Transport Committee

Oral evidence: Security on the railway, HC 1166
Monday 7 April 2014

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Members present: Mrs Louise Ellman (Chair); Sarah Champion; Jim Fitzpatrick; Jason McCartney; Mr Adrian Sanders, Chloe Smith; Graham Stringer; Martin Vickers

Questions 1-79

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Dr Richard Batley,** Principal Research Fellow and Director of Research and Innovation, Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, **Dr Andrew Newton**, Senior Research Fellow, Applied Criminology Centre, University of Huddersfield, and **Andy McCullough**, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Railway Children, gave evidence.

Chair: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Could we have your name and organisation, please?

Dr Batley: I am Richard Batley, director of research at the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds.

Dr Newton: I am Andrew Newton, a senior research fellow at the Applied Criminology Centre, University of Huddersfield.

Andy McCullough: I am Andy McCullough from the charity Railway Children, which is an international NGO that works with children alone and at risk on the streets in East Africa, India and the UK.

Q1 Chair: Thank you very much. I would like to start by asking you all about the work done on safer stations and safer parking schemes. Do you think these schemes are sufficiently flexible to be capable of being implemented at all stations, or are any stations precluded from having these schemes?

Dr Batley: To make just a few comments about secure stations and safer parking, both schemes have very clear guidelines for accreditation. There are two key issues: first, crime at the station or car park must be below a certain threshold; secondly, the station or car park must pass an assessment, which determines whether the measures in place are commensurate with the level of risk.

The consequence of these guidelines is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The guidelines give stations and car parks considerable flexibility to accommodate the diverse features that we see on the ground. In practical terms, accreditation is about the station's or car park's management culture and practices towards personal security. It is not specifically about the presence of CCTV, for example.

Given those qualifications, I will make just a couple of comments about secure stations and safer parking. First, on secure stations, about half the stations in Great Britain now have accreditation and it covers a wide range of station types. On your question about flexibility, they cover all the stations in the A to F classification and a wide range of locational features, such as different levels of crime in the surrounding area. About 400 stations in Great Britain have car parks accredited under safer parking. In general terms, the take-up of safer parking within the industry has been more fragmented than for secure stations, but in principle both schemes give the industry a lot of flexibility.

Q2 Chair: You say that your research finds that safer parking is ineffective unless it is combined with a wide approach to security. Could you explain a bit more about that?

Dr Batley: I need to elaborate on that and explain where that finding comes from. As part of this research, which was funded by RSSB, we developed a statistical crime model. The model was focused on a representative sample of stations—322 stations—around Great Britain over a five-year period, and it estimated the influence of secure stations and safer parking on crime rates while controlling for any other drivers of crime. Using this model, we found no significant crime-reducing effect of safer parking in isolation, but we did find a crime-reducing effect when safer parking was combined with secure stations.

Q3 Chair: Do you know what the reason for that might be?

Dr Batley: It is very difficult to know exactly what the reasons might be. On the one hand, it was a data-driven finding and our data on safer parking were less comprehensive than our data on secure stations, so it may simply be a statistical anomaly. On the other hand, the idea that safer parking in combination with secure stations generates a package effect is a very plausible finding.

Q4 Chair: Would that be because people are aware there are such schemes? You also say in your research that there is very low public awareness of the schemes, so why would the package lead people to feel safer?

Dr Batley: It is very difficult for me to give you a definitive answer. A range of issues may be in play. It is clear that if a station can secure the whole environment, both the station and the car park, you have a much more robust site in terms of the crime threat. If you have a secure station but your provisions in terms of the car park are not good, there could be an aspect of deflection of crime to different parts of the site.

Q5 Chair: You say that more security means that people will want to travel more on rail. Is that to do with their perceptions of security, or the actual figures? How many members of the public would know the figures? Is it perceptions and how they feel?

Dr Batley: There is a whole set of complicated issues. Awareness of the scheme is very low in both passengers and staff members in the industry. In terms of your more substantive point about what issues are at play, there are a few different effects. On the one hand, if you reduce crime, you eliminate the social costs of it; by eliminating crimes, there is a social benefit. More generally, if you reduce crime, there is an improvement in perceptions on the part of rail passengers.

Q6 Chair: I am trying to get to the bottom of why this works in terms of people wanting to travel more. Is it because people feel safer, even though they might not actually be safer?

Dr Batley: I am trying to separate two effects. When we talk about the costs of crime, we are talking about costing the incidences of crime.

Q7 Chair: But what I am trying to work out is how people see it. You say that one of your findings was that secure stations and safer parking can have a significant effect on rail demand, and it means more people will travel by rail. That cannot be because those schemes are in place, if you are saying there is very low public perception of the schemes. Is it that for some reason people feel safer, or they have read a report somewhere that says it is safer?

Dr Batley: There is a very poor perception of the scheme per se, so typically people do not know whether their local station has accreditation. That said, I think people have a very good sense of the level of crime risk, which is a slightly more general issue. We did some work as part of this study to look at the impact of secure stations and safer parking accreditation on railway patronage. It was a statistical analysis of the same representative sample of 322 stations over the same five-year period. We looked at the impacts of accreditation on railway demand while controlling for any other drivers of railway demand. In this case, there was a significant finding in terms of the effect of accreditation on railway patronage. That was a robust statistical result on a very large dataset. What we are suggesting is that people do have a sense of the level of crime threat and it does influence their travel behaviour. That said, there is very low awareness of these specific accreditation schemes.

Q8 Chair: Dr Newton, your study has been to do with pick-pocketing.

Dr Newton: That is correct.

Q9 Chair: What kind of information do you have about where pick-pocketing takes place? How do you identify it? Is it through CCTV or reports of pick-pocketing? Often, people do not know they have been pick-pocketed until much later.

Dr Newton: The work I have been doing has been with the British Transport police and Transport for London. We have developed a probabilistic model of when and where pick-pocketing occurs, based on the very start of the journey to the end of it. You segment the journey by each station stop you go through, run it for all 5,063 pick-pocketing offences

that have happened on the Transport for London network and use that to assign likely risk, based on that probability estimate and the algorithm we have developed.

Q10 Chair: How have you used the information you have got? Are you working with the British Transport police or other organisations?

Dr Newton: We are working with the British Transport police and Transport for London. We have used the model for two things. The first thing they asked me to do was test the model to see if it was accurate or not. We did that by looking at known pick-pocketing offences. I took the model and compared it with where we knew pick-pocketing happened at stations; also, based on data from the Metropolitan police and City of London police, we looked at what happened near stations. We found quite a strong correlation between where our model predicted theft happening below ground, as it were, and known pick-pocketing from BTP. The second thing we did with our model was to test whether there were particular variables or factors at stations that increase or reduce the risk of pick-pocketing. We tested that in the model, as it was.

