

ACCESSING THE RAILWAY

A Study undertaken by TravelWatch East Midlands
in association with Passenger Focus

March 2008



FOREWORD

TravelWatch East Midlands is committed to achieving a better deal for users of public transport, but we are conscious of the need for an efficient transport system to meet the sometimes conflicting needs of all users - cars, freight and public transport.

Congestion of both road and rail systems is getting worse and we therefore welcomed the initiative of the Department for Transport's Innovation Fund backed "6Cs – Congestion Study" into road congestion. Covering the cities and counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, the "6Cs study" has already highlighted the cost of congestion to the Region's economy. We were concerned however, that most public reaction was focusing upon congestion charging and in order to address the bigger picture, organised a conference in October 2007 entitled "Charging or Choice" to highlight the fact that what is needed is not just charging, but a real choice for travellers, with good reliable information to make that choice.

Transport Minister Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP, speaking at the conference confirmed the Government's commitment to encourage, and support financially, initiatives such as the "6Cs project" to find solutions to expected road congestion and went on to praise the work of TravelWatch East Midlands and similar voluntary bodies

TravelWatch East Midlands decided to address one aspect of choice, *the extent to which physical access to the rail system is an inconvenience to passengers, constrains their use of more sustainable ways of getting to the station or ultimately discourages potential passengers from using the train.*

Be they commuters, business or leisure travellers, the convenience and ease with which passengers can get to the rail system is a critical factor on whether they choose to travel by train. To state the obvious, the railway and its stations are where they are. Occasionally, new routes or stations are opened if the substantial cost can be justified, but they are rare (for example the Robin Hood and Ivanhoe lines and new stations at East Midlands Parkway and Corby). Train journeys, therefore, are dependant upon some other form of travel – car, taxi, bus, tram, cycle or on foot – to get to the station.

TravelWatch East Midlands conducted surveys of the facilities at railway stations in the East Midlands and the views of passengers arriving there to catch trains, in order to identify barriers to use which disappoint users and discourage modal shift. This report reviews that work and points to areas of possible improvement.

The work was organised for TravelWatch by Stephen Abbott and funded jointly with Passenger Focus. We are particularly grateful to our member organisations including Campaign for Better Transport, Railfuture, Harborough Rail Users and Kettering Rail Users for undertaking the station surveys, Whyte Young Green consultancy for the excellent analysis, the TravelWatch steering group and of course Stephen for bringing the project together.

Alan Meredith
Chairman
TravelWatch East Midlands

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** The Appendices are contained in a separate document*

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ease of access to the rail system can be a significant influence on whether commuters, business and other passengers choose to travel by rail as an alternative to using less sustainable modes for their journey.

Options for addressing road congestion over the next 20 years, including a possible congestion charge or road pricing, are being explored in the East Midlands through the “6Cs” study. However, if a charge is made, this implies choice, the key to which must be the extent to which public transport is a real alternative to the car, in achieving the “end to end” journey.

TravelWatch East Midlands organised a one-day conference “Charging or Choice” in Leicester on 16 October 2007 at which the issues were exposed and debated. The research described in this report was carried out in support, and a summary was presented at the conference. It aimed to assess the facilities at stations in the East Midlands for passengers transferring to rail from other transport modes, and to seek passenger views on the adequacies or deficiencies of current provision and how these might be addressed.

Passenger surveys were carried out at six stations: Lincoln, Derby, Loughborough, Leicester, Market Harborough and Kettering during July 2007. Survey forms were handed out to departing passengers for completion and return to a Freepost address. A survey was also made of current facilities at the stations.

Our survey found that about 15% of the passengers surveyed travelled less than 1/2 mile to reach the station, while nearly 30% travelled between 1/2 and 2 miles, 2 to 5 miles, and more than 5 miles, respectively. In round figures 50% arrived by car, 25% on foot, 15% by bus, 5% by taxi and 5% by cycle or motorcycle.

At some stations there is insufficient car parking and secure cycle storage at times of peak demand, and facilities in general need improving. Station access for pedestrians, bus and car passengers is often poor and potentially dangerous.

For those passengers expressing willingness to use an alternative mode of travel to the station the bus was the preferred choice – providing services run at suitable times and bus stops are convenient. However, at present the bus-rail interface and provision of information are generally poor.

Lack of confidence in the reliability of connecting services deters some passengers from making inter-connecting journeys by public transport, and rail and bus services need to operate in a joined up manner, irrespective of operator. Station Travel Plans detailing means of access and onward travel would also be helpful.

2. CONCLUSIONS

Ease of access to the rail system can be a significant influence on whether commuters, business and other passengers choose to travel by rail as an alternative to using less sustainable modes for their journey. Our survey showed that:

- Buses have a potentially far greater role to play in accessing the railway, but at present the bus-rail interface and provision of information are poor.
- Station car parking and secure cycle storage need improving, especially where it will encourage park & ride.
- Station access for pedestrians, and bus and car passengers, is often poor and potentially dangerous.
- Rail and bus services need to operate in a joined up manner, with good connections between routes irrespective of operator - and information and help when there are delays.
- Station Travel Plans detailing means of access and onward travel would be a useful development. These would show not only the facilities and travel options, but set targets determined by a robust baseline study, possible linked to an accessibility mapping exercise.

3. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the research were:

1. To assess the current facilities for accessing the railway and interchange from other transport modes (car, bus, tram, taxi, cycle, walking) at selected stations in the East Midlands.
2. To seek passenger views on the adequacies or deficiencies of current provision.

The work was undertaken by volunteers within TravelWatch East Midlands member groups, with the support of Passenger Focus and the cooperation of the train companies.

4. METHODOLOGY AND RESPONSE

Six stations were selected for study: Lincoln, Derby, Loughborough, Leicester, Market Harborough and Kettering. Lincoln was chosen (rather than Grantham or Newark North Gate) so that all stations studied would fall within the new East Midlands Trains franchise. We had hoped to include Nottingham, but this was not possible given the limited number of volunteers available to man the station's multiple entrances. Leicester was substituted in its place.

Permission was obtained from the then station operators to carry out passenger surveys in July 2007 for a full weekday at each location

Passenger surveys

The objective was to hand out 'Getting There' survey forms to departing passengers, those arriving at the station in order to travel onwards by train. This therefore excluded anyone arriving by train or changing trains. Forms were handed out at the station entrances, or if more convenient at the smaller stations (Kettering, Market Harborough, Loughborough) to passengers waiting on the platform.

Passengers were asked to return the completed forms to a Freepost address, although some completed the form while they waited for their train, handing it back to the survey team.

It was planned that surveys should start at 06.30 and be continued until at least midday. Care was taken to ensure that one quarter to one third of the forms was saved for distributing after 09.00.

At the end of the survey period, as a courtesy to station staff, the survey team toured the station platforms and waiting areas to collect any forms discarded as litter.

Table 1 summarises the survey schedule and the numbers of forms distributed and returned.

Table 1. Survey schedule and outcome

Station	Date	Survey period	Forms out	Forms returned	Per cent returned
Lincoln	Tues 10 July	06.30 – 15.00	400	91	22.7
Derby	Wed 12 July	06.40 – 13.15	730	156	21.4
Loughborough	Tues 10 July	06.30 – 18.30	450	108	24.0
Leicester	Mon 9 July	06.30 – 12.45	1000	115	11.5
Market Harborough	Tues 10 July	06.30 – 12.00	400	144	36.0
Kettering	Mon 9 July	06.30 – 12.00	460	87	18.9
Overall			3440	701	20.4

At Lincoln, due to the recent flood damage to the line at Kiveton, the train service to Sheffield was substituted by buses, and the small numbers of passengers using the

replacement buses was included in the study group. The Loughborough survey team continued until later in the day in order to include the significant outbound afternoon flow of t regular travellers.

The overall response of over 20% is very good for a survey of this type, in which the form is completed by the passenger subsequent to its receipt and not in the presence of the surveyor. The noteworthy response rate of 36% at Market Harborough was due in part to a concurrent local passenger campaign, concerning future train services, which had raised awareness.

Station facilities survey

The team undertaking the passenger surveys also assessed the existing facilities at the station, recording these on a 'Survey of Passenger Facilities' form.

5. RESULTS OF THE PASSENGER SURVEY

The passenger survey form (specimen – Appendix 1) asked passengers for details of their journey, including reasons for travel, train time and destination, home postcode, distance travelled to the station and mode used, and information about accompanying passengers, luggage, and disability or special needs.

They were also asked whether or not they would have preferred to have used another mode to reach the station, and if ‘yes’ what changes would be necessary to enable them to do so. Their views were also sought on the costs of car parking and/or cycle storage and its influence on their mode of travel to the station.

Finally, passengers were asked to indicate their age group, gender, and any use of railcards or season tickets. Space was provided at the end of the form for open comments.

About the passengers

Overall:

- 55% of respondents were male and 45% female.
- 72% were aged 25-60, 18% over 60, 9% 16-25 and less than 1% under 16.
- 18% were using railcards, mainly the Senior Railcard, and 29% season tickets.
- 85% were travelling alone, 14% with other adults and 1% with children
- 14% were taking with them heavy or bulky luggage, 2% a folding bicycle and 1% a non-folding bicycle. Only 2 respondents had a pushchair and only 1 was accompanied by a dog.
- Only 4% of respondents declared a disability or special need. In decreasing order these were: mobility, hearing, sight, learning difficulty, wheelchair use and speech impairment.

Forms were not handed out to unaccompanied passengers aged under 16, hence the very low response from this age group. Numbers aged 16-25 may have been understated as the survey took place after universities, colleges and some schools had ended their summer term. The low response from those accompanied by children may be because they were too encumbered already to cope with forms!

Results in some of the above categories for the six stations taken separately showed little variation from the averages shown above and do not justify reporting separately. However, differences were apparent for the age range of passengers, whether accompanied by others, and use of season tickets and railcards, see Table 2.

Table 2. Passenger characteristics.

Station	Age range			With adults	With children	Using railcard	Using season
	16-25	25-60	60 +				
Lincoln	11	49	40	32	0	31	7
Derby	8	69	22	19	2	19	18
Loughborough	11	76	6	4	0	17	33
Leicester	9	68	22	8	2	20	17
Mkt Harborough	5	83	12	10	2	11	45
Kettering	5	85	10	10	1	10	57

All results are percentages of respondents

Noteworthy are the high percentage of respondents at Lincoln aged over 60 and travelling with other adults, and the relatively high use of season tickets at Loughborough, Market Harborough and Kettering. Some passengers from Lincoln were taking advantage of a current ‘over 50s’ offer by Central Trains.

