12   Southern Trains state that 'a station is part of a community and the problems inherent within the community will also be apparent at stations, therefore close liaison with local authorities is vital'[14]. The Committee welcomes this approach and line of thinking, but evidence received from TOCs gave little indication that there was enough engagement with local authorities. There were some exceptions to the general pattern, with Hackney referring to their Safer Transport Group (set up under the CDRP), which One and Silverlink both sit on. Brent cited involvement by Silverlink and Chiltern railways in making station improvements and South Eastern Trains noted that they had worked successfully in partnerships with Bromley, Lewisham and Bexley councils.

2.13   Involvement of TOCs in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships across London seems to be patchy and inconsistent. There is no compulsion for TOCs to engage in these processes and therefore no uniform approach. The Committee understands that railway lines will often cut through a number of boroughs and that it can be difficult to engage fully with every one. However, TOCs currently stand outside any real engagement with public infrastructure in relation to crime and safety. In particular, it seems that regeneration opportunities within boroughs could directly assist TOCs in trying to reduce crime. This issue is addressed in recommendation x.

Policing the network

2.14   The jurisdiction of BTP is defined by statute (Section 31 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003).

> *"A constable of the British Transport Police Force shall have all the powers and privileges of a constable:*

> - *on track,*
> - *on network,*
> - *in a station,*
> - *in a light maintenance depot,*
> - *on other land used for purposes of or in relation to a railway*
> - *on other land in which a person who provides railway services has a freehold or leasehold interest, and*

[12] Home Office Circular 016/2004
[13] LB Newham written evidence
[14] Southern written evidence

- *throughout Great Britain for a purpose connected to a railway or to anything occurring on or in relation to a railway."*

The Secretary of State for Transport is currently conducting a review of the BTP's role, and there is a London wide debate on policing, with consideration being given to amalgamating the Metropolitan, City of London and British Transport Police into a single body.

3.   Dealing with crime at stations

3.1   The British Transport Police are the force charged with enforcing the law on London's tube and rail network. Across London's 274 tube stations and 364 overground stations, the BTP's 1,700 officers deal with all offences carried out on tubes, trains or at stations. The task is not an enviable one; their role is unique. This is apparent not least in their sources of funding and the consequent allocation of their resources.

3.2   The BTP are funded entirely through the transport industry, rather than general taxation. This means their numbers are limited by funds allocated by individual operators. Although he believes the situation to be slowly improving, Chief Constable Ian Johnson describes the BTP as 'massively underfunded'.