Q11 Jim Fitzpatrick: Chair, to follow up your question, I think the answers from both gentlemen are relatively similar. People know they are in a safe environment, whether or not it says "Accredited Station"—whether they can see it or not—and they feel secure when they see lots of CCTV around generally, because they think that means they are being protected and watched. Does the evidence you have looked at—the hot spots identified by virtue of the number of journeys, and how you have rationalised where the hot spots are—correlate with CCTV, or is that too simplistic?

Dr Newton: Is that in terms of looking at where the pick-pocketing is as opposed to whether CCTV reassures people, which are two very different issues?

Q12 Jim Fitzpatrick: Sorry. I am probably asking more whether the pick-pockets know where the CCTV is and therefore use the blind spots.

Dr Newton: It is difficult because we do not know whether the risk is at the station, on the platform or in the carriage itself, but what we can do is identify a number of factors that when they come together in combination increase or reduce the risk. They are things that are known in the literature: people being close together; lack of user knowledge of the system; ease of passenger distraction; accessibility in and outside the station; and also staffing and informal guardianship. Those are some of the factors.

It is important to remember that those are not in isolation; the model looks at them in combination, so you have to have all the factors to change the situation. There are stations with more waiting rooms and with more lifts that are the main access to the platforms, so people are congested. In conjunction with accessibility, there are stations that have more roads and paths in the vicinity, stations that have nearby thefts, and those that are classified by Transport for London as tourist stations. They would use those stations. Where there were more staff and shops present there was a reduction. This informs it. But it is all the factors in combination, not one in isolation. I could not get hold of the CCTV data. They told me there were issues with it and I could not get hold of it, so I do not know what the impact of CCTV was on that, unfortunately.

Q13 Jim Fitzpatrick: Did this lead the transport authorities to be more ready to put up warning signs about the presence of pick-pockets in the areas where you might have identified there was a prevalence?

Dr Newton: As far as we have got with this, officers now have a tool they can use. They can log on and identify hot routes. It changes by time of day as well. There are hot spots at peak travel times, and that changes. There are areas around stations that also have elevated risk at those peak travel times. Anecdotally, from a previous study, the danger of putting up warning signs is that you can flag up to offenders when somebody is checking their wallet, so they can identify which pocket the wallet is in. Anecdotally, that might not be the most appropriate solution.

Q14 Chair: Does having visible staff around make a difference to perceptions of safety, actual safety and actual crime levels?

Dr Newton: The evidence I found is that in combination with all the other factors I mentioned, visible staff have an impact in reducing levels of pick-pocketing, but it is in combination with all the other factors I just mentioned, not in isolation.

Q15 Chair: But it does have an effect in reducing pick-pocketing.

Dr Newton: From the evidence I have modelled, yes.

Q16 Chair: Do pick-pockets engage in other crimes as well?

Dr Newton: Unfortunately, we do not have offender data, so I do not know whether pick-pockets get involved in other types of crime. The evidence suggests that they offend both on the network and near the network, which has implications for how you police inside a station and near a station, and the importance of joined-up operations.

Q17 Chair: Is the pick-pocketing on the station itself, or does it extend to outside and the surrounding areas?

Dr Newton: It extends to outside and the surrounding areas from the evidence I have found, and it is elevated at peak travel times.

Q18 Chair: It is in the surrounding areas as well as on the station.

Dr Newton: Yes.

Q19 Chair: Are you aware of any specific police activities as a result of your research?

Dr Newton: Not that I am aware of. They have this tool and the next step is to evaluate to what extent officers have used it. It is now on an online portal, so officers can log on before their shift and look at where the crime patterns are. I do not know the extent to which they are using this.

Q20 Jason McCartney: Dr Newton, as a fellow Huddersfield person, obviously there must be a strong correlation with congestion on the railways. The East Coast train was very packed this morning coming down, with people leaving their bags away from where they were sitting. Have you been able to pick up any evidence of that? In particular, have you been on the TransPennine Express from Huddersfield to Manchester or Huddersfield to Leeds, where you are so tightly packed, particularly with the ale trail, that you would not feel anyone going into your pocket?

Dr Newton: I have looked only at the data for Transport for London and London Underground.

Q21 Jason McCartney: I was wondering whether you had done a local study separate from what you have told us about today. Have you done any local studies through the university?

Dr Newton: Not on the railway. My only follow-up to your question would be on the issue of how far offenders are willing to travel. Within a confined system like the underground, they may be more prepared to, because of the greater frequency of stops. What we do not know is how far they would be prepared to travel to find opportunities to offend. As you extend the length of the journey, that will take them further away from their known environment—what they are familiar with.

Q22 Jason McCartney: How much would you say this is a scourge of the capital rather than having branched out into the regions?

Dr Newton: I would not say it was a scourge of the capital. Where you have congestion and the opportunities that I found in my study, which could be within railway stations throughout the country, you would have potential opportunities for pick-pocketing.

Q23 Mr Sanders: Have you done any research into whether people carry more luggage today than they did 20 years ago, and where that luggage is stacked in rolling stock that is over 20 years old?

Dr Newton: I have not looked at the nature of the offence, so I have not looked at the type of property that has been stolen, whether it is from the person or from baggage that is not on the person. I could not answer your question.

Q24 Mr Sanders: It seems to be an issue. Certainly, on First Great Western, people are warned at Paddington more than once by tannoy and leaflets to keep an eye on their luggage until the train has left the station. That suggests to me there must be awareness that that is an offence that has increased. Do you have any stats on that?

Dr Newton: I do not have the data; I have not looked at it.

Q25 Sarah Champion: Mr McCullough, do you think that vulnerable children are particularly drawn to railways, or is that just what your charity focuses on?

Andy McCullough: May I start by saying that, funnily enough, nobody picks my pockets on the train? I also congratulate the panel for including young people as a vulnerable group within concourses and railway places.

There are a number of reasons why young people might end up at rail stations, particularly the main concourses. They are the arteries of the country; they are probably the quickest way to get from A to B. Sometimes ticket checks are not consistent across different places. I think it is just another place where young people can be lost. For this inquiry I have come here with the view that young people can be victims of crime, so I feel a bit of an odd one out. Not only do I look the odd one out; I probably am the odd one out.

