

The Network Rail (Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) Improvements) Order
Proof of Evidence of Huddersfield Unlimited and the Huddersfield Civic Society

I appear today on behalf of Huddersfield Unlimited and Huddersfield Civic Society Transport and Connectivity Working Group, which I will refer to from now on as the Huddersfield Transport Group.

During my oral evidence today I will concentrate on the following main points of concern for the Huddersfield Transport Group in relation to The Network Rail (Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) Improvements) Order, which I will refer to from now as the Order.

First, the lack of connectivity to the west side of Huddersfield Station and the impact on the viability of any future redevelopment of St George's Warehouse and surrounding underused land;

Second, the lack of provision of adequate walking routes from all sides of Huddersfield train station;

Third, the need to take account of emerging Kirklees Council plans for the area surrounding and including the station.

Fourth, the lack of adequate car parking provision under the plans set out in the Order.

Lastly, the inadequate lighting for the pedestrian walkway under the bridge on John William Street.

Our simple argument in relation to all of these points is that if the Inspector were to allow the Order to proceed as presented by Network Rail, then the essential connectivity benefits that the Transpennine Rail Upgrade is intended to bring to residents and businesses in Huddersfield will not be delivered.

Taking each of those points in turn, I shall first set out in more detail our concerns relating to the connectivity between the train station and the rest of our town.

It is important to state that in raising our concerns we would invite the Inspector to consider Document NR15A: Huddersfield Station, Design and Access Statement and to NR13: Planning Drawing, Huddersfield Station – Existing and Proposed Platforms – Plan and Section.

Section 5.0 of the Design and Access Statement covers the proposals and it noted that the figure on page 29 shows a 'Future Car Park' to the western side of the station (in the area that is currently used for public parking). However, there appears to be no plans to provide any linkage into and out of the station on this side.

The Huddersfield Transport Group considers that the current plans for the Huddersfield Station should include pedestrian access to and from this area of land and linking to Fitzwilliam Street, allowing better connectivity for areas to the north west of the station.

This provides a once in a generation opportunity to provide access to the station from Fitzwilliam Street for cyclists as well as pedestrians, and the provision of good quality and safe cycle parking and storage on the western side of the station.

We would also note that Kirklees Council has prepared The Huddersfield Blueprint, which is a ten-year vision to create a thriving, modern-day Town Centre. The plan focuses on six key areas, one of

which is the Station Gateway. Relevant extracts from The Huddersfield Blueprint are appended to this document (reference Supp03-HG-2).

The aspirations of Kirklees Council for the Station Gateway include plans for St George's Warehouse and surrounding underused land and the provision of a new Station Square on the existing public car park accessed from Fitzwilliam Street. There is the opportunity given the enhanced pedestrian provision within the station to link St George's Warehouse and surrounding underused land with the rest of the town.

St George's Warehouse is a Grade 2 Listed Victorian brick faced five storey building with a floor footprint of some 50,000 sq. ft (4,600 sq. m) and therefore represents a significant development opportunity. However, whilst the building is visible from both A62 Castlegate (the Ring Road) and from the Town Centre, it is seen as being on 'the wrong side of the tracks' due to the lack of convenient linkages to and from the Town Centre and into the station itself.

There have been several attempts over the years to redevelop the warehouse including with assistance from public bodies and whilst its large floor footprint brings physical and financial challenges, its lack of connectivity with the Town Centre is seen as a significant contributory factor in the failure so far to carry out a comprehensive redevelopment of the building.

The Huddersfield Transport Group consider that the plans for Huddersfield Station should allow for the implementation of this element of The Huddersfield Blueprint by providing access to and from the western side and allowing through pedestrian movements across the station. These linkages will enhance the viability of a comprehensive redevelopment of St George's Warehouse and surrounding underused land.

At its meeting of Cabinet on 22nd June 2021, Kirklees Council resolved to carry out public consultation and make revised applications to West Yorkshire Combined Authority under the Transforming Cities Fund and the West Yorkshire Transport Fund for complementary transport infrastructure schemes in the Station Gateway and at Trinity Street. This resolution was made taking into account the plans for Huddersfield Station and therefore HU and HCS considers that the plans need to have regard for these wider aspirations and must ensure they can be delivered.