3.3   In total, the BTP has around 2,500 officers, with just over 1,700 deployed in London. Within London, the BTP is broken into three groups – the underground, and London North and London South, which in fact cover huge geographical areas. These can be seen in the map below.
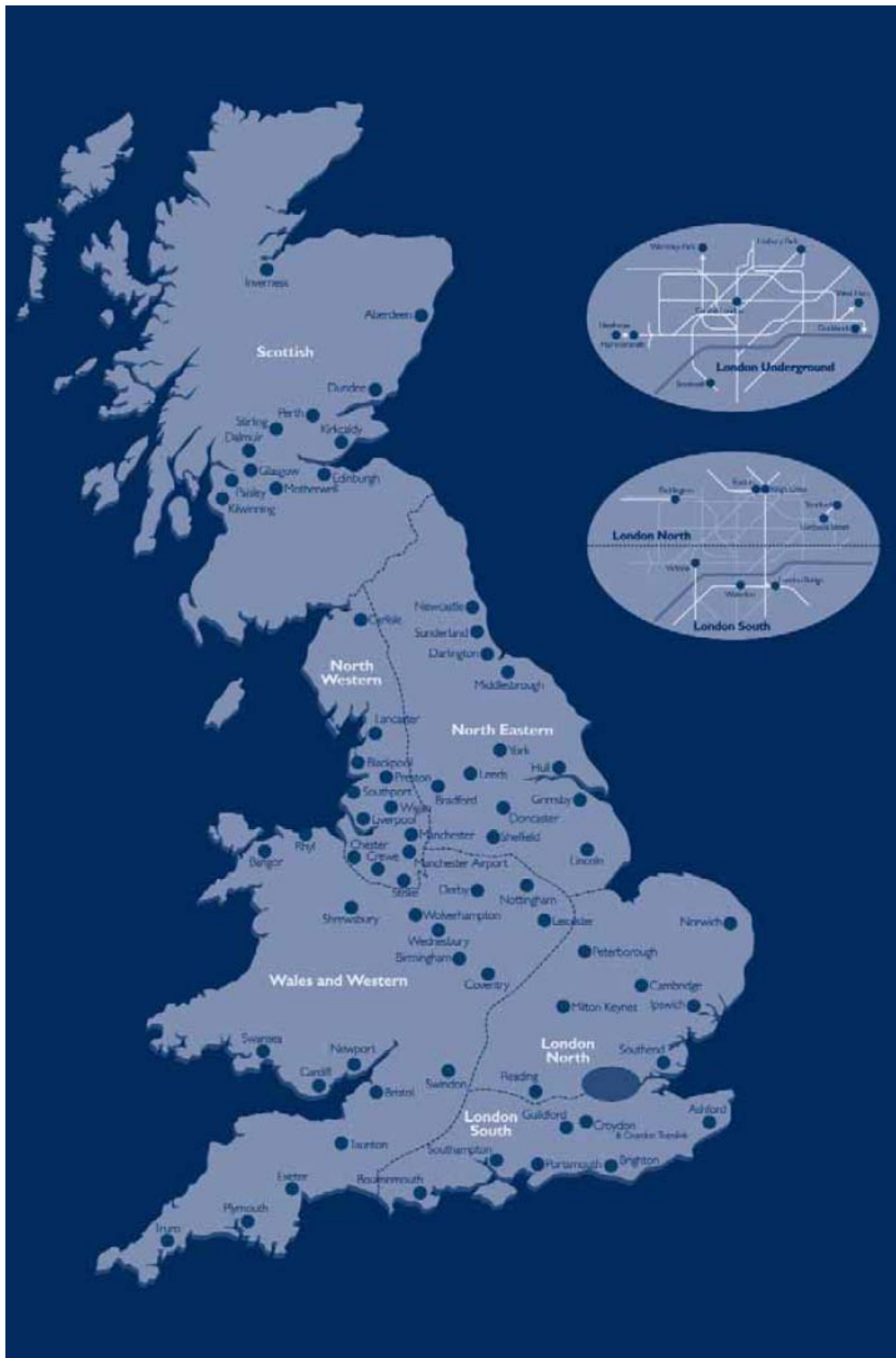
BTP area boundaries – source BTP Annual Report 2004/05

3.4   The table below shows the current deployment of British Transport Police (BTP) across the rail and tube network. More officers are used on London Underground than on railway stations, despite there being overground more stations (354 overground to 248 underground stations outside of zone 1) and a larger ridership on overland railways. The London South and London North Units are funded by Train Operating Companies and, similarly, London Underground funds BTP officers on the tube.

Figure 7 – BTP officers in Greater London Area

	Police Officers	PCSOs	Special Constables	Police Staff	Area Total
London Underground (LU)	662	20	58	137	877
London South (LS)	212	57	63	66	398
London North (LN)	215	71	25	21	332
Central Specialist Units	87	0	0	11	98
Greater London Total	1176	148	146	235	1705

Source: BTP written submission

3.5   The close working relationship that has developed between TfL and the BTP has undoubtedly contributed to a more joined up way of working. It must also be noted that dealing with a single organisation inevitably contributes to this joined up approach. Due to the fragmentation of the rail network across London and the rest of the country, the limited resources of the BTP are stretched thinly when trying to engage with TOCs. The same applies to forming partnerships with boroughs. Ian Johnson notes that there are approximately 900 potential partnerships throughout the country and BTP forces number around 2500.

Methods of Policing

LU Initiatives

3.6   In the last two years, extra funding for 200 BTP officers on the underground has been provided by TfL, which has allowed TPED and BTP to implement 'local policing' on the tube network. Officers are allocated to specific groups of stations, where they work closely with station staff, identifying local policing priorities, in a similar manner to Safer Neighbourhood schemes within the Metropolitan Police. This provides greater accountability, and, as TPED emphasise, the importance of other agencies in combating crime on the transport network is paramount. Issues such as repairs and installing new equipment are the responsibility of the train operators, but the BTP can offer advice and expertise at the planning stage, to 'design out' crime. Furthermore, greater visibility of police on the transport network, can help in securing public trust and assist in tackling crime.