We are looking into why young people turn up and we were surprised. We sent out an FOI to BTP a number of months ago to see how many young people who were picked up on what I think is called a CYP1—the form they use when they pick up a young person on a concourse for any reason—were subsequently found to be missing, or whether they had not got a ticket and there was an inquiry afterwards. We got the response from BTP that it would be too costly to look through all of those because a lot of them were manual written forms. However, we were approached by BTP Euston, who gave me the following statistics: over a period of time between April 2012 and August 2012, 90 young people in Euston, 185 in King's Cross, 115 in Paddington, 239 in Liverpool Street and 140 in Euston underground, after being picked up for having no ticket or for hanging around, were found to be missing or not where they should be—they had run away from somewhere. I would not say it is a London phenomenon; it just happens that BTP were proactive in trying to look at this issue.

Q26 Sarah Champion: In your experience, when they find a young person who is missing, what happens next?
Andy McCullough: I do not know whether you have ever visited any BTP offices, but, unlike their colleagues in the Met and others, they are small; a lot is going on in a very small space. I am sorry. Could you repeat that question?

Q27 Sarah Champion: If the British Transport police have identified someone as clearly a missing child what do they do next? What is their statutory requirement, or their best practice?
Andy McCullough: What often happens is that they get a phone call from the train manager for Virgin to say, "We've got a young person on the train without a ticket. We're not sure what's going on." That is usually just before they end up at the station, and they are literally then handed over to BTP. We seem to be giving name checks, but, to Virgin's credit, they do not want to pursue a criminal charge because a person does not have a ticket; they want to find out what is going on. The police take them back. It is estimated that over a year BTP Euston spend over 500 hours either trying to sort out the return of a young person to where they have come from—sometimes if they have come from Liverpool, Manchester or further afield it is not as easy as it sounds, because they would not be able to send them unaccompanied—or dealing with the local authority, which sometimes takes even longer. You have territorial boundaries where one local authority will say, "It's a child from another area. Why should we deal with them?" The Children Act 1989 says that if they are in your area you deal with them, but that is easier said than done. They get caught up in trying to get a young person home. Having talked to the police—I spent a lot of time with Euston BTP—they say that, in the end, it is quicker to drive that young person back home.

Q28 Sarah Champion: At that point would they be liaising with the other safeguarding agencies, or would they literally drop them at the doorstep?

Andy McCullough: I can talk only about BTP, which is the only one I have had contact with. They say they feel quite isolated. They have not got many connections with their surrounding local authority. If you look at police outside BTP, they have their own specialist child protection and they have links with their local authorities as part of the safeguarding board. I always find it quite strange that the BTP people I have been in contact with do not seem to have those connections. I hope to be able to speak a bit later about the project we are doing with Euston. Some of that is about making sure those relationships exist, because we are quite clear that BTP are not social workers and they are not a hospital service. They end up doing that, and it often detracts them from other things on which they are being measured by Government—anything from cable theft to terrorism. We are hoping that, by working with them and with local authorities, we can reduce those 500 hours so they can spend it on other things.

Q29 Sarah Champion: In an ideal world—looking at the model you are talking about—when the child gets off the train and is identified, what would be the ideal model? What should happen?

Andy McCullough: What we will launch at the end of this month is a piece of work we are doing with a local children's charity called New Horizon, which is a youth work organisation based just outside Euston station. What is going to happen is that, upon the police finding that a child is coming down, we have an agreement with the TOC—with Virgin—that they will inform in advance to give the police a little more time, so that they can then contact the local project. Railway Children are providing some extra money, so they can do some shifts on Sunday. They will then go down and work with that young person, sometimes alongside the police if there are particular child protection issues, to come up with a resolution, whether that be to negotiate with the local authority that the child stays overnight until they can be returned the next morning, and then set up some work to be done with the child and their carer, or whatever brings a resolution. That would leave the police to get on with other things. They would report back afterwards to say, "This is what happened at the end of it."

We are hoping over that period of time to carry out a number of pieces of research to look at the social return on investment—the outcome, or what happens to the child or young person. Did it reduce their risk? Did it stop their running away cycle? There is also the fiscal return. If the police are spending that amount of time, a lot of money is being tied up. If we can look at some way of reducing that, hopefully we will look to the TOCs and others to say, "It might be worth your putting a few quid in here to save money at the other end," because it blocks loads of systems and costs lots of money.

Q30 Chair: We are told that 70% of runaway children are not reported missing. That sounds a very shocking statistic. Is that a firm figure?

Andy McCullough: Absolutely. It is estimated that 100,000 children under the age of 16 run away every year. In my work with ACPO and various other organisations, such as CEOP—Child Exploitation Online Protection—they are very clear that that is a massive underestimation, because 70% of children are not even reported missing. Children in care

are three times more likely to run away than their counterparts. A quarter of those 100,000 talk about being forced out of home and no longer wanted. These are big numbers. A relatively small number end up in stations, because security is quite high; you have to go through a number of ticket barriers. But, if you want to, you can become invisible and quite canny about how you travel through concourses. It is no mystery why King's Cross and Manchester Piccadilly have red light areas just outside the train stations. You have transient populations, mostly of men, and that is where people will gather when they know there are vulnerable people and people passing through. It is why pick-pockets and others are there as well—to exploit people who have a number of things on their mind and are not concentrating.

Q31 Chair: Much of the information we have is about London. You said earlier that it was not only in London. You have now mentioned Manchester. What do we know about where this phenomenon takes place outside London?

Andy McCullough: We do not know a lot. I sent off an FOI and got a reply back from BTP saying they could not do it. One of the things where we would like some support and to work with BTP is to see whether it is just a London phenomenon. I do not think it is. I do not believe in Dick Whittington and his cat, and kids all coming to London because the streets are paved with gold. There will be similar problems but on a different scale and proportion depending on where you are from. To look at scope and scale would be a good piece of work. How many children are in other stations? Not only are we looking to pilot this and reduce those hours, but we need to look at other areas, because if one police officer decided he was fed up spending this amount of time on children and young people and felt he did not get a good result at the end of it, who knows what we would find if we went to some of the other stations? FOI has not worked. Maybe you could do a piece of work there.

Q32 Mr Sanders: There are other organisations involved with runaway children, for example the Children's Society. In the past they have pointed to the fact that tourist resorts, including in my own constituency, are often a magnet for runaway children. Have you done any work in that sphere?

Andy McCullough: I have worked for 27 years on and around the issue of children going missing. I grew up in care myself and made it my business to be missing most of the time. From my own experience and my work with other projects, I believe that a lot of the areas that previously were not tourist destinations now are. Look at Manchester, Liverpool and other places in the north—the north is just past Watford Gap, by the way.

Jason McCartney: Most of us are from the north.

Andy McCullough: We are the northern contingent.

Chloe Smith: There are some from the east and south-west as well.

Andy McCullough: We will give everybody a shout on that one.