I turn now to the two other elements of our objection.

First, the Huddersfield Transport Group believes that additional car parking should be provided as an essential element of the works at Huddersfield Station to cater for current and increasing passenger demand.

We are concerned that Huddersfield Station currently has a car park of some 28 spaces with 4 accessible spaces available which is operated by APCOA on behalf of TransPennine Express. The car park is located on the northern end of the station frontage access from St George's Square.

Inadequate parking is currently a major barrier to rail travel from Huddersfield yet there are no plans to increase the amount of parking in the proposals for Huddersfield Station.

Consideration has been given to Document NR4: Statement of Aims which states at para. 2.1.1 that *"The purpose of the Scheme is to increase capacity, improve journey times, and improve the reliability and resilience of passenger train services that serve both the Scheme Route and the Transpennine route between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York."* Work to Huddersfield Station is part of the Scheme.

NR4 also notes that, following discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail, it is anticipated, and to be planned for, that rail passenger numbers and demand will return to pre COVID-19 levels, and continue their original growth trajectory once the crisis of the pandemic is passed. It therefore follows that passenger numbers and subsequently demand for car parking will grow.

Furthermore, we note the evidence from the Rail Delivery Group's 'Vision for Stations' (relevant extracts contained in document reference Supp03-HG-3), as set out in our Statement of Case which in our opinion clearly demonstrates the importance of the provision of adequate and well-designed car parking at stations.

Lastly, the Huddersfield Transport Group believes that the environment below John William Bridge should be improved as part of the Huddersfield Station improvement scheme.

The John William Street Bridge is the first span of the Huddersfield Viaduct and is to be altered as an integral part of the overall station improvements as the platforms are to be extended over the bridge requiring it to be widened.

The environment for pedestrians on John William Street under this span of the viaduct is currently uninviting particularly during the hours of darkness and results in severance of parts of the Town Centre. This situation will worsen with the widening of the bridge.

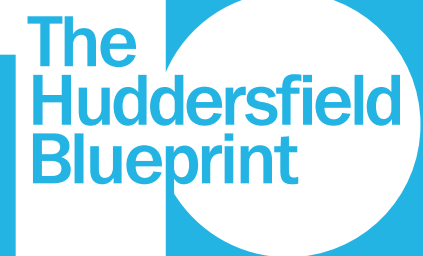
NR15A: Huddersfield Station, Design and Access Statement states that the design & access statement is also applicable to the bridge but it does not appear to consider the environment below the bridge and no improvements are proposed.

Huddersfield Transport Group would encourage the inspector to consider the improvement works carried out on Neville Street in Leeds under the railway station (the 'Dark Arches') where enhanced lighting and cladding has been provided and require that similar works are added into the scope of the Order.