Rail Initiatives

3.7 Other new approaches piloted by the BTP include the use of PCSOs as part of a high visibility policing effort. In particular, these officers are there to offer reassurance, thus reducing fear of crime. One particularly encouraging example of partnership working, in this case with South Eastern Trains, is the accredited officers scheme. Under the Railway Safety Accreditation Scheme, introduced by the government several years ago, police forces can now accredit quasi-security organisations. SET is the first train operating company to introduce Railway Enforcement Officers, in concert with the BTP. Employed by SET, officers deal with anti-social behaviour, undertake preventative policing and provide reassurance and assistance to passengers.

3.8 Another initiative of note is the use of Special Constables in policing the transport network. Schemes run by some train operating companies – including Virgin, GNER and South Eastern Trains – encourage staff to train as voluntary Special Constables. In addition to taking part in operations on the transport network, there are a number of other benefits. As railway workers, these Special Constables have a particular understanding of the railway network, and can share this information with the BTP. Their training is useful when undertaking their normal duties, as they 'are still thinking like police officers'[15], and can feed intelligence back to the BTP.

Boundary Issues

3.9 Arguments have been made in favour of a London-wide transport police service. The BTP have rejected any changes to their boundaries, as this would lead to fragmentation of responsibility across the railway network. It would not deal effectively with boundary issues, they assert, but merely 'displace those problems to another point'.[16] They believe that managing across boundaries is more important than the actual boundaries themselves, and point to co-ordination with the MPS, particularly on the purchasing of equipment.

3.10 However, several boroughs have highlighted problems with the current arrangements. Newham notes that there are differences in offence categories between the BTP and MPS. For example, BTP have a Public Order Offence which does not appear in TfL's list of offences on buses. Most offences on buses are categorised as Disturbance, a category not used by BTP. Brent observe that whilst they consider co-operation between the MPS and the BTP to be excellent, 'the division of responsibility for public safety and security may not be the most efficient way of making the rail network as safe and secure as possible.'[17]

3.11 Many examples of good practice on the transport network can be found, particularly the way the BTP has endeavoured to build partnerships. However, there is currently a huge imbalance in numbers – 215 officers cover the entire area between Norwich and London stations north of the river, compared to 662 on the underground system. Primarily therefore, this appears to be a funding issue, rather than a boundary one. The Committee sees this as unsatisfactory from a rail passengers' point of view. Approximately a third of offences recorded in the London North and London South areas take place within GLA boundaries[18], and policing numbers must reflect this accordingly.

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[15] Ian Johnson, Transport Committee, 1 December 2005
[16] Ian Johnson, Transport Committee, 1 December 2005
[17] Brent written evidence
[18] BTP Annual Report 2004/05 and TPED written evidence

3.12   The Committee also considers that there are several factors that mark London out as unique when dealing with crime at overground stations. London stands apart from the rest of the country in its multi modal transport network – passengers may use the overground, underground and bus networks to get to work or travel around the city. Interchanges between underground and overground have already been highlighted as crime hotspots. The tube transports hundreds of people every few minutes to interchange stations, and because overground trains are much less frequent, service pinch points are created. The majority of commuters from outside London will start or end their journey at interchange stations. Thirty four station interchanges exist within London, outside of the ten mainline station in zone 1. The sheer numbers of people using these stations mean that crime will tend to be higher at these locations.

3.13   The location of stations within London differs from the rest of the country. Regional stations tend to be a lot more integrated into the community, located on high streets or main roads. Stations in London tend to be a lot more isolated, as is discussed further in chapter 5.

Recommendation:

The Department for Transport's review of the British Transport Police must address the chronic lack of resources and funding of safety and security on the overground network in the London areas. Its findings must seek as a stated aim to achieve similar police numbers on the overground network in London to those currently deployed on the London Underground, in order to address the unique nature of London's overground network and tackle the higher levels of crime that exist within Greater London. The review should also seek to establish how effective the operating structures are between the BTP and the Metropolitan Police, in tackling crime on the overground network.