Journey purpose

Figures 1-6 show the purpose of the journeys made from each station

Figure 1 Lincoln

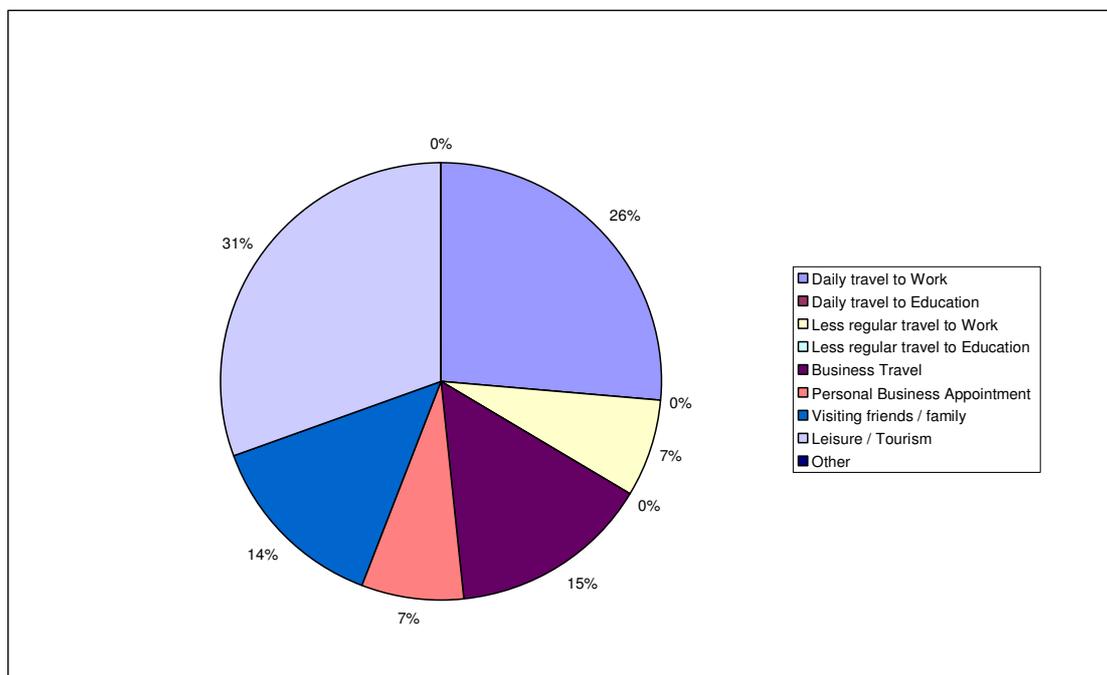


Figure 2 Derby

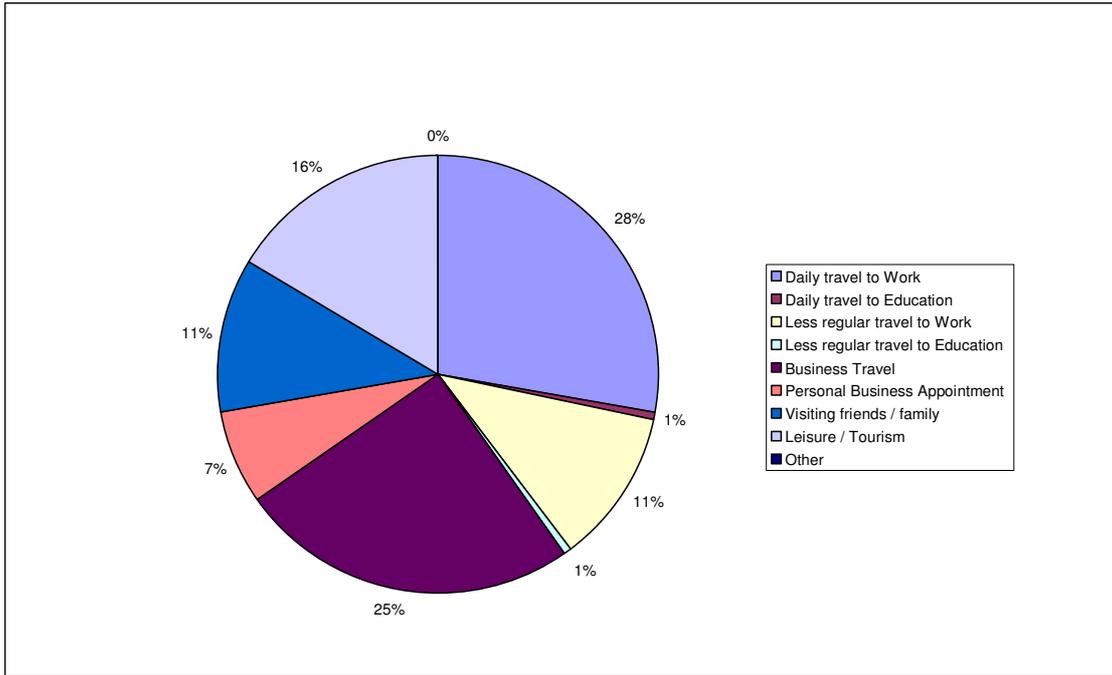


Figure 3 Loughborough

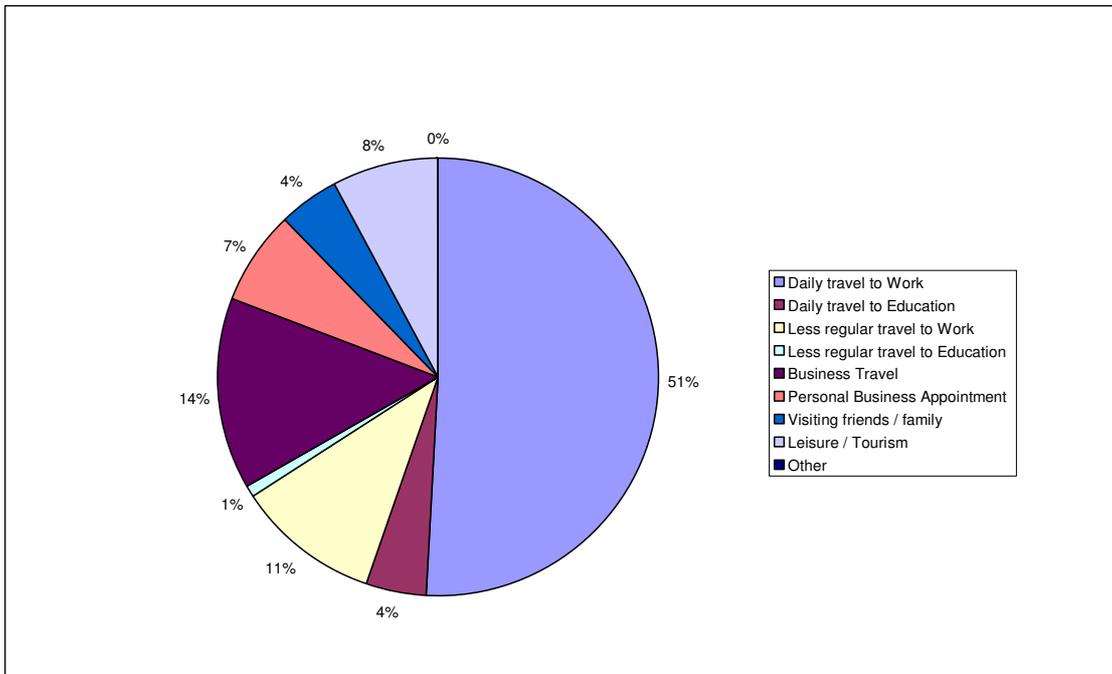


Figure 4 Leicester

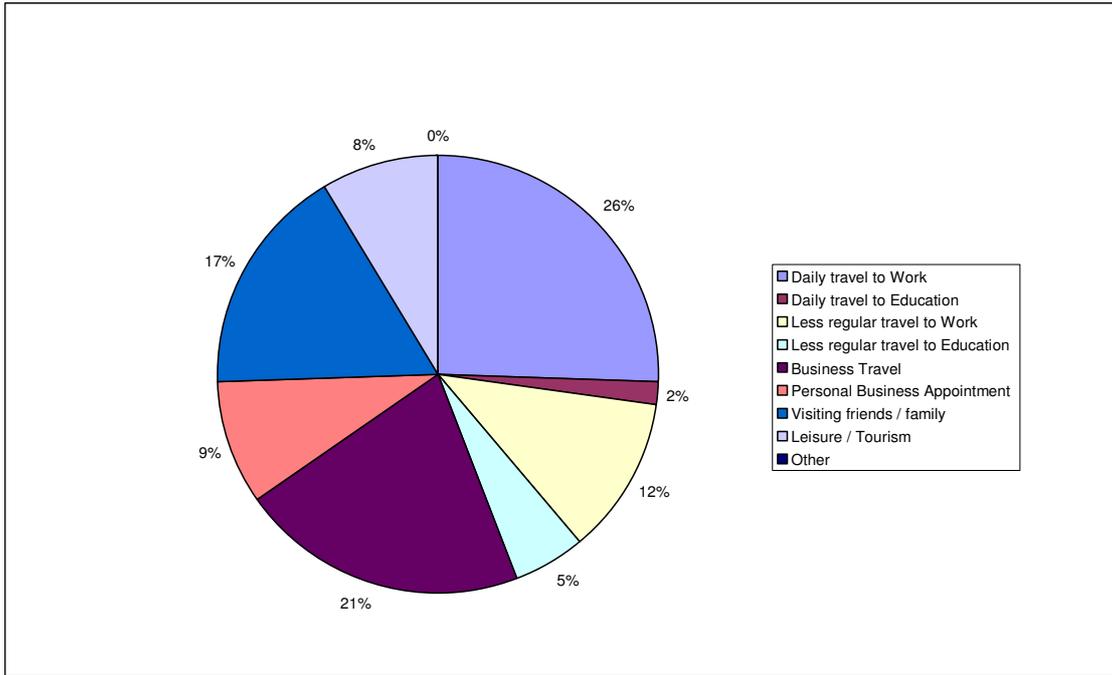


Figure 5 Market Harborough

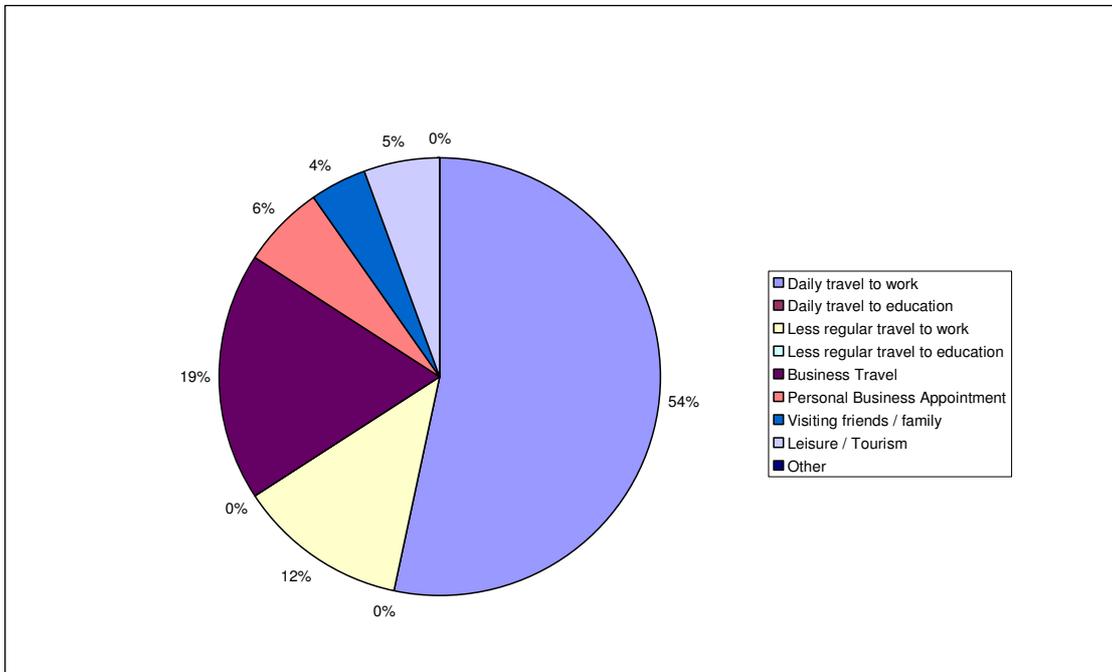
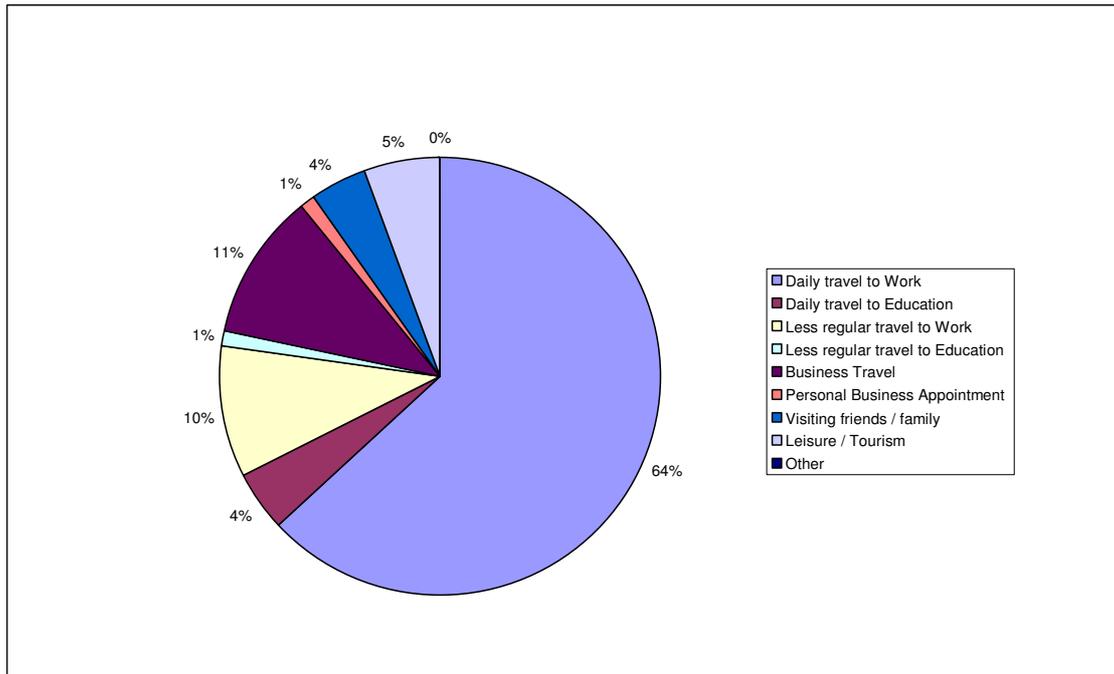


Figure 6 Kettering



Overall, just over half of journeys were travel to work or education, about one fifth for business and just over one quarter for personal business and leisure. Travel for education was probably understated as under-16s were not surveyed and the surveys were out of term for most students. Lincoln showed the most marked variation from this pattern, with the highest percentage of leisure journeys and the lowest percentage for work or