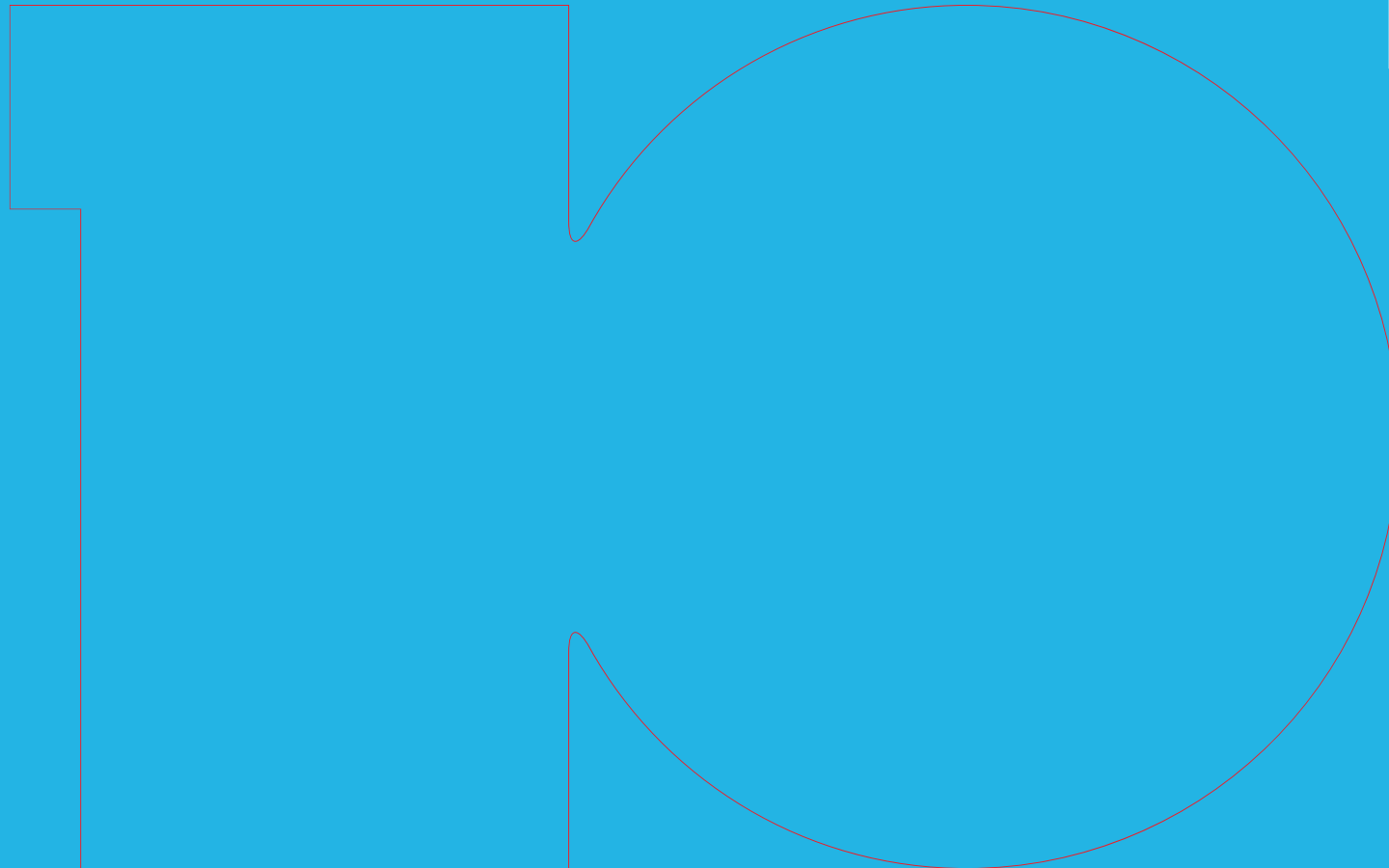
In closing, I would like to acknowledge the efforts that have been made to date by Network Rail to discuss the concerns set out in our Statement of Case. We are also encouraged by their willingness to work with us to seek alternative funding for the projects set out above.

We also understand that Network Rail is working within a tightly defined statutory framework and that had Kirklees Council brought forward fully developed, costed and consented plans by now for development of its active travel plans, including Fitzwilliam Street, St George's Warehouse and surrounding underused land and John William Street, then Network Rail would have been obliged to include these within the scope of the Order.

Nevertheless, we believe it is important that the Inspector amends their current Order to ensure that these vital and complementary projects can be carried out during the lifetime of the TWAO projects, namely before 2027.