4.   Case Study: Tying up the CCTV Network

4.1   The most prevalent concern around dealing with criminal offences - rather than improving station environments - to emerge from the evidence received centres on the deployment of CCTV. The CCTV network on the overground railway is a perfect example of how fractured service provision is hampering the delivery of service improvements across the network. It can be seen as a microcosm of the problems caused by splintered responsibility across the transport network. The central problem is one of co-ordination, with the fractured nature of the transport industry the apparent root of many of the difficulties experienced by those organisations trying to improve station security.

4.2   Franchise agreements contain little to no guidance on the provision of CCTV. The situation can be summed up by South Eastern Trains' statement: 'We are a separate company operating within the railway environment and we can really just go our own way'[19].There is no obligation for CCTV to be installed on trains. There is no common industry standard, or minimum requirements for the equipment used. There are no requirements for TOCs to link their CCTV with law enforcement agencies. Any examples of the above procedures taking place are entirely due to voluntary best practice.

Local Authority Control Rooms
4.3   Currently, many local authorities manage central CCTV control rooms. Local authority CCTV networks feed into these control rooms images that are monitored and should an offence occur these can be enhanced and immediately despatched to MPS or BTP officers on the ground. Live monitoring of CCTV ensures it is a pro-active and dynamic tool whereby interventions can be made as events are happening, rather than reactive equipment used to identify criminals after they have committed the crime.

4.4   Local authority evidence[20] on the whole tends to suggest that the CCTV systems deployed on overland railway stations are generally 'standalone'[21] systems that can be 'unstaffed'[22] and unmonitored. However, it should be noted that there is a lack of integration of CCTV nationally, and there is no common standard or policy[23]. The Committee understands that the Government has requested that a working group within the Association of Chief Police Officers look at this issue. We await the findings of this with interest, and would expect the report to address the issues raised here.

4.5   There are positive examples where Train Operating Companies have worked with local authorities, local police and regional bodies such as TfL to introduce a seamless CCTV network. Southwark and Lewisham highlight work co-ordinated by TfL and SELTRANS (South East London Transport Strategy), which have linked overground stations in the borough to their CCTV network and control room. Lewisham have also been driving forward link ups with South Eastern Trains, so that CCTV footage all their stations in the borough now feeds into local authority control rooms. However, what should be standard practice appears to only be

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[19] David Scott, Transport Committee, 1 December 2005
[20] Enfield, Hackney, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, Southwark
[21] LB Enfield written evidence
[22] LB Hackney written evidence
[23] Ian Johnson, Transport Committee, 1 December 2005

happening where local authorities and TOCs are actively engaged and prepared to drive forward changes.

CCTV Technology

4.6 Good practice is not universal across the network in London. Newham cite two problems it has encountered. First, relevant software needs to be purchased from TOCs to enable data sharing in their CCTV Control Centre – this for example, would allow facial recognition systems to be used by the MPS and BTP. It has also become frustrated as having purchased through their CDRP 'high quality mobile CCTV cameras' for use on their transport network, it has yet to receive permission to install them.

4.7 The British Transport Police and the Metropolitan Police Service both stress the need to co-ordinate the purchasing of CCTV technology, and the benefits of feeding CCTV images into local authority control rooms. Work is being undertaken by the MPS and boroughs to link all local authority CCTV centres into three MPS command centres[24]. However, the benefits of this are not likely to be felt on overground railways unless co-operation over CCTV sharing is established. The MPS and the BTP both stated that TOCs must consult on the CCTV technology purchased and boroughs are demanding that such technology feed into their own control rooms. Both assertions have resource implications on TOCs, as well as local authorities' staffing levels, and levering additional funding from TOCs is problematic.

4.8 The BTP state 'there needs to be clarity concerning the long-term management of infrastructure assets where operators only have short-term use of that infrastructure'. In other words, there are few incentives for TOCs to invest in such technology or to commit to supporting co-ordination of CCTV with local authorities, when the technology they are investing in will effectively be handed back to Network Rail at the end of their franchise and then on to another rail operator.