Mr Sanders: I represent a constituency further away from London than some northern constituencies.

Andy McCullough: Anywhere there is an opportunity to become lost, or feel there might be opportunities, young people will go.

Q33 Mr Sanders: Have any studies ever been done on why they find seaside resorts particularly attractive? It is not an issue just in my constituency.

Andy McCullough: Over the years, I have not seen anything that would lead me to believe that they are a particular target. It is interesting to hear about CCTV. CCTV has changed the geography of where young people run. If you want to go missing, you want to avoid CCTV; you do not want to walk through Manchester city centre, where you will be filmed 167 times from various angles. I think it has squeezed young people into other areas where populations are quite transient. Having grown up in Cornwall myself, I know there are really busy times, and quite often times when tumbleweed rolls across the road. Young people and others know that it is easy to get lost in Brighton and other areas like that. People see a child and do not question why they are there and what they are doing; they are quite desensitised to transient populations.

Q34 Chair: In relation to stations, what particular steps do you think could be taken by the police, the Government or other agencies to deal with vulnerable situations for runaways? Could you perhaps tell us something about that vulnerability?

Q35 Jim Fitzpatrick: On the back of that, Mr McCullough, you mentioned the initiative with BTP at Euston. Are there other initiatives in different parts of the country where negotiation is going on for organisations like yours to take on the social worker dimension? As you describe, in terms of cost-benefit analysis, it is better for the police to do what they are supposed to be doing, rather than acting as social workers, care workers or whatever. That could be better delegated to people who have a passion for it, an understanding of it and can empathise more with the kids. Is the Euston project the only one, or are there lots of them around the country but that are just not on people's radar?

Andy McCullough: Over the last few years TOCs and BTP have got better and better at engaging with the voluntary sector. Some great work with the Samaritans was done with Network Rail and others in reducing suicides, so things are beginning to change. The TOCs and others have been working with Missing People to advertise on concourses when a child or vulnerable adult goes missing, but as far as I know, this is the first attempt to do a direct intervention and take over where the police have started the work, which is why we are going to pilot it. We are hoping to present the evidence in October. If we can prove a reduction in risk, and in time and money spent on this group, hopefully we might be able to look at other places and say, "Are you interested in doing a similar thing?" but at this moment I do not know of any other.

Q36 Chair: Later in this inquiry we will be talking to the British Transport police and the Transport Minister. Are there any specific issues you would like us to raise with them, or things you think they could do?

Andy McCullough: I have three very brief things: one for BTP, one for BTPA and one for the Minister. I start with the head honcho: the Minister. We would like the Government to consider as part of the tendering process for Network Rail and other TOCs that they include a regard to safeguard vulnerable children, so that when people put in bids they are

asked what they are doing to contribute to safeguarding this particular group. Train stations are strange things. They are private property that the public walk on, but both the police and others still have a duty of care. In this case I am here to represent children. That is one of the things. I will forward these to you as well.

As for BTPA, for me it would be about including child protection as one of their targets and as a priority, much like how, over the years, through guidance from ACPO and work with CEOP and the Home Office, child protection has become very high within the police arenas. The third one would be that BTP—with their 1,440 police staff, 353 PCSOs and 228 special police; I do not know what a special police person is—look at training their recruits in creating safe spaces for children and young people in and around concourses to meet a duty of care.

Q37 Chair: Could you tell us very briefly about the key dangers young people are in? Is it gangs who are organising at stations?
Andy McCullough: I do not think we know enough at the moment. We know that some of the sexual exploitation taking place on concourses is gang-related and quite organised in some areas, but until we begin to look at some numbers and look at this—we are just beginning this journey to see what makes children vulnerable and why they are going through these places. It is hoped that over the six months we will get a better picture, and hopefully we may be invited back to report to you.

Q38 Chair: What can happen to the children we are talking about in relation to people hanging around stations?
Andy McCullough: They can be targeted by paedophiles and others who want to exploit children and young people—organise pick-pocketing and stuff like that. The biggest crime is that we miss them and do not even look for them. Much like the 70% who are not reported, we become part of that cycle. Nobody even stops you to say, "Are you okay? Where are you going? Why haven't you got a ticket?" To commend Virgin and others we are beginning to work with, they are not looking at the criminal offence of not having a ticket; they are thinking about what is going on with that child. That has to be commended.

Q39 Jason McCartney: Mr McCullough, this is really interesting. I have had a spate of young people being robbed in daylight of the high-value items they have these days—the latest iPods, phones and things like that. A lot of this criminal activity could be happening anywhere, couldn't it? It could be in our town centres, village centres, on the buses, or on the way home from school, because it is much easier to have a high-value item than it was. You are probably a lot younger than me. I cannot remember the highest value item I had when I was younger—a copy of *Whizzer and Chips*, or something like that. Do you agree that these thefts, unfortunately, are happening anywhere young people congregate, not just on the railway?
Andy McCullough: I am 46, by the way.

Jason McCartney: So am I. We're the same age. You have aged a lot better than I have.

Andy McCullough: Rock and roll keeps you young.

I do not know whether there is any evidence—it would be interesting—about the age categories of people who are being pick-pocketed. My experience, particularly around train stations, is that young people probably have more crime done to them than commit crimes, particularly pick-pocketing and being mugged for any money they have on them. That has happened to my own children and others I know.

This is not the normal type of inquiry I come along to; I usually come to the Education Select Committee and other stuff like that, so it is really good that you are beginning to think about this. They are our future passengers. They will set the culture of these stations, as much as the police, SSP and all the franchises on the concourses, so we need to look at them. Through this piece of work, hopefully we will find out what happens to them during this journey and whether we can intervene sooner before they arrive in London having come from Glasgow. They end up in a place and they do not know where they are. If you are under 16, you cannot sign on and get any money; you have to rely either on your own resources—some of this might be survival crime—or you become reliant on adults and people around you, and that is not always safe.

Q40 Jason McCartney: To come back briefly to Dr Batley and Dr Newton, having coming down on East Coast this morning, I saw how some people behave irrationally when on the train. One chap took a call on his mobile and left his high-value laptop for half an hour—he left it plugged in, charging. Just because they are on a train some people seem to lose rationality about looking after their high-value items. Maybe this is just when we head up north to Yorkshire, and people would not dream of doing that if they were commuting to London every day.

Chair: Was there anything in your research that shows that?

Dr Newton: I can only think back to the research literature that I have read. One of the factors about travelling, be it on the railway or other, is that you can be easily distracted. It might be the pressures of your journey. You might be travelling with children; you might be late; you might be rushing to get there. That kind of environment can make you say, "Why did I do that?" It is one of a number of factors, but travelling can mean that people are rushed and do not take as much care as they sometimes would.