A decade of ambition



#HuddersfieldBlueprint



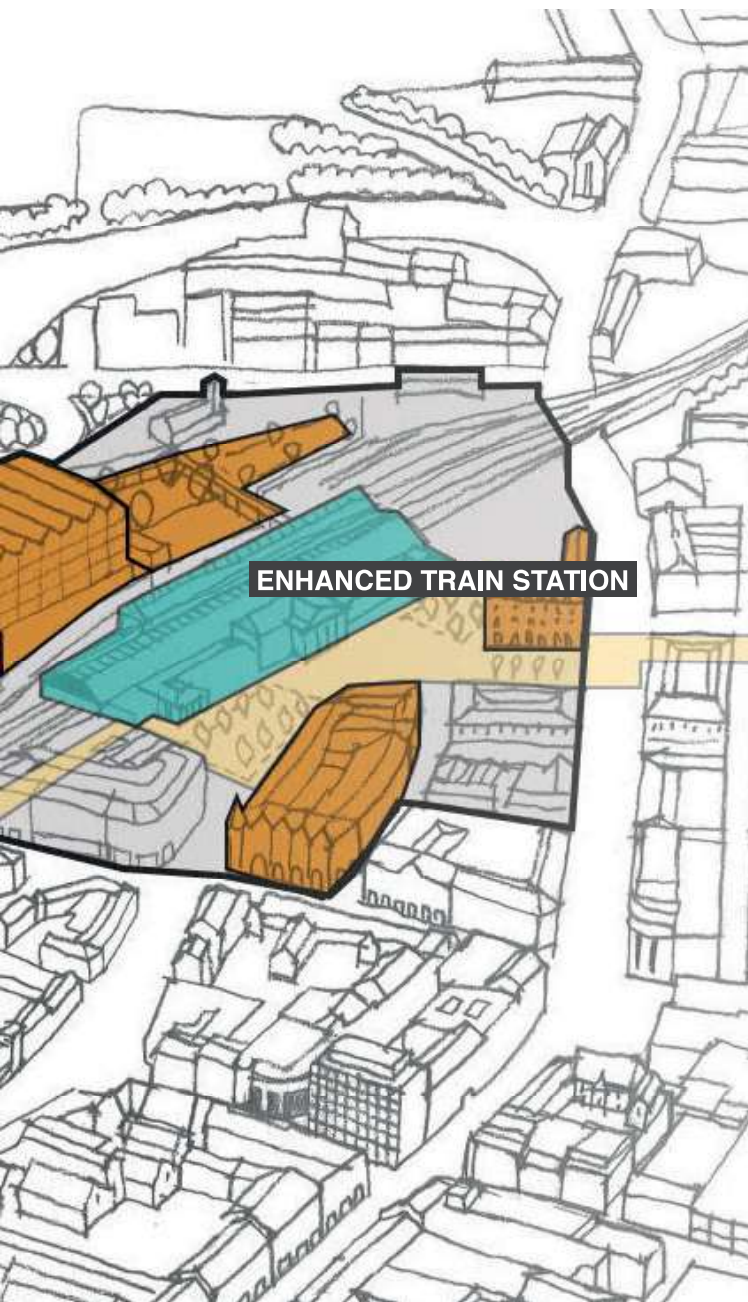
Station Gateway: welcome to Huddersfield

Huddersfield Railway Station is already a striking arrival place for visitors.

However, the future Trans-Pennine Route rail upgrade provides an opportunity to look at improving facilities in the station. This may include new cafés, restaurants and retail to improve the experience for passengers.

As a key entrance into Huddersfield, we will look to better connect it to the rest of the town centre. On leaving the station, the areas to both the east and west will open up to the town and the first impression will be of high-quality space and architecture.