education. Derby and Leicester showed the highest levels of journeys for business, and the highest levels for leisure (after Lincoln). The other three stations had the highest percentage of journeys for work or education, reflecting the high use of season tickets noted above.

Travel to the station

Figures 7-18 show the distance travelled to each station and the mode used.

Lincoln

Figure 7. Distance travelled to the station

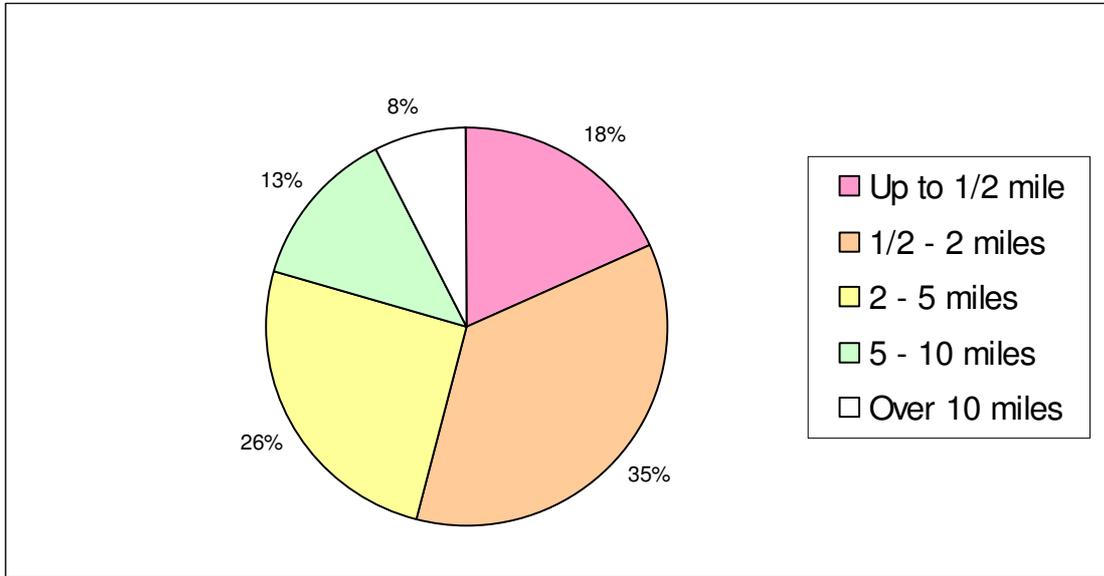
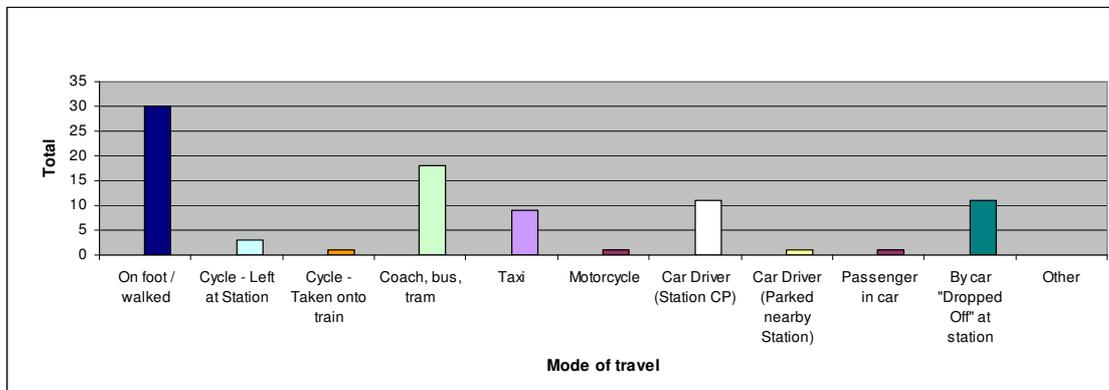


Figure 8. Mode of transport used



One third of passengers travelled 0.5-2 miles to the station, one quarter 2-5 miles, and one fifth up to 0.5 miles. Most reached the station on foot, but those using bus, taxi or cycle exceeded the number arriving by car.

Derby

Figure 9. Distance travelled to station

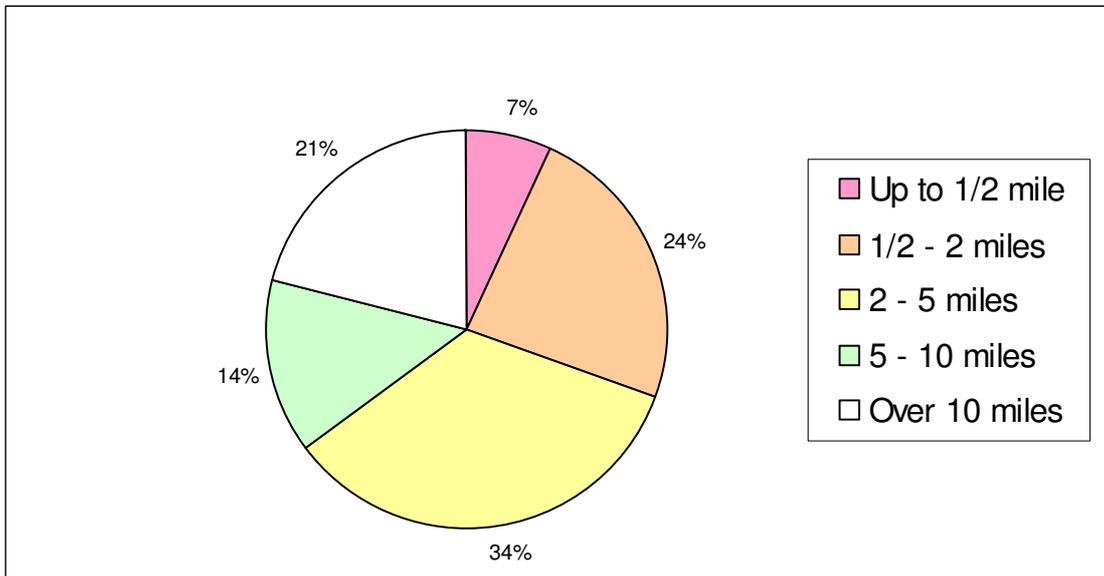
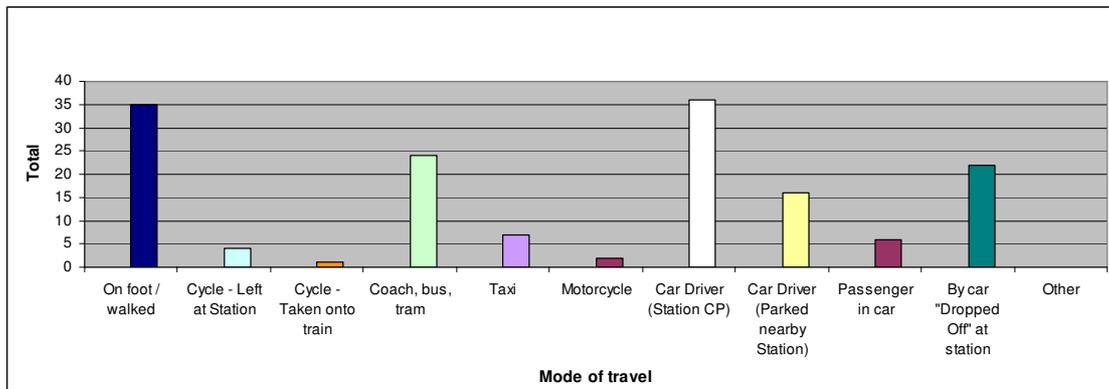