TfL Initiatives

4.9 TfL are currently funding an investment package to improve station security, one aspect of which is the provision of CCTV across all stations in London. At the time of writing, TfL's 2006/07 Business Plan is still to be confirmed. However, there is a commitment that by the end of the current financial year, 50% of stations in the GLA area will be covered, and the expectation and TfL's aim is that this roll-out of equipment should cover all stations within the GLA area. They are therefore now the principal provider of CCTV equipment on the overground network. TfL however, has no strategic control over mainline railways and so cannot ensure that the CCTV equipment they provide will feed into local authority control rooms.

4.10 The Committee welcomes TfL's intervention in voluntarily funding the provision of CCTV. However, the Committee was disappointed at the levels of equipment provision and total lack of co-ordination across the network that have been obtained from the franchise agreements thus far. In particular, the benefits of linking CCTV into local authority control rooms are self-evident. Stations are part of the community and CCTV co-ordination needs to reflect that. The Committee has not heard any arguments that adequately address why TOCs are not undertaking such link ups across London.

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[24] LB Hackney written evidence

4.11 Voluntary local authority partnerships are not exerting enough influence on TOCs and Enfield suggests a more high-level government approach to tackle the issue. TfL are lobbying for greater control of the franchise agreements for rail services in London – a possibility with the Railways Act 2005. Should TfL for example, obtain franchising responsibilities for the North London Line, they say they would demand the provision of 24/7 monitored CCTV. Essentially there appears to be a disturbing lack of any strategic approach to using CCTV as an effective tool in the fight against crime. Direction on this needs to come from government and we would certainly argue that this should recognise the exceptional status of London.

Key Findings and Recommendations:

The Committee welcomes TfL's intervention in funding CCTV provision, but was disappointed by the lack of any common standard or compatibility that TOCs must work to.

The Committee was extremely concerned about the current lack of co-ordination across the network and the failure of standalone CCTV systems at rail stations to feed into local authority control rooms.

It seems that improvements can only be made at a central government level. We therefore request the Department for Transport address this issue and ensure there is greater compulsion within the franchising framework for TOCs to integrate their CCTV systems with boroughs and the police.

5. Improving the Station Environment

5.1   Unfortunately it is not an uncommon experience for many people living in suburban areas to approach a station by turning down a poorly lit side street and enter the station via a dark and narrow flight of stairs. Walking into the forecourt, they cannot purchase a ticket because the machine is broken and the ticket office is shut. On the platform, there is no information on when the train is due. The timetable has been vandalised, as has the waiting shelter, where empty beer cans litter the floor. Looking around, the station seems deserted – there is no shop where passengers might be able to buy a newspaper or a drink. There may not seem to be any way of contacting a member of staff in an emergency.

In this section, we look at how stations might be improved, and what the barriers to these improvements might be.

5.2   It is widely acknowledged that unpleasant and potentially unsafe station environments act as a disincentive to travelling on railways. Thus commercial interest should ensure that stations are clean and well looked after, and this was the assumption made when originally drawing up franchise agreements. It is clear that this has not worked in practice. Here we look at the key characteristics of 'safe' stations and examine some of the barriers that exist to prevent their uptake.

5.3   Boroughs, TfL and some TOCs (particularly Southern) emphasise the importance of the 'whole journey' approach. Newham break this down into the following sections:

- The walking environment (walking from destination point to a transport point or the opposite)
- The waiting environment (waiting at the station) and
- The on-transport environment (travelling on a train)

5.4   For passenger safety to be given full consideration within this context, partnerships between TOCs, boroughs, TfL, the BTP and the MPS are crucial. A joined up approach - control of the station environment, lighting, location of entrances, facilities such as shops or cafes and cleanliness are imperative in designing out crime. The following is a walk through of the passenger experience of a station, and the ideal standards that would be in place, contrasted with the reality many passengers face:

The area surrounding the station - The BTP and others have noted the need to reclaim the space outside stations. Partnerships between TOCs, boroughs and the police are essential in tackling this, particularly with CCTV co-ordination and improvements to the surrounding area. Several boroughs, including Lewisham, Southwark and Brent, identify regeneration opportunities as a way of improving the area outside stations, which they believe can have a direct impact on the actual

station environment. For example, Southwark are including London Bridge and Elephant and Castle stations in regeneration plans, and Brent have targeted particular station approaches and entrances in improvements to certain areas. Designing out crime around stations make it less likely that stations themselves become crime hotspots.