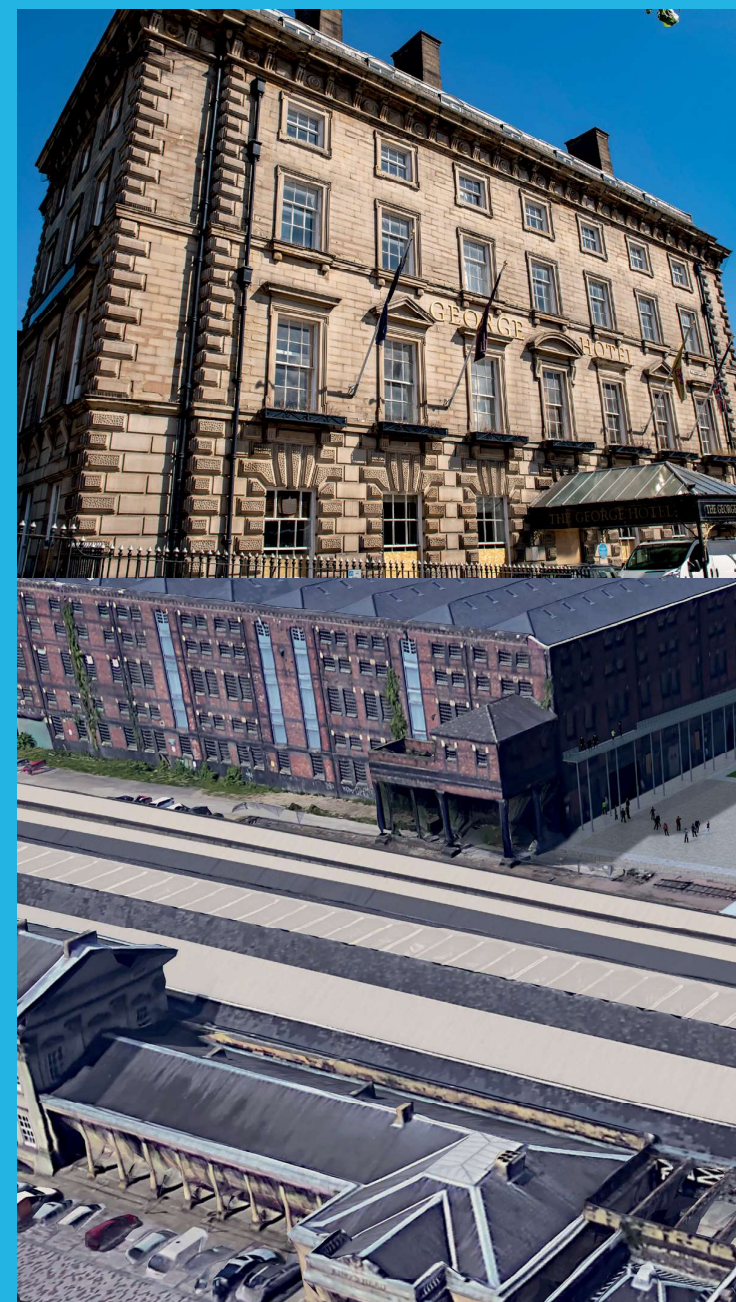
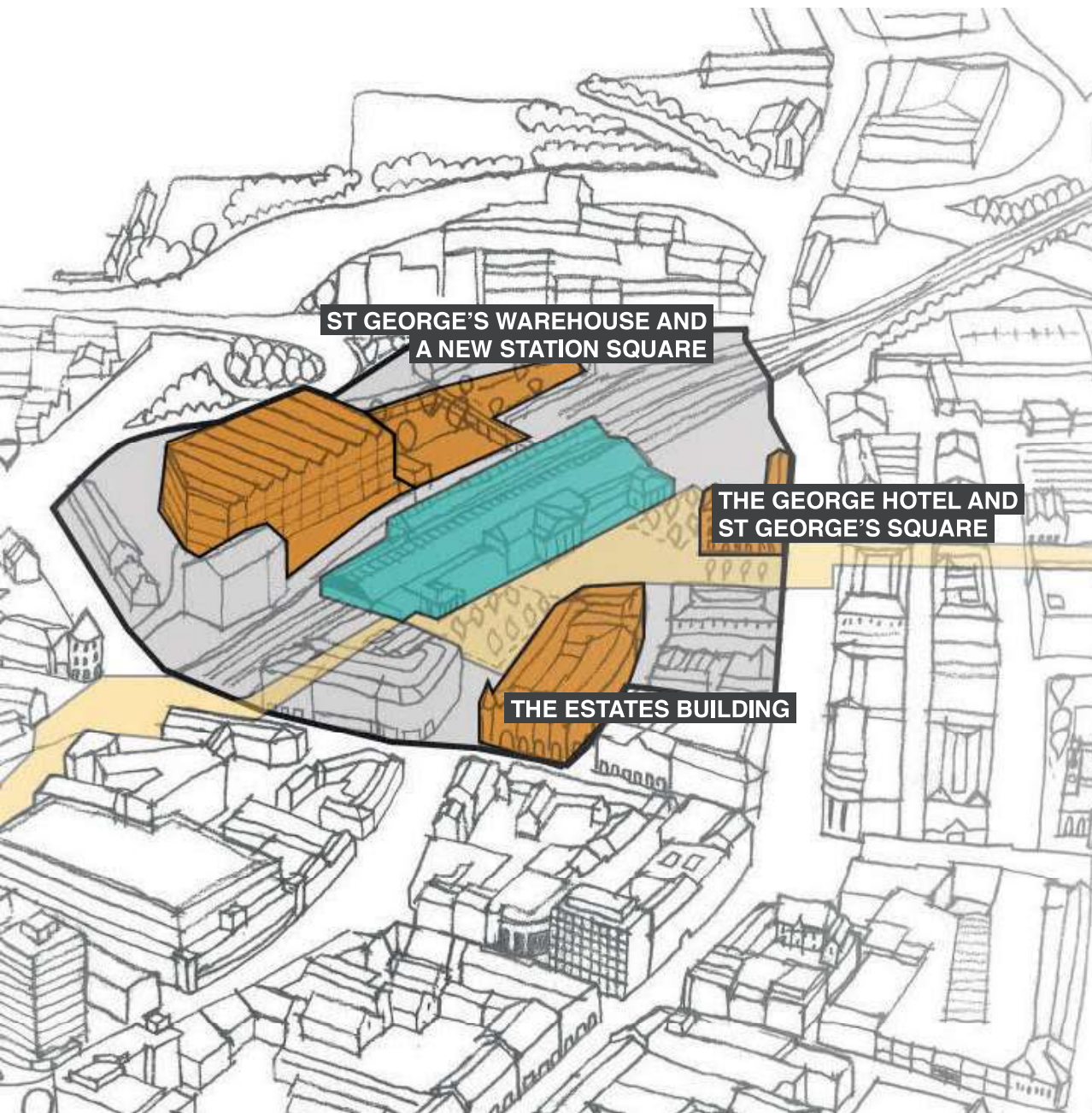


