

Campaign for Better Transport



Local Rail Partnerships

Examples of how local partnerships can be used
to fund and develop the rail network

Better Transport: Transport that improves our quality of life and reduces our environmental impact

Local Rail Partnerships

Examples of how local partnerships can be used to fund and develop the rail network

Railways matter. Stations are gateways to the communities they serve, and can act as hubs for development and for transport links within the area too. However, planning and investment for rail is separate from other kinds of planning and transport, so too often the potential for local rail services and stations is not developed. To local authorities, developers and others, the rail industry can seem complex and difficult to work with, making improvements seem too difficult. At worst, some stations are virtually abandoned, with no-one taking any responsibility for developing or caring for them.

It need not be like this. We have already seen the growth of community rail partnerships, which on branch and local lines have made links between the railway and the wider community, bringing local council, community and business groups into revitalising stations and services.

But the principle of partnership needs to be applied all over the rail network, not just on particular lines. This report shows how in practice partnerships between the rail industry and other interests can revitalise run-down stations, create better transport links and – very importantly – lever in new money from public bodies, developers and other interested parties. The case studies here show that by working together all these bodies can improve people's rail journeys and in doing so support sustainable economic development and the local community. We hope you find them useful.



Stephen Joseph,
Executive Director

**Please contact us if you would like to discuss how we can work together for better transport:
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Report written by John French, Transport Regeneration.

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Foreword

Stations are becoming the modern gateways to urban centres. This requires more sophisticated management of their enhancement and development. In most cases, this can only be achieved through close cooperation and partnership. Now more than ever stations are in a position to contribute to the social, environmental and economic well-being of the communities they serve, and to provide safe and efficient interchanges with other modes of transport.

My own company, NedRailways, is a firm believer in making a difference through partnership working. This commitment has its roots in the practical experience and achievements of our parent company in the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands, station development plans are carefully structured to consider not only what the station itself needs, but also what benefits a holistic solution can bring to the surrounding areas and local environment. An excellent example is the redevelopment of the major railway station at Den Bosch, a city of 150,000 inhabitants in the Randstad conurbation in the west of the country.

The line upon which Den Bosch station sits divides the town almost in two. Bridges and other crossing facilities to connect the two sides of the city are limited. The line had created a dichotomy, with half of the city growing prosperous while the other half fell into a decline. In other words, there really was a 'wrong side of the tracks' for people living in Den Bosch.

Providing integrated bus, taxi and parking facilities was an important part of the partnership development approach at Den Bosch, as was the enhancement of cycle storage services. Other important elements to help passengers on the move were real-time information systems, ticket vending machines and commercial retail facilities on

platforms. Den Bosch station had the potential to boost local prosperity, so an early decision was taken to broaden the existing walkway over the railway line to twice the required width to create a clear pedestrian 'connection' between the two sides of the city. This encouraged people to use the station as a crossing point, which made the area more attractive for real estate development.

This structured approach at Den Bosch has revitalised the station and the surrounding region. As a direct result of the new station facilities, passenger numbers increased by 35%. Passengers are enjoying improved accessibility and transfer facilities, and satisfaction has increased.

The station development project has also delivered other major benefits, including 15,000 new apartments and the creation of office space supporting over 10,000 jobs. New coffee bars, restaurants and conference facilities have transformed the ambience of the station and added to the sense of regeneration in the area.

None of this could have been achieved without a partnership approach in which all parties set out with a clear vision and cooperated to deliver mutually supporting goals. This approach reflects the philosophy which lies at the heart of *Local Rail Partnerships*. I commend the case studies selected for this publication. They highlight excellent examples of what can be achieved through working in partnership.



Anton Valk,
Executive Director, NedRailways

Case Study:

Ramsgate Interchange

Introduction

Ramsgate probably has the best rail connections in Thanet, with regular services to London's Victoria and Charing Cross stations, via both Faversham and Ashford International. Over 650,000 passenger journeys per year are made from the station. The station is, however, over a mile from the town centre, and onward travel to the town, port and outlying areas is mainly by bus or taxi.