Figure 10. Mode of transport used



One third travelled 2-5 miles and one quarter 0.5-2 miles, but over one fifth travelled more than 10 miles. Car use predominated followed by walking and bus.

Loughborough

Figure 11. Distance travelled to station

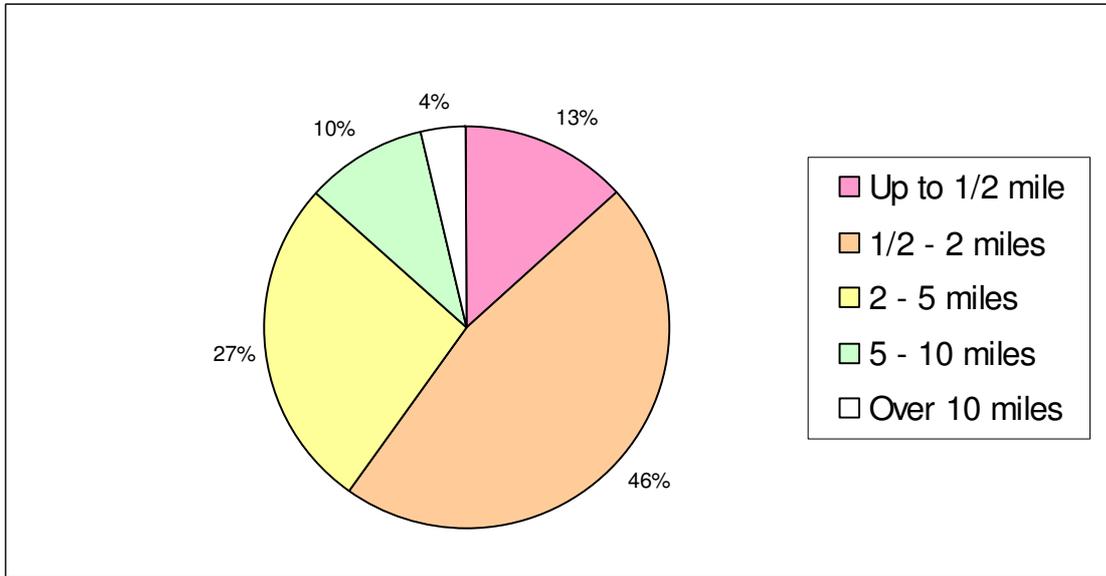
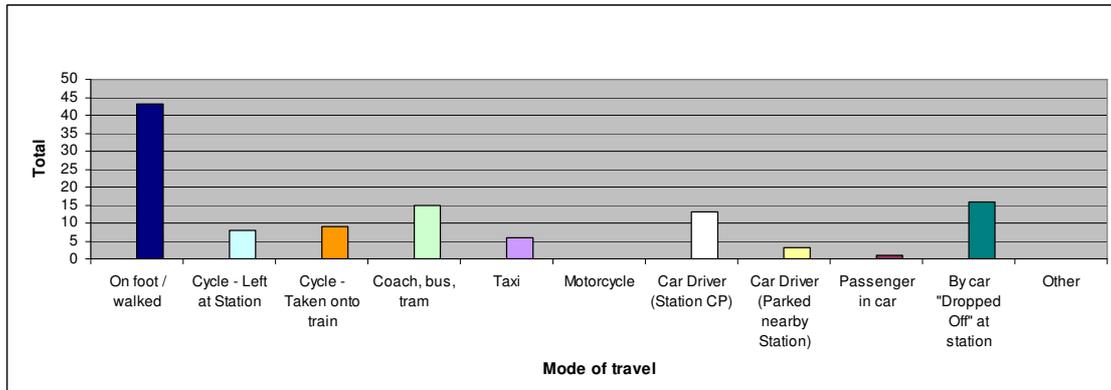


Figure 12. Mode of transport used



Nearly half of passengers travelled 0.5-2 miles to the station, with a quarter travelling 2-5 miles. Most arrived on foot, followed by car, then similar numbers using cycle and bus.

Leicester

Figure 13. Distance travelled to station

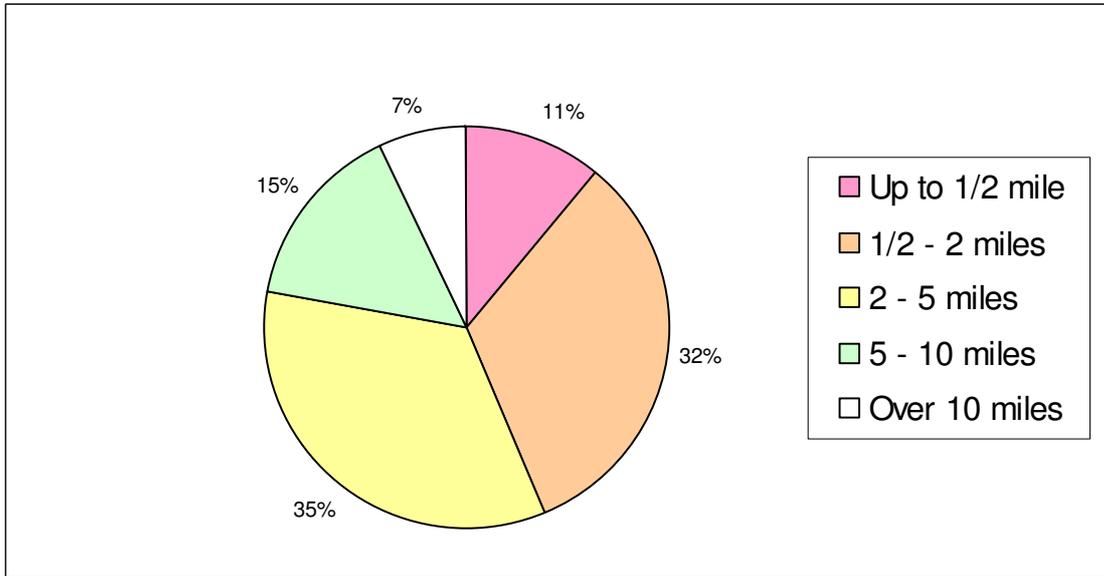
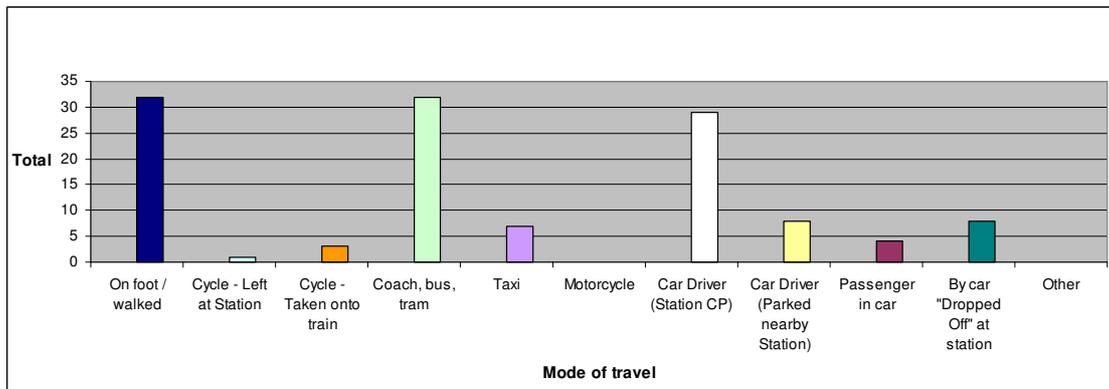


Figure 14. Mode of transport used



About one third travelled 0.5-2 miles and one third 2-5 miles. Car was the most popular mode, followed by similar numbers walking and using the bus.