Jason McCartney: They are charging away from where they were sitting, because a lot of the power points on East Coast do not work. People go into other carriages and say, "Can I leave this?" This morning people were plugging in their items and charging them where they were not sitting.

Q41 Chair: Dr Batley and Dr Newton, have you any specific recommendations you would like to make either to British Transport police, the transport Minister or anyone else we will be seeing in this inquiry?

Dr Batley: Maybe I could make just one point in closing, which may be a point to DfT and ATOC. We have talked about a range of issues, and the solution to a lot of them is investment in better personal security at railway stations. In the case of our study, which focused on secure stations and safer parking, we found clear evidence that these schemes reduce crime, and that reduced crime yields benefit to rail users and encourages greater patronage of the railways.

Q42 Chair: So you want more of these schemes to be funded.

Dr Batley: We recommended that DfT and ATOC should take account of these findings when looking at issuing appraisal guidance. The Department and ATOC issue appraisal guidance in relation to improving the quality of railway stations generally, and investment in things like—

Q43 Chair: You would like them to be more active in promoting the schemes. Is that what you are saying?

Dr Batley: We have given them the apparatus to build the business case for investment in personal skills.

Q44 Chair: Are you saying you would like them to be more active in supporting these schemes?

Dr Batley: We have given them the tools to justify building business cases.

Q45 Chair: Dr Newton, is there anything you want to add to that in terms of what you would like the Minister or British Transport police to do?

Dr Newton: There are two things I would question or recommend. First, it is quite clear that there are things happening within stations and near stations for which different people have responsibility: you have BTP, station managers and then you have local police. On the extent to which these are joined up in terms of knowledge of different offenders and vulnerable people, I would be interested to see what they are going to do so that can happen more effectively.

The second thing applies particularly to London, but it might happen in other ways. In an era where it looks like we are going to have extended wi-fi coverage on the underground, fewer ticket offices and extended opening hours, what have they done to look at the impact of that on crime, particularly with extended wi-fi and people having their mobiles out?

Q46 Chair: What would your research lead you to want to happen?

Dr Newton: In terms of research, we need to know more about exactly where the risk is within the station and what would be the impact.

Q47 Chair: No, in terms of the work you have already done, what would that lead you to request? Are you saying you would like more staff to be around, or not removed?

Dr Newton: The staffing and guardianship issue and informal surveillance seems to be quite important as one of a number of factors in reducing pick-pocketing. I would suggest they need to take that into account quite strongly in the changes that are going to be happening on the underground.

Chair: Thank you all very much.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Mike Hewitson**, Head of Passenger Issues, Passenger Focus, and **Charles Horton**, Managing Director, Southeastern, and Policing and Security group member, Rail Delivery Group, gave evidence.

Chair: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Could I have your name and organisation, please?

Mike Hewitson: I am Mike Hewitson, head of passenger issues at Passenger Focus.

Charles Horton: I am Charles Horton, managing director of Southeastern. I am also a member of the Rail Delivery Group policing and security sub-group.

Q48 Chair: Some commentators have questioned the value of British Transport police as a specialist organisation. What are your views on that? What do you think British Transport police bring to this situation that would not be there without them?

Mike Hewitson: In the National Rail Passenger Survey we asked questions about awareness of BTP and how people rated their effectiveness. There was quite a high level of awareness: 79% of passengers had heard of the transport police, which is a good level of awareness for any organisation, and satisfaction in terms of "Excellent" and "Good" was about 65%. That is the view from passengers; they do notice them and think they are doing a reasonable job.

Charles Horton: From an industry perspective, we highly value the fact that we have a specialist police force for the railway. We believe that their expertise, knowledge and understanding of our businesses makes them particularly effective at dealing with the particular crime that can affect the railways. For us, dealing with one national force rather than 43 Home Office forces is a much easier and simpler proposition. To work with that specialist force, which has an understanding of our businesses, and set priorities that are in the best interests of passengers, is much easier than it would be if we were dealing with a multitude of national forces.

Q49 Chair: If they were not there, do you think their expertise could be undertaken by all the other forces? Would it work?

Charles Horton: I think that would be difficult. Although there is a mutual aid arrangement with Home Office forces, and they give valuable support to the British Transport police, any Home Office police officer is naturally going to attend an incident on the railway far less frequently than a British Transport police officer. Similarly, British Transport police officers have a level of training and expertise in railway matters that means they are particularly effective at dealing with them. I think it would be very difficult to replicate that knowledge and expertise in those numerous Home Office forces.

Mike Hewitson: It works best when the transport police objectives are aligned with passengers' priorities. We know that public order and antisocial behaviour is a big issue for passengers, so tackling that as one of the objectives is useful. Visibility of staff is a big issue. Aligning more officers in the evening through to the early morning is important.

That has an impact. Something that is not security driven at all is delays and disruptions. The impact of the transport police in clearing incidents quickly leads to less disruption, which leads to happier passengers. Where there are fatalities on the railway, the expertise that the transport police can bring, particularly in identifying what perhaps is suspicious and what is not, and reopening the railway more quickly, means much less impact in terms of delays and disruption. That aspect certainly would not be dealt with as quickly if it was Home Office police.

Q50 Chair: I want to ask you about the safer stations scheme and how it is working. Why aren't more stations part of that scheme? Why can't all stations be in it?
Charles Horton: Since 2005, there has been a big increase in the number of stations accredited under the secure stations scheme. We have moved from about 148 in 2005 to 1,346 now, which is a fairly substantial increase. My company and many others see this as a good scheme that brings benefits, and we have progressive programmes in place to accredit more stations. Given the benefits we are deriving from it and the progress we are making, I think it is good evidence of the industry's commitment to improving passenger safety and security, and perceptions of passenger security and safety, through the secure stations scheme. As to whether more stations are accredited, I guess they will be, because we all have schemes. I have plans in my company to accredit more stations, but there may be stations where it is particularly difficult to give accreditation—for example, because of crime in the surrounding area. There is specific guidance in the secure stations scheme which recognises that fact and provides advice to operators who find themselves in that situation.

Q51 Chair: Is there a design problem in a large number of stations that makes it difficult?
Charles Horton: For some stations it is easier to get accreditation than for others. For example, if there are areas on stations where there are lots of corridors, or blanked-off areas where it is easy for people to hide, that makes it particularly difficult; areas that are very remote might make it more difficult. There is not a specific issue that means it is impossible to accredit any particular station, but it might take a lot of money, time and energy to accredit one station compared with another.