The Ramsgate Interchange project aimed to provide Ramsgate and Thanet with a transport interchange that is safer, easier to use and more attractive for all users, linking the station more effectively with the local community.

The problems

Previous work undertaken by Kent County Council identified interchange improvements at Ramsgate as a priority project. Problems at the station included:

- A large forecourt which was a poorly used resource
- Conflicting traffic movements, creating safety hazards for pedestrians going to and from the station
- Randomly sited bus stops, with little or no information, deterring people from using existing bus services
- Poor taxi facilities with poor queuing arrangements
- Haphazard and only partially marked-out car parking and short-wait areas
- Limited access and parking for cycles
- Poor local and bus information, particularly about onward travel to the town, seaside or port



New buses serving the new interchange

PHOTO: TRANSPORT REGENERATION LTD

The solution

Kent County Council, in partnership with the Thanet District Authority, Network Rail and South Eastern Trains, agreed on a complete redesign of the station forecourt which would also allow for growth in bus/rail interchange. The improvements included:

- Relocating two existing bus stops from the station approach to the station forecourt, with a new paved area, heritage-approved bus shelters and an electronic information kiosk
- A pedestrian route across the forecourt (complemented by a zebra crossing on the adjacent highway, provided by Kent County Council)
- A section of new cycle route across the forecourt
- Resurfacing and remarking the car park, with drop-off and short-stay areas

A complementary county-wide programme installed cycle parking at the station, through a partnership between county and district councils and South Eastern Trains. The Kent Local Transport Plan also provided a cycle route linking the local community to the station.

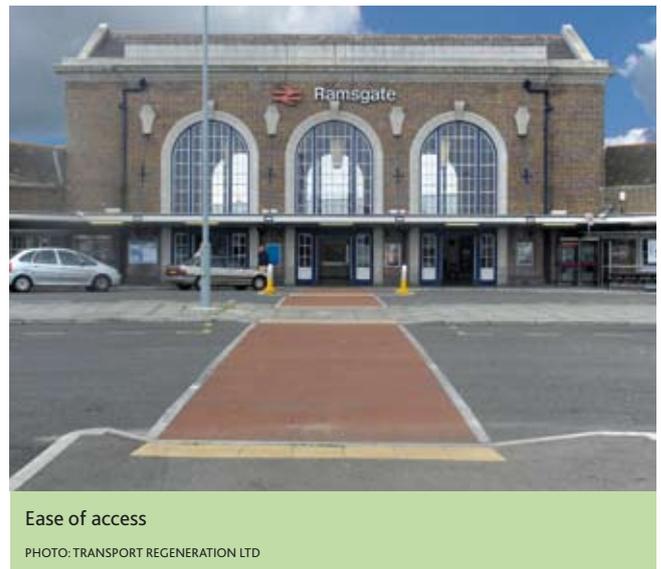
The funding

The Ramsgate Interchange project recognised that a scheme which reduces social exclusion, encourages tourism and protects built heritage will have more funding opportunities than a mere car park enhancement scheme. The project was able to argue for funding on the basis of being in a priority area for economic regeneration; the potential to develop tourism; the station building's listed status and the general condition of the existing facilities.

When this project was initially developed, the Strategic Rail Authority's Rail Passenger Partnership fund (RPP) was ideal for small schemes not deemed commercially viable in the short term. Because matched funding improved the chances of RPP funding, a partnership was formed to identify as many project outputs as possible:

- **Network Rail**, interested in the condition of the facility
- **Connex/South Eastern Trains**, the station operator
- **Stagecoach East Kent** and **Eastonways**, the local bus operators
- **Kent County Council**, keen to facilitate better bus/rail integration to promote social inclusion in this deprived area
- **Thanet District Council**, wanting to see better use of the station as a tourist resource. Tourism is considered key to the future economic vitality of the town.
- **The Railway Heritage Trust**, keen to enhance the setting of the Grade 2 listed building

Network Rail had plans to resurface the station forecourt area, and made its 'resurfacing' money available for matching against other funds. A series of 'internal' funding applications were made within the local authorities. These, in addition to a Rail Heritage funding application, enabled an RPP application to be submitted. In this way, a funding package of about £220,000 was assembled.