Market Harbourough

Figure 15. Distance travelled to station

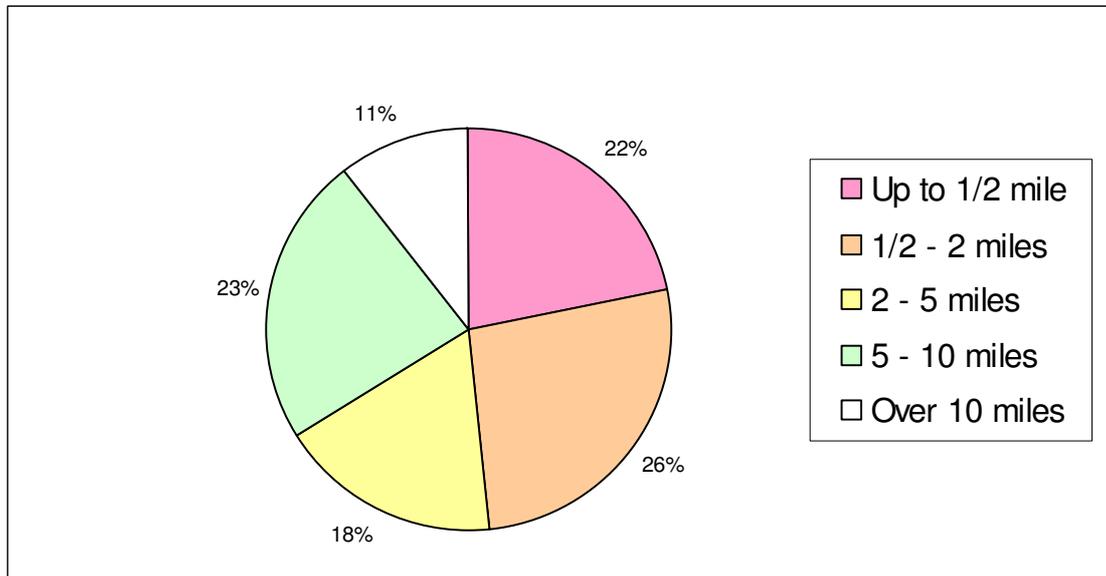
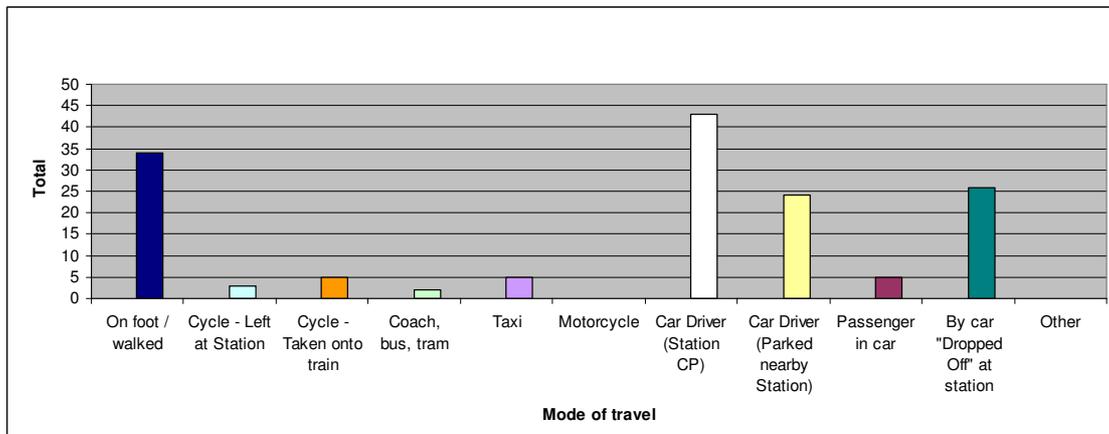


Figure 16. Mode of transport used



One quarter of passengers travelled 0.5-2 miles, and nearly one quarter 5-10 miles. Over one fifth travelled up to 0.5 miles and nearly one fifth 2-5 miles. Most used cars followed by walking, bus usage was minimal.

Kettering

Figure 17. Distance travelled to the station

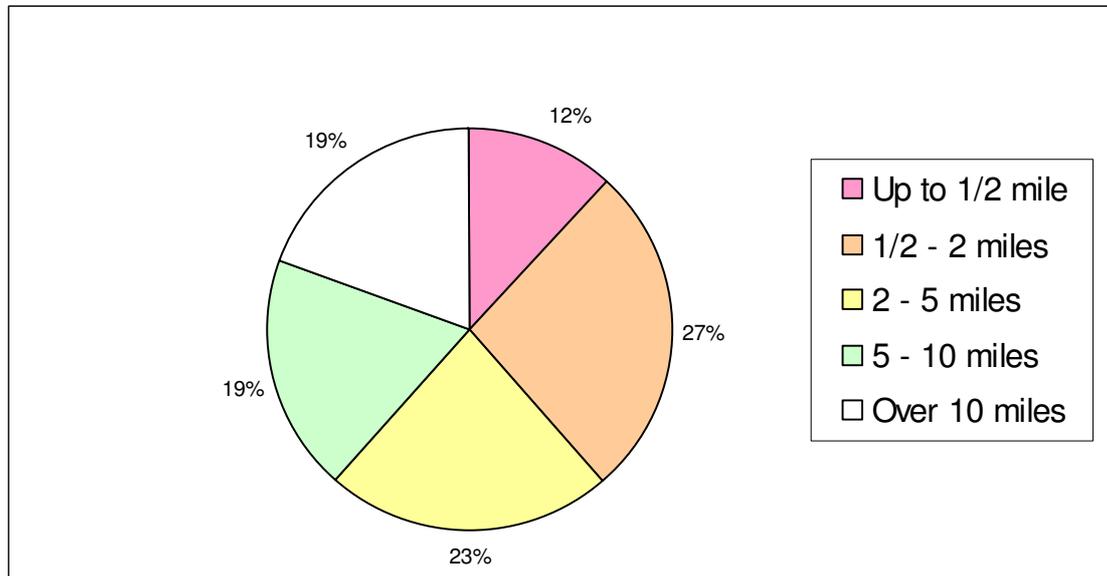
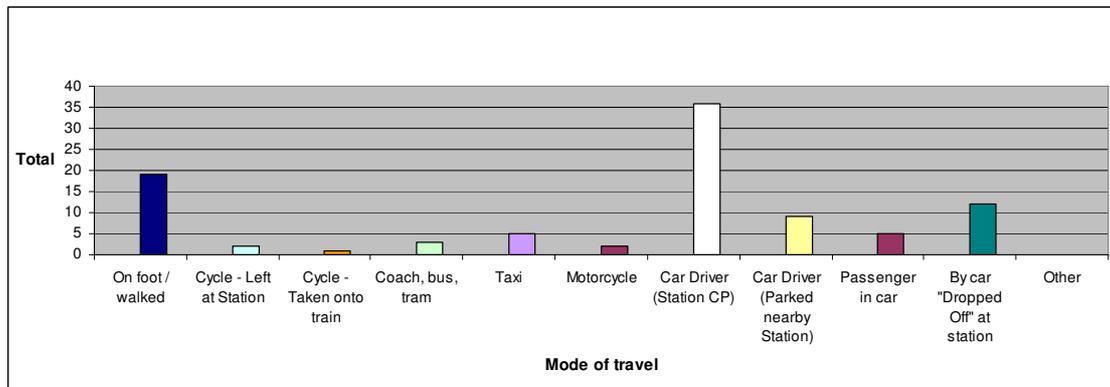


Figure 18. Mode of transport used



Over one quarter of passengers travelled 0.5-2 miles and nearly one quarter 2-5 miles. One fifth travelled 5-10 miles and one fifth over 10 miles. The car was the main travel mode followed by walking, very few passengers used the bus.

All stations

Taking the data for the six stations together, about 15% of the passengers surveyed travelled less than 0.5 miles to reach the station, while nearly 30% travelled between 0.5 and 2 miles, 2 to 5 miles, and more than 5 miles, respectively. All passengers surveyed recorded a single mode of travel to the station, but it is recognised that it is possible for more than one mode to be used - for example, in Derby and Leicester passengers may

arrive at the principal bus station by bus then walk on to the station. In round figures 50% arrived at the station by car, 25% on foot, 15% by bus, 5% by taxi and 5% by cycle or motorcycle.

Overall, 85% of passengers said that the station used was that nearest to the starting point of their journey. Reasons for not using the nearest station related mainly to frequency of train service or lack of connections, but also cited were better availability or security of parking, easier road journeys and sharing car journeys.

Where passengers gave the postcode in full for the location of the start of their journey this data has been used to produce scatter diagrams showing journey origins relative to the stations, see Appendix 2.

Preference for alternative travel to the station

Of the passengers surveyed 26% said that they would have preferred to have used a different mode of travel to the station. Figures 19-24 show the results for each of the six stations.