Q52 Chair: Mr Hewitson, what information does Passenger Focus have about how people see safety? Is it to do with stations being designated safer stations, or other factors?
Mike Hewitson: The prime factor, from a passenger perspective, is the presence of uniformed staff, whether it is a member of railway staff or the transport police. That tends to have the biggest impact on perception. We like secure stations. It is a focus for activity; it is a reason for getting together with third parties; it is a catalyst for all the things that need to be done, various investments in CCTV and such, but the main thing that drives perception is the presence of staff.

Q53 Sarah Champion: A previous witness from Railway Children put forward the suggestion that within rail franchises we should have something about safeguarding

vulnerable people, and also vulnerable young people. Could both of you comment on your thoughts on that?

Charles Horton: It is not our area of expertise, clearly. We would need to learn how to do that, and to do it well, but all of us are willing to be good citizens as well. For example, my company is working with a charity called City Safe Havens where people who come on to stations and feel vulnerable and scared can get some support and help. You have heard what Virgin Trains are doing. There are other initiatives that I am aware of across the country where we are prepared to be good citizens and work enthusiastically with other parties to do this.

Whether a specific requirement in franchise agreements would be effective, I do not know. I do not know enough about what it would mean in terms of additional resources or requirements to be placed upon us, but anything can be priced and costed. Therefore, it would be for the Department to judge whether that is good value for the taxpayer's money.

Mike Hewitson: In the new round of franchises, community engagement—engaging with your passengers in the community in which you work—seems to be coming through a bit more strongly, so there is certainly scope to build it into that. It is a very interesting idea, and certainly one worth considering.

Q54 Chloe Smith: I would like to broaden the discussion to crime against property as well as crime against the person. Could you convey any data you have about the cost of vandalism or other damage, however you think it best to categorise it, to rail property, whether that be the station, the carriage or anything else you have?

Charles Horton: I admit I do not have those figures to hand, so if you are particularly interested we could see what we can pull together from our existing information. Criminal damage and vandalism is clearly an issue for the railway, graffiti in particular, and all of us have regimes in place to tackle those issues—for example, clearing graffiti off trains, replacing scratched windows and the like. A big factor in people feeling safe and secure travelling on the railway is that the stations and trains look clean and well cared for and there is not graffiti and vandalism, because it all adds to the general perception of it being a secure and controlled environment.

Q55 Chloe Smith: If you had a chance to come back with any detail, I would be fascinated to see if there was a historical point when or if any pattern of behaviour changed with the perception of public or private ownership. We can argue about whether the assets are or are not public or private, but I wonder whether that would crop up in your figures, if you had them.

Charles Horton: I suspect societal issues are far bigger than whether the criminal or the person perpetrating the damage has any thought about who owns the asset. I think it is very much more a societal issue.

Q56 Chloe Smith: Indeed. Can I put a second question that relates to a matter that has been more in the public eye? I understand that this Committee, admittedly before I joined it, took a long look at cable theft and the impact it has not only on getting something looking neat and tidy but getting it operational and functional. Can you tell us a bit more about your work there?

Charles Horton: There is a big piece of work going on within the industry with the British Transport police and with the support of this Committee and politicians generally to try to tackle the issue. I think four factors can explain the improved situation with cable theft from the railway. The first is that there has been effective policing, with improved intelligence about the criminal gangs involved and the risk locations for cable theft. Secondly, Network Rail have done a lot of work to harden the target, to use a bit of jargon, and make sure cable is kept away and put into secure compounds, where possible. There are also things like troughing, where possible; it is glued down to stop people ripping off the lid and stealing the cable. Thirdly, there have been more visible patrols by Network Rail staff, police staff and others, which again provide a deterrent to those engaged in this sort of activity. Finally, very importantly, the changes in the legislation relating to scrap metal dealers and the taking away of the ready market for stolen copper have been enormously helpful in cutting off a ready source for people to get some proceeds from their crime. We think those four factors explain the change and the big improvement.

Q57 Chloe Smith: Is there a fifth factor in the price of the commodity—the value of the commodity?

Charles Horton: Yes. If you are looking to secure a return for something that is relatively easy to do, or has been in the past, it is still valuable, but when the price of any raw material goes up it may bring into the market other people to do it.

Q58 Chloe Smith: In the data that you have, there are four good factors as to why there is a change. Are the figures still declining? Could you make any prediction?

Charles Horton: We have seen a steady improvement over the last two or three years in cable theft.

Q59 Martin Vickers: There has been a very considerable reduction in the number of offences reported through BTP over the last 10 years and a considerable rise in staffing levels. Is there a direct link?

Charles Horton: Where we see improvements in crime security outcomes there is, first, a good partnership between ourselves and the police in terms of good targeting and understanding of passengers' priorities, and, secondly, investment in things like CCTV, both on stations and trains, and the secure stations accreditation scheme. There has been a strong push in many parts of the industry to bring additional complementary policing resources to bear to support the British Transport police. For example, a number of companies have railway security-accredited staff who have powers in addition to those of normal train operating company staff. They provide additional support particularly in dealing with crime and low-level antisocial behaviour. They are rail enforcement officers in my company, and rail neighbourhood officers in the South West Trains area. These people add to that picture.

The other factor is about managing and securing the railway network, making sure it looks good, and that crime, graffiti and vandalism are cleared up and dealt with quickly, because the whole business of making the environment look and feel cared for has a big bearing on people's perceptions of security. I would not say there is a direct correlation to staffing; I think it is part of the mix that has helped this improving situation.

Mike Hewitson: I agree. Staffing is important not so much in terms of the detection of crime but the perception and fear of crime. It has a much bigger impact on that. Every time we have asked passengers about police objectives and such, in various research or just through general correspondence, there is a difficult balance between intelligence-led policing to target the problem and being seen, which I suspect is no different from Home Office policing. There is a difference in the sense of security that comes from walking around in a uniform, which is perhaps not the best way to catch criminals. There has to be a balance, and, in typical passenger fashion, of course we want both. Whether or not there is a direct correlation with success is difficult.

Q60 Martin Vickers: You speak about visibility and the public's perception of safety and so on. Clearly, that is very important in terms of their safety on trains, stations and so on. What about the work BTP do in protecting lineside assets and so on, which I presume is more intelligence-led? Have more resources been put into that? The split between notifiable offences—has that been in all categories of crime, or have there been differences in safety issues as regards passengers or assets?
Mike Hewitson: I am afraid I do not know the figures.

Charles Horton: The story is that BTP working with us have managed to drive down crime across the board in—from memory—most categories. There has been a general improvement. That is a question you could put to them, but my memory of the data is that in all crime categories we have seen an improvement.