Ease of access

PHOTO: TRANSPORT REGENERATION LTD

The project was able to argue for funding on the basis of being in a priority area for economic regeneration

Lessons learnt

RPP funding was undoubtedly a key element of the overall package, but the subsequent demise of RPP should not overshadow the future development of small-scale schemes. Important aspects of the Ramsgate project can be transferred: good communication, early identification of Network Rail investment plans and sensitivity to partners' aspirations.

Case Study:

Dover Priory

Introduction

Dover is the historic gateway linking Britain with the rest of Europe and the busiest passenger port in the world.

Dover's economic role has nonetheless changed over the years. The town has lost its military role and dock-related employment has plummeted. There is little diversification in the local economy, with low skills and high unemployment. Deprivation statistics for parts of the town indicate some of England's worst child poverty, housing stock, education, skills and training, unemployment and low income.

Dover had some success as a Victorian seaside resort, and recent attempts to regenerate the town have focused on leisure and tourism – making it a place worth visiting rather than just travelling through. The enhancement scheme at Dover Priory station is one of the key projects in Dover's renaissance.

The problems

Over the years, Dover Priory station has suffered from a general run-down in its fortunes. Dover Harbour station was closed as the nature and location of the harbour's operations changed. International travellers were then routed via the formerly domestic Priory station, with the ferry companies providing coach links between the station and harbour. International travel still accounts for about a quarter of the station's million passengers each year, but new travel options to the continent have benefited from a higher priority and greater investment. A distinct lack of



Restored art deco frontage

PHOTO: TRANSPORT REGENERATION LTD

maintenance during the first rail franchise contributed to a station very much 'down at heel'.

Particular issues identified include:

- A domestic station poorly equipped for its role as an international interchange
- Poor quality international bus-rail transfer facilities
- A lack of multi-lingual signage to help non-English-speaking visitors at this most international of UK rail stations
- Difficult onward access by foot, bicycle or local bus, deterring good links with the town centre and Dover Castle
- Inadequate information about local attractions and how to reach them, particularly on foot or bus
- Poor access for pedestrians from the Priory Hill area of Dover, which remains one of its most deprived areas



Refurbished and remodeled booking office with ramped access to new waiting facilities

PHOTO: TRANSPORT REGENERATION LTD

Overall, Dover Priory presents a very poor first impression of the UK for overseas visitors and functions inadequately to support the local community and regeneration initiatives.

The solution

Dover District Council, as part of its commitment to the development of the town, formed a partnership with Network Rail, South Eastern Trains and Kent County Council, with Transport Regeneration acting as the county council's funding consultant. Following a series of meetings the partnership agreed a number of initiatives, strongly supported through local consultation. They included:

- New high standard waiting accommodation within the main station building for domestic visitors and international travellers transferring to buses
- Multi-lingual resigning of the station and forecourt
- Restoration of the station's 'heritage' appeal, within the booking hall and across the building facade
- A new drop off/pick up point for cars and taxis
- Better foot access to Priory Hill
- Improved CCTV coverage for better security

Kent County Council, as both transport authority and an organisation with a track record in delivering European schemes, took the lead in building a financial case for the project. Dover District Council provided expertise on local consultation and on regeneration, tourism and

social inclusion. The Port industry and visitor attractions were particularly interested in station improvement proposals. South Eastern Trains and Network Rail provided information about the operation and management of the station.

The proposed new interchange, in addition to transport benefits, was marketed as the catalyst for regeneration and social inclusion. From detailed discussion and consultation with local visitor attractions, the port industry and transport providers, the partnership built up a full picture of a broad range of requirements.