Location of station entrances - Entrances located on main roads, ideally with shops around and well integrated into other transportmodes, well lit and clearly signed with the station name, lines and services mean a passenger will feel more secure when walking into the station. However, many stations are over 100 years old and entrances are often located on smaller streets, or only accessible by stairs, increasing passenger insecurity. Access to stations is a particular issue for disabled people, and progress by TOCs on improving this has been described by the National Audit Office as 'slow'.

Real time information – The passenger should have a clear idea of when the train is going to arrive. An absence of information can make passengers feel vulnerable, as they do not know how long they will be waiting at the station. Providing real time information at station entrances or off site, also is done by the DLR, could also improve passenger security, by reducing the amount of time passengers have to wait in-station. Hackney suggest the possibility of an information display at a local hospital located very near a station. The provision of real time information at street level or in nearby facilities would have direct benefits for customer and can only be done by TOCs in partnership with local authorities.

Ticket gates – this is a key way of controlling the station environment as it ensures that train stations are used by passengers only. Gates must be staffed to further ensure access control, and this also provides a visible presence. However on smaller stations, which cannot support ticket office staff, ticket gates cannot be used as passengers often purchase tickets from conductors on the trains themselves.

Good lighting - in all areas of the station, and particularly isolated areas such as bridges, bright lighting ensures that passengers are aware of their environment and feel more in control. It also enhances the operation of CCTV cameras.

Station name plates – these should be well lit and readily visible from all seats in arriving trains.

Clean stations – this is essential to passenger perceptions of safety at stations. Hackney state that 'poor maintenance and cleanliness of stations can increase the perception of fear, perpetuating the 'broken window syndrome''. Franchise agreements now have specific requirements for emptying litterbins and removing graffiti within fixed periods of time.

Waiting accommodation – while the passenger is waiting, there should be protection from the elements. Well maintained and internally lit accommodation of sufficient size can make stations feel more welcoming. It is vital that passengers can clearly see in and out of the shelter.

Facilities at stations - Shops, cafes and toilets make stations feel more welcoming. They also provide a human presence, which is reassuring to passengers. Whilst good facilities exist at larger stations, improvements to small, unsafe and partially staffed stations cannot be justified on commercial grounds due to the low numbers of people that use them. Some small suburban stations are only used by around 100 people per day. Therefore, revenue-raising facilities are not commercially viable.

Help points – If an incident does occur in the station, it is essential that there is a clearly identified contact point for passengers to be able to talk to staff and request assistance.

5.5   So why are these improvements not being made on a larger scale? The Committee found that problems mainly stem from structural barriers that make it difficult to implement station improvements. Network Rail's approach to improvements has been criticised by some as too complicated and inflexible, therefore discouraging investment by TOCs[25]. TOCs themselves generally have franchises lasting 7 years, and return on investment tends only to show over 10+ year period. Towards end of their franchises, TOCs are unwilling to invest. In particular, Silverlink's franchise on the North London Line has been extended more frequently, providing little incentive to invest.

5.6   Whilst the Committee has been disappointed at the under-investment and seeming lack of concern for passenger safety and security, the blame for the poor state of London's suburban railway stations cannot lie exclusively with the TOCs. There is very little incentive for TOCs to invest in stations, and far more emphasis has been placed on improving waiting and journey times.

5.7   The Committee concludes that the current franchise agreements are not adequately taking account of passenger security and safety. To provide current users with the environment they deserve, as well as attracting new customers to the railways, there needs to be much more emphasis on corporate sector responsibility. The Committee would like to see a move away from the current culture of meeting minimum standards, towards a system that encourages and rewards good practice.

5.8   Within franchise agreements, much more robust definitions of station standards need to be in place, with incentives to encourage TOCs to make station

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[25] National Audit Office, 'Maintaining and improving Britain's railway stations', July 2005

environments safe and welcoming. In particular, the Committee would like to see much greater control of the station environment. Ticket gating can be expensive – some stations have neither ticket machines nor offices, and gates must also be staffed. However, it is a key way of ensuring that only passengers use stations. The Committee recommends that appropriate targets, with penalties incurred for poor performance, should be set within franchise agreements.   If franchise agreements are to be more rigorous in standards, it would seem logical that they are also made longer – to ensure TOCs can plan ahead more effectively, and give more time for return on investment to show. This should be balanced by a triggering of the franchising process for consistant failure to perform over a number of years.