Mike Hewitson: We have seen an across-the-board increase in satisfaction with personal security at stations and on trains over the last five or six years. It has gone up considerably. Some train companies, in particular Merseyrail and London Overground, have seen some quite remarkable increases—10 to 15 percentage points—in satisfaction, so it is being noticed.

Q61 Jason McCartney: Gentlemen, how much correlation do you think there is with the consumption of alcohol? Most rail operators have tried at various stages to bring in alcohol bans. Do you think there is a correlation? Is it time for a blanket ban as per the London underground?
Mike Hewitson: When you ask passengers, the answer rather depends on the type of passenger. There is not always a lot of support for a blanket ban. People say that one of the joys of rail travel is to sit back on a journey to Edinburgh, have a drink and admire the scenery. There is no real difference between that and, say, having a drink up to Peterborough, but they say, "Well, you don't need one because it's only 50 minutes." You get a rather mixed answer according to the type of journey you are making. We have always been rather uncomfortable with a blanket ban, because it stops law-abiding people doing law-abiding things in a perfectly non-threatening way, to target the minority who abuse it. If you are going to target that minority by walking up and down the train policing it, you could police the particular issue rather than stop everybody else doing it. Where there is a problem at a particular time at night, or on certain trains, or for football matches, concerts, festivals and so on, put in a ban to address the specific problem, but there is a little reluctance about having a generic ban across everything. It is slightly different on the London underground, or even Merseyrail. When you are on a very short-hop network

perhaps there is a different argument, but when you are sitting on a train commuting for 50 minutes or an hour each day, it is not uncommon to see people sitting back to have a drink and causing no problem whatsoever.

Q62 Jason McCartney: How effective do you think specific targeted bans would be? In my area of Huddersfield we have the phenomenon of the ale trail, which I have observed myself. In the middle of the afternoon you have 240 ale trailers. At two o'clock on a Saturday afternoon they get off at Marsden or Slaithwaite.
Mike Hewitson: It is a big issue.

Jason McCartney: Absolutely.

Mike Hewitson: You have to differentiate between alcohol on the train and alcohol on the person before they get on the train.

Q63 Jason McCartney: They have cans with them as well.
Mike Hewitson: Yes. Where you have a specific problem, consider a ban, but to ban everything for everybody because of problems in certain places seems at times an extreme reaction. At least try to tackle the specific problems first; if there is a problem on the ale trail, put the ban on those services and stop it happening there.

Q64 Jason McCartney: Mr Horton, I do not know whether you are aware that Northern Rail are not collecting ticket fares, because if people have been having a drink they are a bit more relaxed and it is harder to collect ticket fares. Is this something your group has discussed?
Charles Horton: Sure. The first thing to say is that alcohol-related crime is practised by a very small number of people. Secondly, often the problem is that people have a large amount to drink before they get on the train, and the drinking on the train itself is sometimes not the biggest issue. Thirdly, for our staff it creates another potential cause of conflict when they argue with a customer, who may have had too many to drink, over whether or not they should be coming on the train with a can of lager—that is probably not the brightest situation to put our staff into. As Mike said, putting a blanket ban on people's enjoyment, where they have the opportunity perhaps on the east coast main line to have a glass of wine, a beer or something else on the way home, seems to us to be treating things in the wrong way. Penalising the majority for the irresponsible behaviour of a minority seems to be the wrong way of looking at this particular problem.

As Mike said, the key issue is to crack down on particular antisocial behaviour in specific situations, just as we would deal with any crime or disorder on a particular line of route. I can think of a line of route on my network where we have had a pretty high-profile presence, not particularly to do with an alcohol-related thing but to deal with an antisocial behaviour problem perpetrated by other people. We have done that in conjunction with British Transport police and our own staff to tackle the issue on a targeted basis. I think that is a far better way of doing it than implementing a ban.

Mike Hewitson: One of the successes of the Merseyrail scheme was to prevent people who had had too much from getting on the trains in the first place. Some of the research I

have seen—I recall that it was from RSSB—found that stopping drunken, rowdy people getting on to trains was a higher priority than attacking drinking on the train, so it was prioritised in that sense for passengers themselves. They saw the bigger issue as being drunk people rather than people drinking.

Q65 Jason McCartney: We often hear about passengers being refused access to aircraft. Mr Horton, what guidance and training do you give your staff? Do they routinely refuse passengers who are inebriated the opportunity to travel?

Charles Horton: Clearly, we have to strike a balance between the safety of the customer who may be intoxicated and the wider impact they may have on other passengers. The guidance we give our staff is that, if someone is at a level of intoxication where they are likely to be a danger to themselves and others, we will refuse the ability to travel, but we do that very sparingly, for the reason that the last thing you want to do in these circumstances is strand someone potentially a long way from home, preventing them from travelling back to a place of safety.

We have to rely on our staff to exercise their good judgment in those circumstances. It is not something where I can write down precisely in what circumstances that is used, but my experience from talking to staff is that they exercise that judgment pretty effectively and are pretty good at managing situations without creating additional conflict, which is another thing we don't want to do. There is a world of difference between saying to somebody, "I think you've had a bit too much. Can you just sit down for half an hour, have a coffee and see if you can get yourself into a fit state to travel?" and saying, "Right, I want your can of lager off you." One is likely to meet with one response, and the other a slightly different response.

Q66 Chair: Mr Hewitson, what information do you have on that specific point—for example, on Merseyrail where there is now a ban on people getting on trains if it is considered they are not in a good condition? Have you any information or feedback on that? Do staff have special training to deal with that? Have there been any problems?

Mike Hewitson: There was quite a concerted training programme to start with on how to approach people—conflict avoidance. For the first few months it was dovetailed with a police presence as well, to provide that sense of back-up, but it was also part of publication—a community awareness thing—that these are the new rules. It was not just about enforcement; it was partly about education as well.

Q67 Chair: What is your assessment of that? Is it your assessment that the scheme is working?

Mike Hewitson: We are looking at the passenger satisfaction scores for Merseyrail. I can cut them out and send them to you later. They are going up very well. There are really impressive scores in terms of satisfaction with security at the stations and on the trains. We have certainly seen an increase, whether or not you can tie it to that specific element of the initiative, because there are lots of things coming together on Merseyrail to make people feel safer, but it must have had an impact on it.

Q68 Jim Fitzpatrick: Moving from Mersey trains to football specials, as a West Ham supporter I am not talking to you this morning about Liverpool's result yesterday. On football specials, narrowing it down to a particular problem group, you refer in your written evidence to balancing the needs of football supporters and other passengers and staff. Football hooliganism has not been eliminated, but it has been reduced and driven out of stadia. What is the experience for train operating companies of dealing with football fans? Is it still a big issue, or less of an issue? Is it heavy BTP staff presence that is preventing it from reaching the headlines? How much investment do you have to make to get the trains to operate smoothly and still be in one piece when they arrive at their destination?