The funding

It was evident that the various elements of the Dover scheme would, collectively, demonstrate synergy, with numerous outputs beyond transport and accessibility. Maximising the range of outputs increases funding opportunities.

Marketing the station as an attractive interchange with tourist attractions and ferry operators has helped to justify providing improved transport facilities for the local community and potential visitors.

The project could be seen to contribute to area regeneration, tourism development, social inclusion, protection of the built heritage, transport integration, environmental enhancements and improved safety.

A commitment was given to explore the use of renewable energy and sustainable building materials as an innovative measure. Local architecture students were involved in the design process, through Kent Institute of Architecture and Design. It also provided additional innovation – important for securing many forms of European funding.

The Dover Priory project fitted with HST Connect, a wider European funding partnership scheme led by the regional development agency SEEDA. HST Connect aims to link areas to the European high-speed rail network. This wider project was key to the funding package as a whole. The Dover Priory scheme fitted with HST Connect and wider European objectives, and Dover's international role was seen as beneficial to the European scheme.

A financial package of around £350,000 was developed, using the Kent Local Transport Plan, regeneration funding from Dover District Council and Kent County Council, the Railway Heritage Trust, European funding (Interreg IIIb for the North West Europe Region), and support from South Eastern Trains.

The proposed new interchange, in addition to transport benefits, was marketed as the catalyst for regeneration and social inclusion

Attaching the Dover project to an existing European funding partnership under development facilitated the project's transition through the Interreg IIIB application process.

Lessons learnt

Key to the development of this project has been a focused, pro-active local partnership, aided by a wider enthusiastic partnership, including the rail industry and the regional development agency SEEDA. Reflecting partner interests, the project aims to bring social, economic and environmental benefits, and this is reflected in the funding achieved.

Kent and its rail network has benefited from other Interreg-funded schemes too. Other examples are major investment in the station and interchange upgrade at Ashford International station, and links with the Fastrack guided bus serving Ebbsfleet and local stations on the North Kent line. These schemes have brought to Kent an unparalleled level of benefit. It shows what can be done by building up the knowledge and networking necessary to overcome barriers to successful European funding applications, together with the support of the regional development agency.

Case Study:

Taunton Interchange

Introduction

Taunton is the county town for Somerset and a regional growth centre. It is a gateway to Exmoor National Park and the attractive Somerset coast, including the busy Butlins camp at Minehead.

Taunton station benefits from high-speed intercity rail connections to London, the Midlands and South West and a range of local services. The Taunton Interchange project focused on the strategic role of the station in helping the town to grow and to serve its wider region.

The problems

The local and regional authorities are aware that some of the local communities suffer from social deprivation and exclusion, not helped by transport and accessibility problems. There are particular concentrations of deprivation within parts of Taunton and Minehead and within rural communities such as Watchet, Williton and Dunster. Until the end of 2006 West Somerset was designated a European Objective 2 area. This entitled the area to regional development funding aimed at raising levels of economic activity closer to the European average. Regional planning guidance emphasised the role of poor access to jobs and services in rural West Somerset as a factor in relatively poor economic performance.

Regional and local planning and transport plans specifically recognised that upgrading integrated transport facilities was important for accommodating Taunton's strategic growth. Current facilities were a barrier to growth opportunities.

There were several specific issues at the station that this project was trying to address:

- Bus services at Taunton station were frequent and well used, but facilities for people wanting to use the bus were poor and hard to get to
- The stop for Taunton town centre, served by 13 buses per hour, was under a dark and damp railway bridge – not a secure or attractive location, and difficult for passengers with luggage
- People travelling further afield by regular buses to Minehead and elsewhere suffered from limited facilities and awkward access – for passengers and buses – within the south side car park
- Cycle parking facilities at the station were dated and insecure, and surrounding roads were not cycle friendly
- Increasingly, Taunton station car park was becoming full – sufficient for current travel patterns, but the local authorities and train operators were concerned that growth of rail use from Taunton would be stifled

The solution

FirstGroup coordinated a diverse partnership which included Network Rail, Somerset County Council, FirstBus and local developers. The company also took the lead in commissioning plans for an upgraded interchange. With assistance from First's funding consultants, Transport

Regeneration, the project partners agreed on the scope of the project. They then developed a funding package of over £300,000, which included the partners' own resources and a grant from the Strategic Rail Authority through its Rail Passenger Partnership scheme.