Figure 19. Lincoln

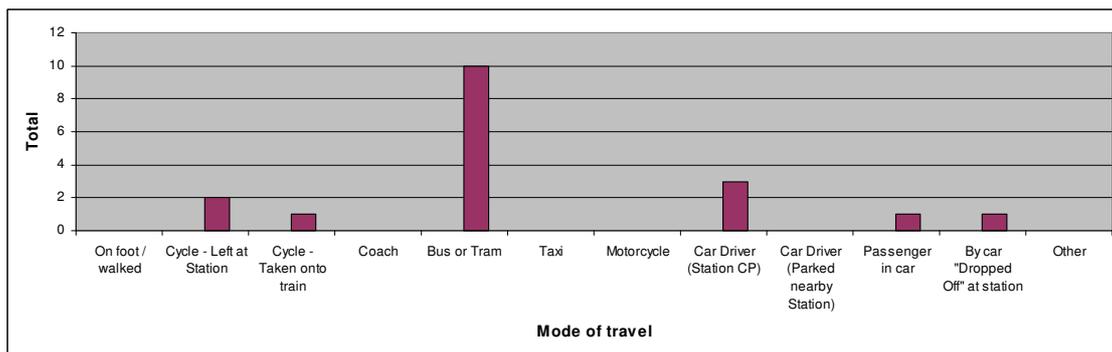


Figure 20. Derby

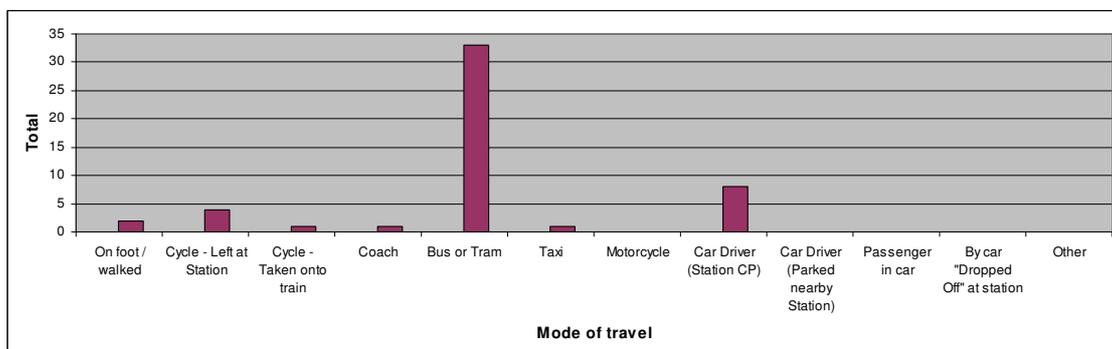


Figure 21 Loughborough

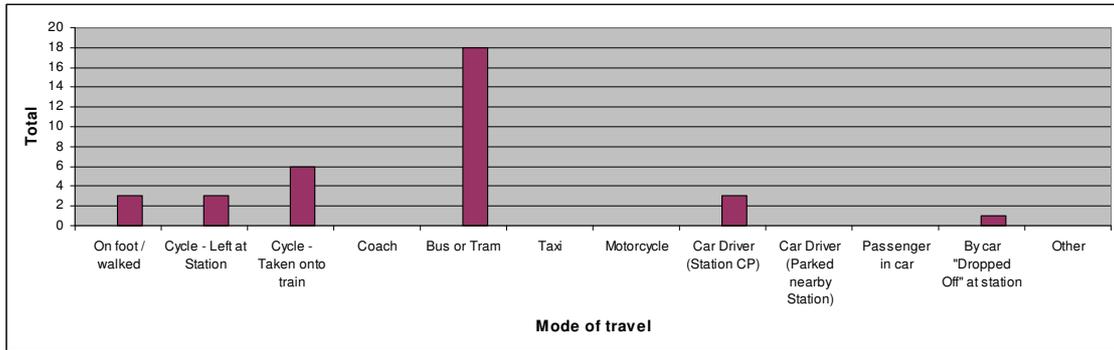


Figure 22 Leicester

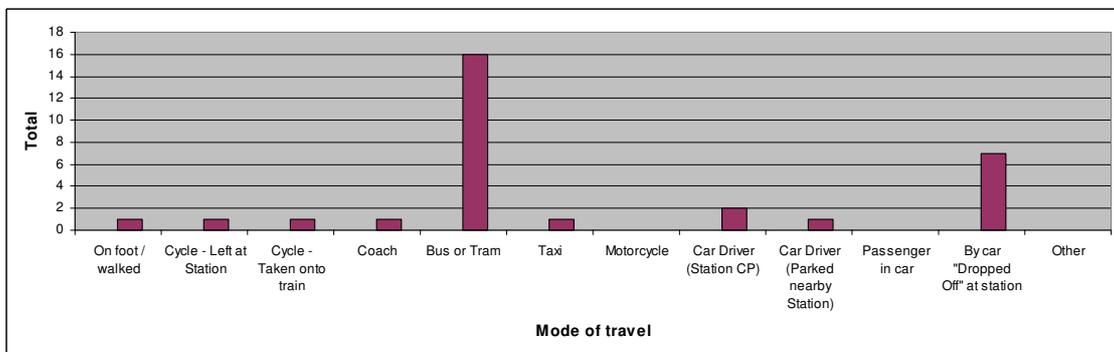


Figure 23 Market Harborough

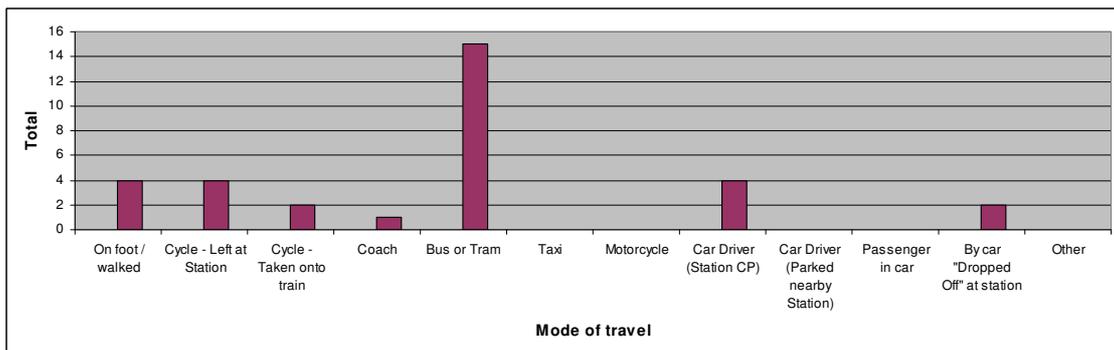
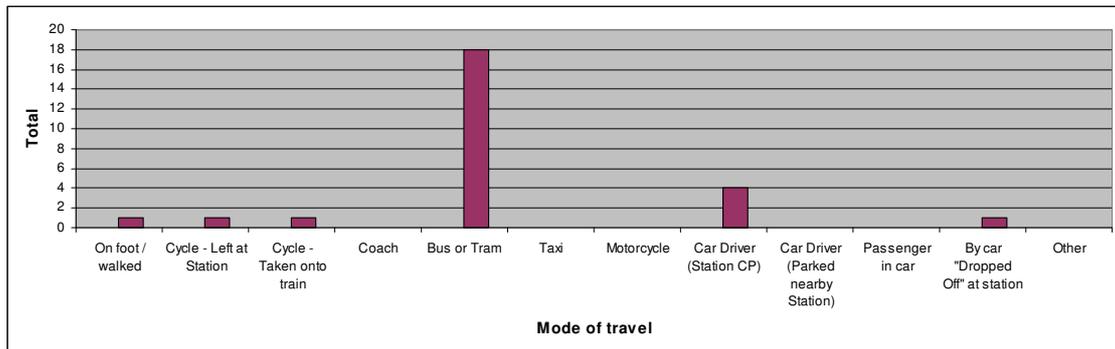
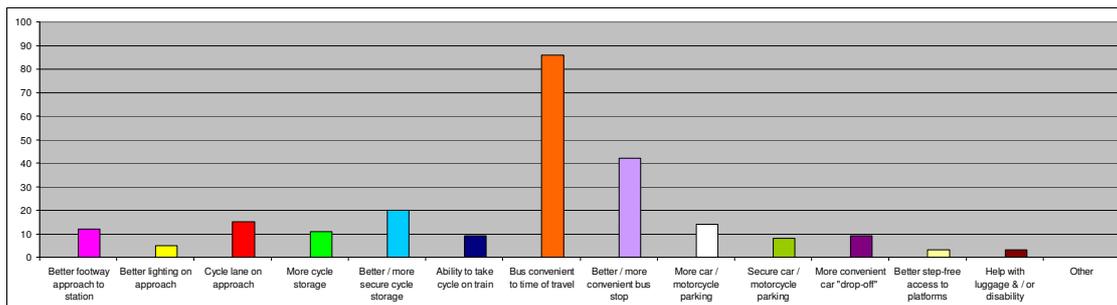


Figure 24 Kettering



Although some passengers would have preferred to have used cars or cycled, the alternative mode in greatest demand at each station was the bus. When asked about measures need to enable them to use the alternative mode, passengers gave a similar response at each station. Fig 25 shows the combined result for all stations.

Figure 25 Measures needed to enable use of preferred access mode



Not surprisingly there is demand for buses convenient to time of travel, and better or more convenient bus stops, followed by better facilities for cycles, car parking, car 'drop off' and pedestrian access.

Car parking costs

Only 4% of passengers using station car parks parked for half a day or less. Use of season tickets rather than paying per day ranged from 0% at Lincoln, 8% at Loughborough and 14% at both Derby and Leicester, to 43% at Market Harborough and 46% at Kettering.

Passengers using car parks were asked about various aspects of charging, see Fig 26-31. Cost of cycle storage was not an issue as no charge is made for this facility.