5.9   It seems apparent to the Committee that London needs a strategic approach to its railways. A third of the country's rail journeys are made within London and TfL estimate that the network will need to grow by 40% in the next 10 years to cope with projected population and job growth[26]. The biggest agent for change within London railways is Transport for London. The potential handover of franchising agreements on the North London Line will be an important opportunity to trial some of the recommendations of this report. If successful, other cities may benefit from similar initiatives. We have been encouraged by TfL's stance on passenger safety, and believe the improvements they suggest will result in visible and tangible improvements for passengers. We would also expect these standards to be applied to all operating companies as franchises are negotiated.

Secure Stations Accreditation

5.10   The DfT has attempted to drive up standards through its Secure Stations Scheme, which contains many specifications on the above facilities. However, it is voluntary, and so depends on whether a TOC wishes to accredit stations or not, so it is hard to judge TOCs against each other. There is low public awareness of what the scheme actually involves and how it benefits passengers. TfL believe that achieving a certain number of awards as part of a timed programme should be included in franchise agreements, and that safety standards at overground stations should be similar to those experienced at outer London underground stations.

5.11   There is confusion over how points are awarded; many physical features are given the same amount of marks as 'administrative' criteria. For example, it appears that live monitoring of CCTV carries the same weight as the CCTV system being compliant with the Data Protection Act. Essentially, the criteria need to be more customer focused. Currently there appears to be a corporate emphasis – for example, points are awarded for having a personal security policy endorsed at board level. Whilst this is no doubt commendable, unless the passenger can see the concrete results of this policy, it is of little use when measuring the security of a station.

5.12   TfL believe that a two tier system should be in place, whereby stations are judged on a number of 'base' criteria, for example 24/7 monitored CCTV and help points, as well as staffing levels. If these criteria are met then stations can pass onto a secondary set of criteria.

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[26] TfL Rail presentation, http://www.tfl.gov.uk/rail/downloads/pdf/060504-LR-Conf-2004.pdf

5.13 Furthermore, TfL point out that the scheme has been devised nationally and the very great differentiations in stations across London can make the current criteria redundant, particularly at major interchanges and some of the smallest overground stations, as discussed in chapter 3. Therefore it would seem sensible to build in some specific criteria for London, to take account of the multi modal and high density nature of London's transport system, as well as the isolated locations of many of the city's suburban stations. We understand that TfL Rail are undertaking research in this area in preparation for negotiations on the Silverlink franchise.

Staffing levels

5.14 There are no minimum staffing levels for stations under franchise agreements. Research has shown that a visible staffing presence at stations is the single most important factor in making passengers feel secure.

5.15 Deployment of staff is a key issue. TfL cite their market research showing that during daylight hours, customer service is the priority, but that this changes to personal security during hours of darkness. Staffing presence is usually in the form of ticket office staff.

5.16 Newham have raised the issue of 'duty of care' – what are the responsibilities of staff if a passenger is in danger or distressed? Ticket office staff, for example, will be sitting behind a glass screen and they cannot go out onto the platforms. Whilst having some kind of human interaction may be reassuring for passengers, ticket office staff cannot intervene if a crime is occurring. If they are used in a pro-active way – for example monitoring CCTV around the station as well as selling tickets – then they can quickly react to the situation by calling the police or alerting emergency services. However, it must be noted that this is a reactive role, rather than direct intervention or prevention.

5.17 South Eastern Trains have recently announced reductions in ticket office opening times. They emphasised to the Committee that a permanent presence would be maintained at all stations that previously had a permanent presence. SET have stated that resources will be redirected towards frontline staff, with a more visible presence, namely station assistants, Railway Enforcement Officers and revenue protection officers. Additionally, 39 new posts are to be created. Currently, these proposals are subject to approval by the Department for Transport who have defered the decision until Govia, the new franchisee, takes over in April.