The scheme will facilitate growth at the station and open up direct bus links to a range of destinations in Somerset

The project resulted in several improvements. At the main station entrance, a new contraflow bus and cycle route, new bus stop and shelter and new drop-off/pick-up point for cars and taxis were created, as were segregated pedestrian access across the forecourt and additional cycle parking. At the former main station entrance, a new passenger waiting room with direct access to platforms and buses was built, a new circulation system meant buses don't need to reverse within the car park, and 70 additional parking spaces, with CCTV, were created. The station was improved throughout by better local and interchange information and signage and upgraded lighting.

The scheme will facilitate growth at the station and open up direct bus links to a range of destinations in Somerset, including Taunton town, Butlins in Minehead, the West Somerset Railway (a steam railway) at Watchet and Minehead stations, Wells, Glastonbury, Exmoor National Park and the Somerset coast.

Following on the success of the station scheme, a number of complementary initiatives have been gathering steam. They include:

- **Project Taunton**, an extensive regeneration scheme set to make Taunton 'the centre for sustainable and prosperous living in the South West'. Major regeneration proposals include retail development in the town centre

and residential and commercial redevelopment in the station area. Financial support for Project Taunton has come from the Environment Agency, the South West Regional Development Agency and local authorities, as well as developers

- **A rail industry scheme** to boost capacity and accommodate a higher level of rail service from the station, achieved through reusing a former island platform
- **'Steamlink'**, the local bus connection between Taunton station, the West Somerset Railway and Minehead which began in 2007. This service is sponsored by Somerset County Council and run in partnership with the West Somerset Railway and Cooks Coaches
- **'Adopt A Station'**, First Greater Western's community programme designed to make stations a vibrant part of the community, which was piloted at the station. A local primary school was invited to adopt the station and to contribute to station flower baskets and planters, with the children first visiting the Borough Council nurseries where the flowers were grown. In 2006 the Taunton station won a Royal Horticultural Society special award for its outstanding contribution to Taunton in Bloom.

Lessons learnt

The Taunton scheme is an excellent example of establishing a virtuous circle of continuous improvements. The interchange project is enabling increased rail use and growth of the town in its regional role, in addition to a host of successor projects in which the station plays a major role.

Making connections between local conditions and regional and national policies were key to establishing the project. The scheme also demonstrates the opportunities available through linking with indirect benefits such as economic regeneration and social inclusion.

Developer contributions facilitated the scheme's funding package. Council hierarchies and structures do not always make good communication easy. Even if inter-departmental communications are good, council planning officers need to know what the weaknesses of the local

integrated transport system are and require assurance that if funding were made available, these weaknesses could be addressed.

There are examples elsewhere in the UK of developer funds being allocated for integrated transport purposes but unspent for years and then returned to developers. Good communication and coordination is the remedy, both within and between stakeholder organisations. Rail industry input at an early stage to development frameworks and planning briefs is instrumental in achieving viable schemes. Often this input will be required some years before any investment is made available.

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The New Burscough Bridge Interchange

PHOTO: ATOC, THE ASSOCIATION OF TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Case Study:

Burscough Bridge Interchange

Introduction

Lancashire County Council has a growing number of well developed rail initiatives to its credit. One of the most notable is the completion of an interchange at Burscough Bridge Station.

The problems

Burscough, with a population of nearly 10,000, is the largest community along the Southport to Wigan rail line and is the point at which the Southport to Wigan and Preston to Ormskirk railways cross each other. There is no connection between the two lines and the stations serving them – Burscough Junction and Burscough

Bridge – are some distance apart. In 2002 Burscough was identified by the Northwest Regional Development Agency as a community in need of economic regeneration.