Figure 26 Period of parking

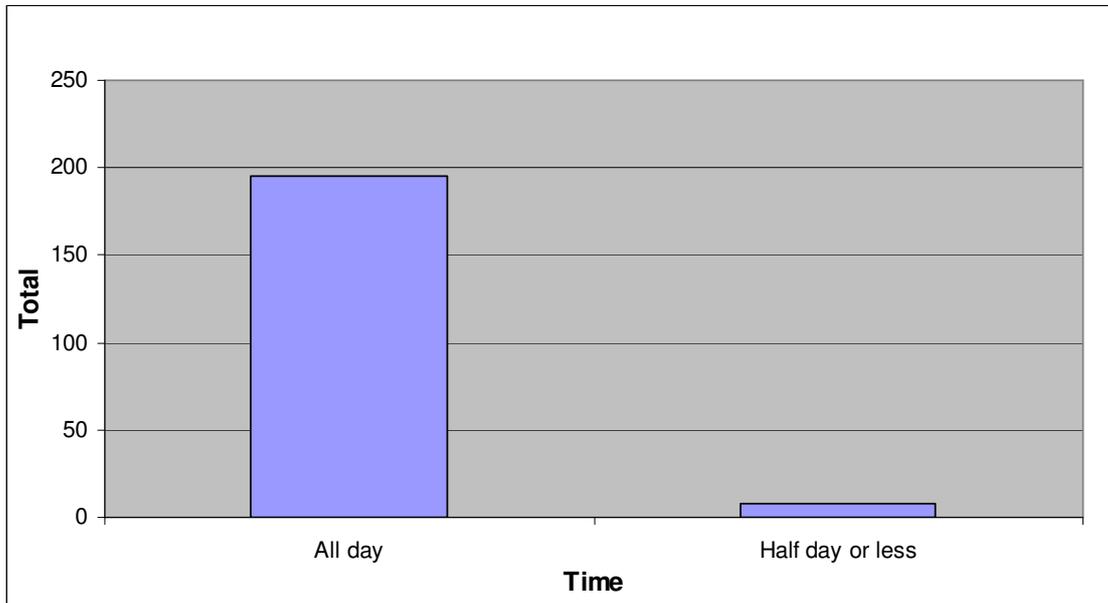


Figure 27 Type of payment

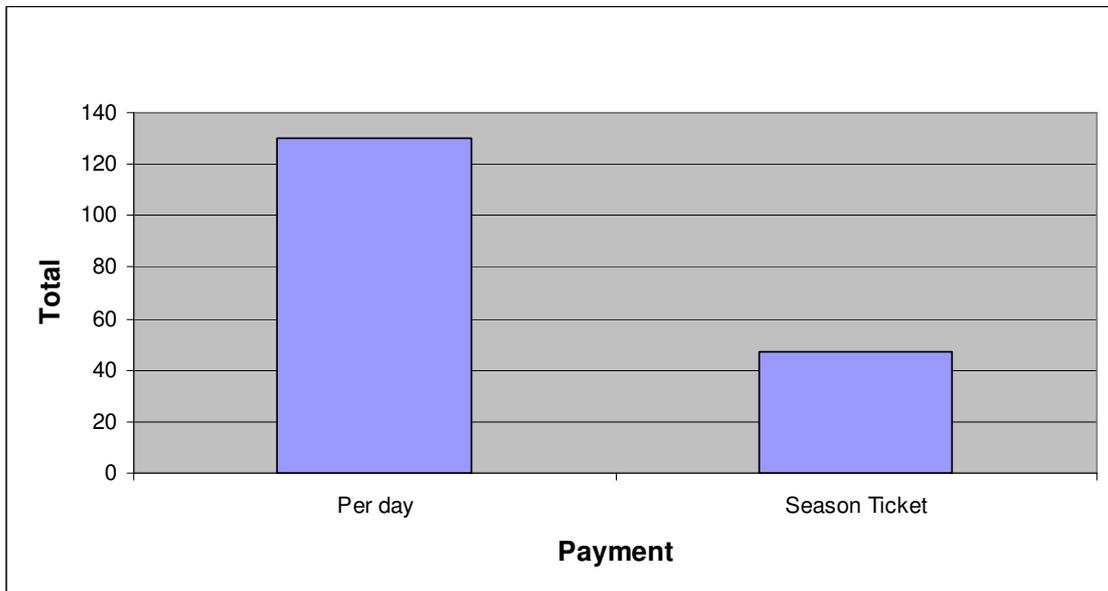


Figure 28 Whether cost influenced use of car park

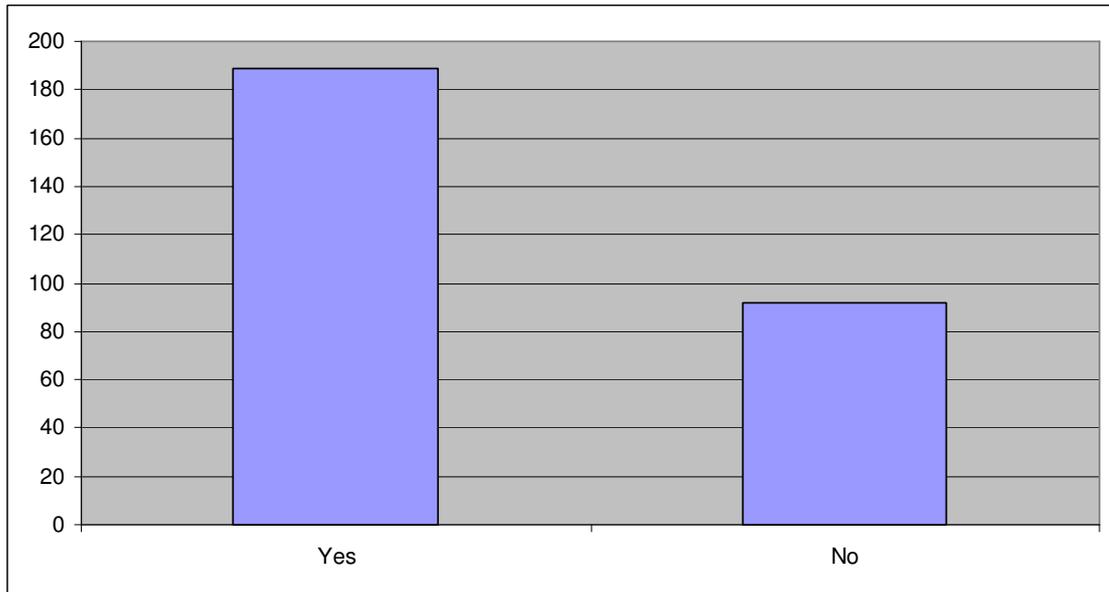


Figure 29 Whether another mode of travel to the station would be considered if parking was dearer

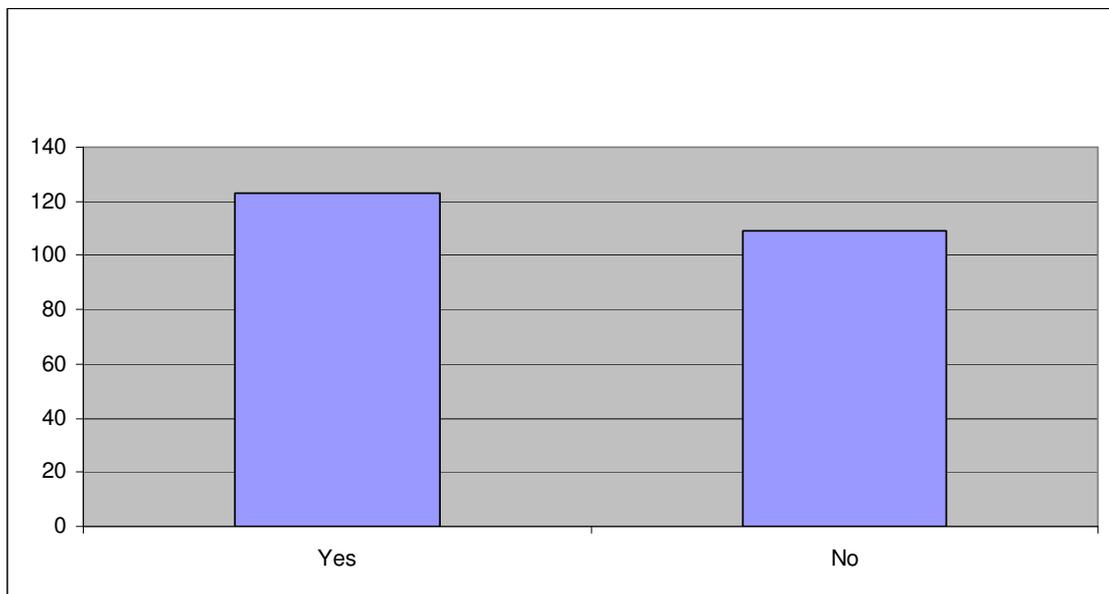


Figure 30 Whether car park would be used more if cheaper part-day or off-peak

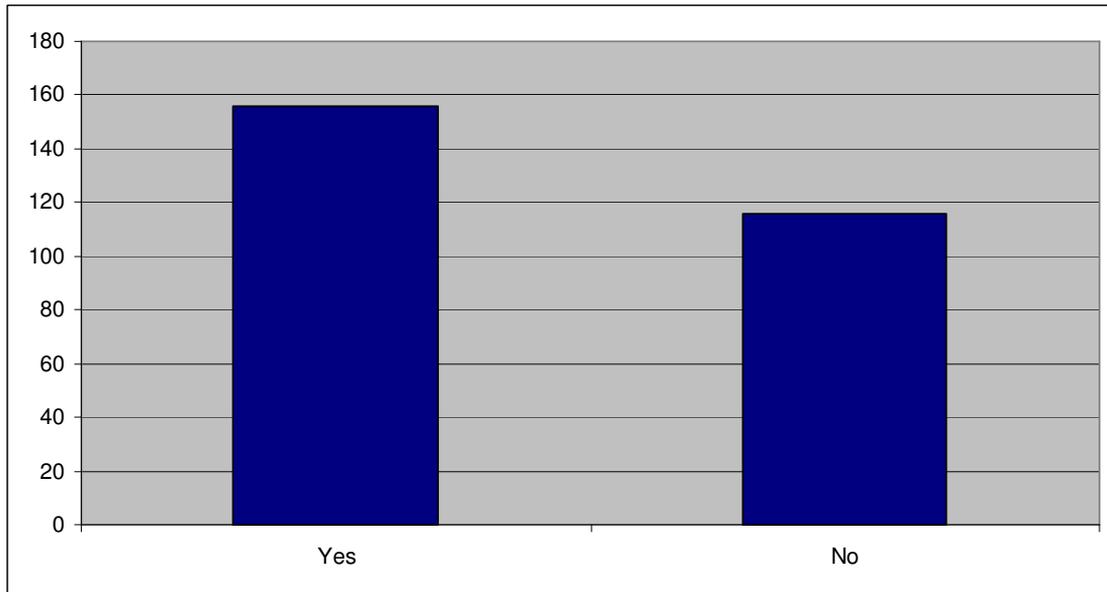
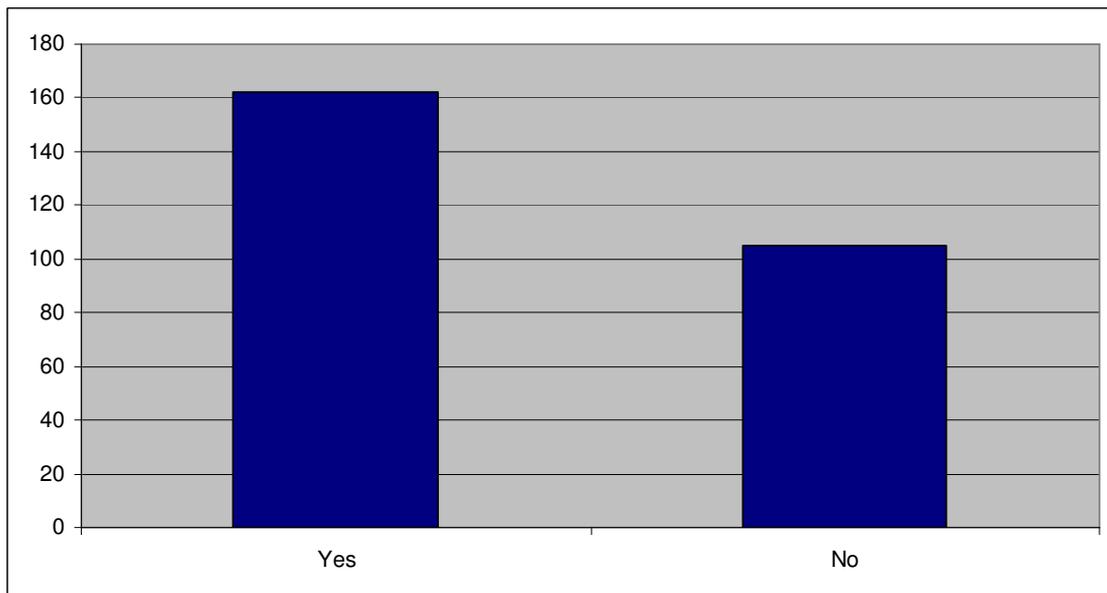


Figure 31 Whether car park would be used more if cheaper at weekends



Cost was an influence for about twice as many passengers as those for whom it was not, but just over half of passengers said that they would consider another mode of travel to the station if parking was dearer.

Only a small majority said that they would use the car park more if there was a cheaper rate for part-day or off-peak parking, but more than half said that they would park more often if there was a cheaper rate at weekends. Since the survey, half price car parking at weekends has been introduced at several stations, including Market Harborough and Kettering, for an experimental period.

6. RESULTS OF THE STATION FACILITIES SURVEY

The survey form, see Appendix 2, recorded details of station staffing hours, pedestrian access, facilities for those reaching the station by cycle, bus or coach, taxi, car or motorcycle, together with the provision for those with special needs.

Where deficiencies were noted these were supported and augmented by the comments written by respondents in the 'comments' section of the passenger survey form.

The key access and intermodal issues raised at each of the stations were as follows.

Lincoln

Lack of bus services to station

There was a particular wish for better services in the evenings, to allow both legs of a return journey to the station to be made by bus, and on Sunday mornings.