5.18 Certainly, these initiatives go some way to ensuring staff have a more pro-active role in tackling crime on the railways. The Committee is concerned however, that the staffing presence may be for a shorter time, particularly during the evening. Given that many stations are considered to be understaffed anyway, this is a key concern. As Rail Enforcement Officers (REOs) will be operating at stations and on trains, there is no guarantee that stations will have a permanent presence. The Committee therefore gives its conditional support to these initiatives, if they are approved, but emphasises that any reduction in the numbers of hours that stations are staffed is unacceptable.

5.19 It would be helpful for station posts to be ring fenced, as distinct from staff travelling the network, to ensure that a station staff presence is maintained as far as possible. Southwark have suggested that the role of ticket office staff should

be broadened to include station supervision, and this is another idea that should be given consideration.

5.20   To reiterate TfL Rail's point, customer service is the priority for passengers in the daytime, but security is the key concern at night. One way this could be addressed is through better co-ordination of police and railway staff, so that the two complement each other and passenger needs are managed in a more holistic manner. This would go some way to attempting to ensure that stations are permanently staffed, which is the ideal.

5.21   The Committee accepts that it is unrealistic to expect every station to be staffed throughout opening hours. However, we would like to see more imaginative deployment of staff, moving away from ticket offices and towards platforms and certainly no reduction in current staffing levels. The deployment and engagement of staff as Special Constables by some TOCs is an innovative step.

5.22   The Committee understands the staffing implications of installing ticket gates, but does not accept that ways cannot be found to deal with this issue, by redeploying ticket office staff. Key to improving stations that cannot be staffed is the upgrading of station infrastructure and this must now be taken forward by the Department for Transport and the Train Operating Companies.

Recommendations

The Committee calls upon the Department for Transport to revise the criteria of the Secure Stations scheme to:
- **To apply more stringent criteria and give greater weighting to passenger safety and experience, for example the provision of real time information and ticket gates.**
- **To apply greater weighting to the active and constructive engagement with local authorities by TOCs through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, where tangible results can be demonstrated.**
- **To apply less emphasis on the corporate and administrative criteria**
- **To adopt London specific criteria that adequately reflect the unique needs of the London rail network, such as the existence of tube interchanges and a cross-modal ticketing structure (Oyster Cards)**

The Committee urges the Department for Transport to procure longer franchises with a compulsion on train operating companies to:
- **Apply and secure the revised Secure Stations accreditation within a timeframe, with penalties in place for failure to do so, and a refranchising process for consistently poor performing TOCs.**

The Committee acknowledges that staffing increases are expensive for TOCs. However, we would like to see more imaginative and innovative deployment of staff on stations to ensure a visible presence on both concourse and platform.

Appendix A – List of Evidence submitted to the Committee

The Committee would like to thank all those organisations and individuals who took the time to contact the Committee and submit their evidence to the scrutiny.

If you wish to obtain a copy of any of the evidence listed please get touch with Bonnie Jones via e-mail at bonnie.jones@london.gov.uk

Written Submissions

TfL Rail
TfL Transport Policing and Enforcement Directive
Metropolitan Police
British Transport Police
LB Lewisham
LB Hammersmith and Fulham
LB Kensington and Chelsea
LB Enfield
LB Newham
LB Southwark
LB Hackney
LB Brent
LB Lambeth

First Great Western Link
South Eastern Trains
Southern Trains
Thameslink Rail
Chiltern Trains
GNER
TSSA
Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Meetings

The following individuals gave evidence to the Transport Committee on the 1st December 2005:

Steve Burton – TfL TPED
Trevor Hill – TfL Rail
Ian Johnson – Chief Contable, British Transport Police
Peter Zieminski – Chief Superintendent, Head of Strategic Development, BTP
David Scott – Head of Crime and Safety, South Eastern Trains
Mike Gibson – Public Affairs Manager, South Eastern Trains

Appendix B – Orders and Translations

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Appendix C: Principles of scrutiny

The powers of the London Assembly include power to investigate and report on decisions and actions of the Mayor, or on matters relating to the principal purposes of the Greater London Authority, and on any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Londoners. In the conduct of scrutiny and investigation the Assembly abides by a number of principles.

Scrutinies:

- aim to recommend action to achieve improvements;

- are conducted with objectivity and independence;

- examine all aspects of the Mayor's strategies;

- consult widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost;

- are conducted in a constructive and positive manner; and

- are conducted with an awareness of the need to spend taxpayers money wisely and well.

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