KEY PROJECTS

Enhanced train station

The Trans-Pennine upgrade will provide opportunities to enhance the station with good quality waiting areas and a choice of eating, drinking and convenience shopping. Importantly, it is an opportunity to connect St George's Warehouse with the station and the rest of the town.







KEY PROJECTS

St George's Warehouse and a new Station Square

A new Station Square will provide an arrival space, drop off zone and new entrance to Huddersfield Train Station.

The lower levels of St George's Warehouse can be converted into a car park, with the upper floors converted into office space, apartments or a hotel. This will make better use of this site and connect the warehouse to the town.

The Estates Buildings

The Estates Buildings will be brought back into use. The ground floor is suitable for retail, while the upper floors could be converted into apartments.

The George Hotel and St George's Square

Kirklees Council is committed to seeing the George Hotel brought back into use. The council will continue to work with the owner to make sure the building reopens and plays a big role in the vision set out in The Huddersfield Blueprint.

St George's Square will be better used to support more events which will increase visitors into the town centre.

Vision for Stations

Nine principles for the future of Britain's stations



The Principles

The principles – Nine P's – described over the following pages are designed to underpin the overall *Vision for Stations* and illustrate how it will be achieved.

P1: Customer focussed

There has been significant investment in stations but our *Vision* aims to build on this.

P2: Intelligent use of technology

The latest information and ticketing technologies are fully utilised to support and enhance the experience at stations.

P3: Seamless journey experience

Ensure stations are fully integrated with rail services and onward travel modes (including walk, cycle, bus, car, tube, transit, metro, air, ferry or ship).

P4: Reflect local needs and opportunities

Tailor stations to reflect local needs and characteristics while still being part of a recognisable national network.

P5: Safe and secure environment

Ensure all stations and their localities are places where users can feel safe and secure.

P6: Entrepreneurial spirit

View stations as potential catalysts for innovation and entrepreneurship, and thereby enhancing the railway and local economies.

P7: Flexible and long-term stewardship

Plan and operate stations for the long term, with built in flexibility to adapt to change.

P8: Shared industry know-how

Share knowledge and experience of what works best at stations in meeting passengers' diverse needs in the most efficient and effective manner.

P9: Optimised network

Realise the full value of every station while minimising inefficiencies through investment and operation based on objective and informed decision making.

P3

Seamless journey experience

Ensure stations are fully integrated with rail services and onward travel modes (including walk, cycle, bus, car, tube, transit, metro, air, ferry or ship)

P3: Seamless journey experience

Integrating stations into the wider transport network is essential for easy-to-make journeys. This means a continual process of improving the connectivity of journeys to and from our stations, as well as the last (and first) few metres within the station itself. The ongoing nature of this task reflects the changes that can be expected around our stations to:

- walking facilities and wayfinding information
- cycle routes, cycle parking and cycle hire facilities
- bus services
- tram, tube and metro services
- roads and car parking facilities
- car clubs
- taxis and private hire operations.