Lack of signing for the buses

Lincoln bus station is only 100 metres from the railway station but is not visible from the station exit – astonishingly there is no signage to give interchanging passengers directions! Similarly, the bus station has no direction signs for the railway station.

Slow train services, poor delay information

All rail services from Lincoln, including the principal route to Newark and Nottingham, suffer from low line speeds by modern inter-city rail standards. Many trains to Nottingham, and all trains on the other routes, call at all stations, making for slow journeys. Subsequent plans by the new operator East Midlands Trains to reduce stops at lightly used stations should help to improve the Nottingham service. Late advice of train delays is probably due in part to the continued use of traditional signalling on Lincolnshire lines. The new signalling centre at Lincoln, due to be commissioned in summer 2008, should help to improve train running information.

Derby

Cost of car parking

There were widespread complaints at the cost of car parking (£9 per day, since increased to £10). These may have arisen in part from passengers currently driving to Derby (because of the next two issues listed) in order to make relatively short train journeys, for example to Nottingham, for which the train fare was less than the parking charge.

Lack of and/or lack of confidence in connecting trains

Passengers complained of the low train service frequency on the Derwent Valley (Matlock) line, which inhibited taking the train especially when their return journey time was uncertain. East Midlands Trains plan to increase the frequency from the present 90-120 minutes to hourly and extend the service to Nottingham. There was lack of confidence in the reliability of connections from both the Derwent Valley and Stoke-on-Trent lines.

Inadequacies in direct bus services to and from the station

Passengers commented that the need to change buses in the city centre, normally paying a second fare, in order to reach the station was a handicap. In part this is a perception as a range of bus services currently serves the station. However stopping points are dispersed, some city buses stopping over road from the station forecourt and information at the station, although comprehensive, is not easy to find or understand. The shelter for city-bound buses has a city centre bus stop plan, but no timetable. This does not matter during the day when services are frequent, but is relevant in the evening – although from experience buses do not always run at the times printed in the timetable.

Loughborough

Chaotic forecourt

Cars, taxis and buses vie for limited space in the station forecourt, making conditions difficult and at times dangerous for passengers on foot. While the situation has been worsened by the introduction of ticket barriers, passengers now having to visit the booking hall to purchase a ticket then walk outside again to the barriers to access the platform, since the survey additional yellow lines have partly alleviated this aspect.

Lack of step-free access

Access to the southbound platform is via an open footbridge, step-free access is only possible by staff escort over a boarded crossing requiring permission from the signaller. This is difficult to arrange given the frequency and speed of trains. However, Loughborough has been allocated funding from the Department for Transport's 'Access for All' programme, and provision of a new footbridge with lifts is expected during 2008. Access to facilities within the station such as toilets is via a step, and the bus bays outside do not accommodate 'kneeling' low-floor buses.

Poor, and poorly presented, bus information

Loughborough station is well-served by buses, either to the station itself or passing nearby. However, at the time of the survey the bus information, although comprehensive, was hard to understand, not indicating clearly the stop required for particular destinations. It is pleasing to note that, since the survey, this has been remedied in part with destination lists provided above the shelter. However, there is still no information on other buses using stops near to the station.

Lack of car parking and secure cycle storage

Car parking is insufficient, and increase in spaces is bound up with the planned Eastern Gateway development encompassing redundant railway land. Since the survey there has been a welcome increase in short stay spaces. Cyclists prefer to chain their machines to the station railings rather than use the inadequate rack provided. Installation of covered 'Sheffield' stands would be helpful.

Leicester

Lack of, and lack of confidence in, connecting trains

As at Derby, passengers expressed lack of faith in connecting trains, for example from the east-west route to the main line.

Car parking cost and bay width

Again, as at Derby, the £9 parking charge was considered to be excessive. There were also complaints that the narrow width of the parking bays had led to damage to vehicles.

Poor access from street and from disabled parking

Access from the street is step free – although use of the crossing requires a detour to avoid steps. However, access from the disabled spaces in the car park requires the negotiation of several kerbs, cobbled paving and the steep slope from the station entrance to the concourse. The few disabled spaces in the forecourt are nearer, but access is likewise via cobbles and kerbs.

Market Harborough

Severe lack of car parking and cycle storage

Although car parking was extended to 200 spaces in the early 1990s these are now all taken up by about 08.30 on most weekdays. Since the survey, restrictions from December 2007 in on-street parking near the station have threatened to exacerbate the problem. However, it is pleasing to note that East Midlands Trains have extended the car park by 100 spaces from January 2008, using a rolled gravel surface in order to provide a quick solution. When the rack near the booking office is full cyclists prefer to leave their machines in the adjacent passageway, rather than using the open rack on the platform. Five lockable cages are also available on the platform.

Lack of shelter on platforms and at bus stop

Despite growth in footfall to 700 000 passenger journeys per year, Market Harborough station does not have a single metre of platform canopy, the only shelter being over the head of the platform access ramp and stairway and in the small waiting rooms. The journey from car park to booking hall to platform to train is very unpleasant on wet days! The bus stop has no shelter, and is on a turning circle approached by a blind corner. On wet days passengers who wait in the station entrance until the bus appears have no chance of catching it, if they stand at the bus stop they get wet.

Lack of step-free access

The northbound platform can be accessed by a ramp from the booking hall or from the car park, but the southbound platform can only be reached by a stairway or by staff escort over a boarded crossing. The station has not yet been selected for improvements under 'Access for All'.

Poor bus information

At the time of the survey the bus information at the station was both incomplete and inaccurate. The display still showed the Kettering bus service withdrawn several months previously. This has now been remedied, but the display both then and since makes no mention of the bus service to Lutterworth and Hinckley, which was extended to the station in October 2005. It is no surprise that this is little used.

Kettering

Lack of bus services to the station

Given that Kettering has dispersed residential and industrial areas, and satellite towns such as Rothwell and Thrapston for which it serves as the railhead, it is astonishing to find that no bus services run to or near the station – apart from the Rail Link bus to Corby. Hopefully the situation will improve now that Stagecoach Group run both rail and bus services in the area.

Poor condition of the car park

Complaints were made that the car park surface has become poor, with the white lining well worn and almost obliterated in places.

Poor pedestrian access

There is no safe route for pedestrians to reach the station entrance from the opposite footpath across the flow of cars and taxis, a pedestrian crossing is needed.

7. ANALYSIS AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Overall, based on the combined results for the six stations surveyed, about 15% of passengers travel less than 0.5 miles to reach the station, with around 30% travelling each of 0.5-2 miles, 2-5 miles and more than 5 miles. In round figures 50% arrive by car, 25% on foot, 15% by bus, 5% by taxi and 5% by cycle or motorcycle.

Knowledge of home postcodes enables scatter maps of journey origins to be constructed, an example is shown at Appendix 3. Although based on limited data this does indicate where the need to travel is coming from, and using the methodology with more comprehensive data would support the development of public transport services and station travel plans.

At some stations there is insufficient car parking and secure cycle storage at times of peak demand, and facilities in general need improving. Better provision would encourage park & ride journeys of the most desirable kind, where the road journey leg is short and the rail leg relatively long. Demand for car parking is likely to remain strong, even if some passengers are encouraged to use buses.

For those passengers expressing willingness to use an alternative mode of travel to the station the bus was the preferred choice – providing services run at suitable times and bus stops are convenient. These caveats are likely to be easier to satisfy in the larger centres, frequency of bus service in smaller towns is never likely to be sufficient to make the bus a ‘turn up and go’ option or provide reasonable connections with every train. When passengers say that they wish to use the bus there is perhaps an element of ‘well they would say that wouldn’t they’, but nevertheless buses appear to have a potentially far greater role to play in accessing the railway. However, at present the bus-rail interface and provision of information are generally poor. In Derby and Leicester the distance of the principal bus station from the railway station is a handicap. Much could be done to encourage bus usage by attention to these issues, at relatively modest cost.

Lack of trust in connections deters some passengers from making multi-leg journeys by public transport, with reliance on the car to augment the principal rail section of their trip. Rail and bus services need to operate in a joined up manner, with good connections between routes whether rail-rail, bus-bus or bus-rail, irrespective of operator. There also needs to be a source of information and help when there are delays.

Station access for pedestrians, and bus and car passengers, is often poor and potentially dangerous. Conflicts between vehicles and walking routes need to be resolved, with clear marking of station forecourts, traffic control measures and provision of pedestrian crossings.

In order to encourage modal shift from the car to public transport detailed but easy to understand information on how to access, or travel onwards from, railway stations is desirable. Station Travel Plans giving such information would be a useful development. These would show not only the facilities and travel options, but set targets determined by a robust baseline study, possible linked to an accessibility mapping exercise. A simple but effective measure has been seen in Scotland – at stations of all types, from the

Glasgow suburbs to the Highlands, a prominent poster near the exit headed 'Onward Travel from this Station' gives a location map with details of where to catch taxis, buses and ferries together with frequencies and stations served. This could surely be emulated elsewhere?

Surveys of this type help to provide a picture of each station and its business. Derby and Leicester exhibited typical city station characteristics, with a fairly even spread of journey purpose but the highest levels of travel on business, and passengers travelling to a wide range of destinations. Loughborough, Market Harborough and Kettering had high levels of commuting, to London but also to Leicester, Nottingham, Birmingham and Derby. Lincoln proved an oddity – relatively low levels of commuting and business travel, a high level of leisure travel and many passengers aged over 60. This probably reflects the poor, slow train services, and lack of longer-distance through routes – an unattractive offer for all but the archetypal 'social railway' user. It is pleasing to note that, under the new East Midlands Trains and National Express East Coast rail franchises, Lincoln will at last get through trains to London!

8. NEXT STEPS

Useful follow-on work to this study could include:

- Further detailed surveys by operators and/or local authorities, both at the same stations and elsewhere across the network.
- Surveys of the travel patterns of those parking other than at rail stations, for example in city and town centres, to assess the extent to which they could have used public transport and the measures needed to encourage them to do so.
- Development and upgrading of interchange facilities where inadequacies have been identified.
- Development of Station Travel Plans.
- Promotion of ‘Smarter Choices’ options for travellers.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the TravelWatch East Midlands Steering Group, especially Chairman Alan Meredith and Paul Fullwood, for their guidance and support in carrying out this work; to Passenger Focus for part funding and for providing the Freepost facility; to the then train operators Central Trains and Midland Main line for permission to carry out the surveys; and to White Young Green for help with data analysis. Last, but by no means least, thanks are due to the survey teams, all of whom were unpaid volunteers - without their help and interest this work could not have taken place.

Stephen Abbott
30th March 2008

"TravelWatch East Midlands" is the public name of the East Midlands
Passenger Transport Users Forum

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