Charles Horton: In general on football-related violence, there has been a big societal change in relation to hooligans and the problems of the 1970s compared with today. Football supporters are you and me; they are our kids. They are wives, husbands and partners. We are all football fans at some level, and we all value the fact that we can travel to games on the same trains as everyone else and enjoy the same facilities as everyone else. The time when football specials were in place was at the height of the hooliganism problem, and it was a time particularly when British Rail had some spare rolling stock they could bring to bear to help run those football specials. I think their day has passed. Sometimes we provide special additional trains on top of existing trains, where we expect things to be particularly crowded, but specific football specials, probably their day has passed. There is also some evidence that, in the past, when football specials were run, those who were hellbent on trouble would try to avoid them because they knew they would be heavily policed. They would look for the opportunity to go on other trains, because they knew there would be a lighter police presence on them.

In terms of how football crowds are dealt with at the moment, there is a good partnership between ourselves, the Home Office forces and the British Transport police. There is now very good intelligence as to which trains and which fans are likely to be problematic. Where there is specific intelligence about people who are likely to cause trouble, we bring in additional staff to deal with the issue. British Transport police bring in a lot of additional staff to deal with it, and generally the level of problems created by football-related violence on the railway network has gradually improved and lessened.

Mike Hewitson: I do not have a great deal to add. It is not a particular area we have ever researched. I wonder whether, to some degree, travelling patterns these days—particularly longer distance ones—are determined by the availability of cheaper tickets rather than the time of the kick-off. I think people will chase the cheap tickets, and that tends to spread people out a bit more.

It is not just about football. At Twickenham or Cardiff on rugby days, or on any concert days, a sudden big influx of people who are enjoying the situation is going to create a sense of unease for families or people travelling. At that time, the skill is in the train staff just moving people into another carriage and creating a quieter zone for people. There are things you can do on the day as well, but any big crowds of people can be disconcerting.

Q69 Chair: You mentioned training, Mr Hewitson. Do you think there is enough appropriate training to deal with this?

Mike Hewitson: Training has got a lot better, but that type of response is dependent on having somebody on the train in the first place, so it is the presence of staff and then the training of staff.

Q70 Chair: Who would be responsible for that?
Mike Hewitson: As a rule, the on-train staff would be train company staff. You can have travelling security staff. Good security staff are trained in customer service as well, rather than being just bouncers. There is a lot going into that sort of customer service side. It gets a bit difficult sometimes when trains are really full, but there is certainly an improvement in the customer service end of it.

Q71 Chair: Looking at security generally, is there enough co-operation between Network Rail and the train operating companies to provide appropriate staff and training?
Mike Hewitson: I don't know about the degree of co-operation. I would look back at the increasing satisfaction scores for passengers on trains; that must be because something is going well. Certainly, satisfaction does not go up on its own, so it must be in response to activities. I don't know whether you could tie it back in to Network Rail and train company co-ordination. Charles might have a better idea.

Charles Horton: We have a strong level of co-operation with Network Rail in terms of security on the railway, and there is mutual self-interest in being good with each other in tackling this issue.

Q72 Chair: Does it work?
Charles Horton: Yes.

Q73 Chair: In a practical way?
Charles Horton: It does work in a practical way. If I could give you an example, in our local British Transport police area we have a process of setting local policing targets for every year, which Network Rail and ourselves as train operators come together to do. We review that regularly throughout the year through an account management process. Sixth-monthly, we sit down to discuss how we are going in terms of the year's targets, and we all talk to the British Transport police, Network Rail and others about how we can support each another to achieve improvements in crime and security outcomes for passengers, because it is to all our benefit to work together in that way.

Q74 Chair: Some franchises have conditions in them to implement more safer stations along the line. Is that something you would welcome?
Charles Horton: Yes, absolutely.

Q75 Chair: Mr Hewitson, do you think it would help if that was a requirement?
Mike Hewitson: We welcome the targets that are there. We would quite like more stations to be covered, whether you do individual stations or they are set sometimes according to percentage of footfall, which tends to draw the secure station to the bigger stations. Once

you have taken the big footfall ones, it is a question of moving down and doing some of the other stations as well.

We like them. I think they will have a bigger impact on passengers the more that passengers are aware it is being done. As a passenger, you will see CCTV; you can get a sense that the lighting is brighter. If they have knocked down a few redundant buildings and the sight lines are clearer, you can see that. It is just tackling that mental side of it as well and explaining to people that this station now has a secure categorisation, particularly if it is done in conjunction with the car park, so your journey to and from there is covered as well; and it is even better if it is done in conjunction with the local authority so that the walking routes are brighter and lighter. It does not do a great deal of good if the station is a lovely hub of security and you are then walking through an underpass. The more you can push the environs of the station out for the majority of people's journeys, the better the reaction, but you should always tell people when you are doing things better. It helps to reinforce that perception.

Q76 Chair: Mr Horton, are enough of these initiatives taking place? Does the structure of the rail industry allow this to happen?

Charles Horton: There is no impediment in the structure of the rail industry to improving security. Just coming back to your question about whether we would welcome more secure station accreditation in franchise competitions, the simple answer is that I do not think any train operator would have any difficulty responding to the Department if the Department asked us to do it. The question will be whether the target to deliver more secure stations would be judged as value for the taxpayer, taking the broader view of franchising. As a general principle, we would have no problem with it because, as you have seen, we have made substantial progress in securing secure station accreditation for more than half of the national rail stations already.

Q77 Chair: Mr Hewitson, if I can go back to the point you made about having a holistic look at how the passenger feels, whether in the station, getting on the train or outside the station, is enough being done to look at the whole environment and make the appropriate changes?

Mike Hewitson: When you couple it with station travel plans, it gets better, so that it is much more of a door-to-door focus on how people get from the locality to the station. If you couple security as part of that, you have a better, holistic approach to it all. Without it, there is a danger of just looking at security at the station on its own, which is good; it is okay if you drive—

Q78 Chair: I am trying to get a feel for your assessment of what is actually happening—

Mike Hewitson: Should there be more?

Chair: These are the things that should be happening. To what degree are they happening, and what could help it?

Mike Hewitson: I would like more. I would like more emphasis in franchises on station travel plans as well as more emphasis on secure station accreditation. I think they go hand in hand.

Q79 Chair: Those are the two things you would like to change.

Mike Hewitson: In that franchise specification element, yes, with yet another nod towards staffing as well.

Chair: Are there any other questions? Thank you very much.