When considering the overall journey there is a need to be supportive of local policies and ambitions. This can mean prioritising active and sustainable modes (walking, cycling, public transport). We recognise the value in making it easier and more pleasant for customers to walk to and from stations: this is good for the customer as it encourages active travel; good for the station as it reduces pressure on transport facilities such as car parking; and good for communities as it improves air quality.

Station information is equally important. Elements to consider include:

- wayfinding signs to and from the station
- clear signage to assist with interchanging between modes, for example for car parking, cycle parking, and bus stops
- local area maps at the station
- real time and timetable information for buses
- information available online and on customers' smart phones to help with travel to and from the station.

Partnerships are key to the delivery of an integrated end-to-end journey. It will be important for station operators to engage positively with relevant local authorities and transport operators, and where appropriate with local destinations such as tourist attractions. These partnerships will be valuable for integrated information, connected services, and multi-modal tickets or smart cards.

Our overall approach will be to take a holistic approach to the end-to-end journey with the station taking a central role, but within the context of the wider journey.

P4

Reflect local needs and opportunities

Tailor stations to reflect local needs and characteristics while still being part of a recognisable national network

P4: Reflect local needs and opportunities

Stations should not sit in isolation from their local communities and should reflect their needs and aspirations. Communities should have a real stake in their stations. This may mean, for example, using local suppliers and retailers where they can offer a high quality service which also adds local character and supports local enterprises.

Stations should be seen as community assets and not just part of the railway infrastructure.

In order to understand and involve local communities, a variety of organisations need to be engaged, such as:

- local planning and transport authorities
- local economic partnerships (LEPs)
- tourist boards
- local tourist attractions
- town centre managers
- schools, colleges
- major employers
- community groups
- local voluntary organisations
- local passenger groups.

Working with relevant interested parties each stations' role in the community can develop and evolve as a positive facilitator for change. In some cases this might involve a Community Rail Partnership or Adopt-a-Station scheme, or it might include jointly funded development projects. At many stations there is the opportunity to utilise spare capacity to provide valuable community services such as a grocery shop, library, drop-in health centre, nursery, bank, or Post Office.

In general, stations should be good neighbours who care about their local communities.

To achieve this, railway station staff should be further empowered. These are the people on the front line that know the local communities best and understand the limitations and potential of their stations. Station employees will also be encouraged to participate in and support community projects.

Nevertheless, while accommodating local needs, every station should remain a recognisable part of a national network, with national standards and shared best practice.

P6

Entrepreneurial spirit

View stations as potential catalysts for innovation and entrepreneurship, and thereby enhancing the railway and local economies

P6: Entrepreneurial spirit

Stations should be seen as focal points for forward thinking and the application of innovations. This will be achieved by engendering a positive, “can-do” spirit in which entrepreneurs flourish. It means being prepared to try different ideas and if necessary, learn from the experience in order to develop approaches which can be rolled out on a larger scale.

This mindset is important because of the rapidly changing and developing future and the imperative to avoid being stuck in the past. Some of the uncertainties and opportunities are around:

- shopping patterns and expectations for an attractive retail environment as an antidote to the virtual world of internet shopping;
- the trend for more transient ‘pop-up’ retail outlets which are ideal for smaller community-based or start-up retailers;
- changes in retail logistics, with stations being increasingly used as places customers can pick up deliveries;
- changes in payment methods with a move away from cash and physical tickets to the use of cards and chips of varying types, including the use of contactless bank cards, mobile phones, and smart cards;
- the availability and use of data such as that from people using their smart phones for on-line searching and purchasing;
- intelligent CCTV;
- wearable technology and technology implants.

We therefore need to maintain an up-to-date awareness of emerging trends.

To support this, contractual mechanisms which facilitate partnership working must be established. This includes developing relationships with private sector developers which can benefit station users, local communities and the private developer.

This change in mindset cannot happen overnight, so pilot projects across a range of circumstances to develop our approach and demonstrate its value would be an appropriate way forward in the short term.

Within the context of a rapidly changing world we believe it is worth celebrating the heritage inherent in many of our stations, and recognising that this can provide a catalyst to innovative thinking. The opportunity here is to combine the best of the historic character of a station with the benefits which the latest technology can afford.



Leeds station's re-purposed Western concourse