The West of Lancashire Community Rail Partnership, in conjunction with Lancashire County Council, undertook a Travel Needs Assessment of the area. They found that people from the surrounding rural communities were travelling into Burscough not only to use the facilities within the village but also to interchange between bus and rail, or bus and bus, for health, education, leisure and work purposes. The study suggested that appropriate facilities would allow for more growth in sustainable travel.

The solution

The findings of the Travel Needs Assessment suggested that a more identifiable interchange point would be beneficial. Burscough Bridge station offered the best location. It had better opportunities for access and subsequent social and economic benefits for the community, as well as the environmental benefits associated with public transport.

The project's development stage illustrates a number of useful points:

- Partnership was important in ensuring synergy with wider policy and benefits. The Community Rail Partnership and Lancashire County Council have been able to apply expertise beyond rail-centred outputs, to develop a more robust case for funding
- Full use was made of Northwest Regional Development Agency designation for economic regeneration. Regional agencies can play a key role in both justifying a project and, in some cases, facilitating funding
- A robust justification of need was key. Wider issues were identified in advance, and this helped in the consultation with stakeholders. As a result, everyone involved agreed to develop a formal bus/rail interchange at Burscough Bridge station

Funding

The Community Rail Partnership (CRP) concept has been adopted by the Department for Transport, along with a Community Rail Development Strategy. Specialist CRP Officers can often be an important part of local authority public transport teams.

For the Burscough Bridge Interchange project, the West of Lancashire CRP Officer developed various funding bids to secure the £760,000 capital and £377,000 revenue support needed. Funding came through a partnership between Lancashire County Council, Northwest Regional Development Agency, the Countryside Agency and West Lancashire District Council. Northern Rail provided an 'in kind' contribution through the involvement of key people at all stages of the scheme.

The scheme was completed and opened to the public in November 2005 and is proving a great success:

- A brand new, state-of-the-art interchange building comprises a travel and information office, a café and staff accommodation. The travel and information office sells the full range of National Rail products. The interchange also provides passengers with a heated waiting area and an accessible public toilet
- The interchange is staffed Monday to Saturday and employs two full-time staff and one casual member of staff. Since opening, hours have been extended to meet growing demand
- A new bus waiting facility has been provided outside the main station entrance, along with a taxi and 'kiss and ride' area where passengers can be dropped off. All local bus services have been re-routed to serve the interchange, and timetables of some services have been adjusted to improve coordination with train arrival and departure times
- Secure cycle lockers are provided, and this facility is proving so popular that there are plans for it to be expanded in the near future
- An extensive CCTV system covers the expanded customer car park, the interchange building and all public areas. This has now been extended to cover Burscough Junction station
- There is a locally operated public address system
- There is separate step-free access to both platforms

The project is being carefully monitored in order to provide useful data to influence future similar initiatives



Interchange in action

PHOTO: ATOC, THE ASSOCIATION OF TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

The county council, in partnership with Northern Rail, has recently completed a survey of various stations which, economically, would struggle to justify investment. From this initial survey, Accrington Station has been chosen to act as a demonstration of eco-building techniques. The council hopes to develop a demonstration project that uses the latest in 'green' building methods and renewable energy technology. The emphasis on eco-initiatives should significantly widen the funding opportunities. On the basis of experience, the council sensibly realises that the funding of rail development often requires more outputs than a new station building.

Future opportunities

The various project partners all agree that the Burscough Interchange project is a resounding success.

The interchange has only been open for a short period but already there has been a sharp growth in usage of Burscough Bridge station. Latest figures show that usage is up 14% on the previous year and is increasing. This is bringing new challenges:

- There is increasing demand to extend opening times and to open on Sundays. To meet this the project is now looking to take on an additional member of staff
- The car park is now full
- The secure cycle parking is proving very popular and additional cycle lockers will be obtained shortly
- Further improvements to local bus services are being pursued to improve coordination and to provide better links to local communities. In time a through bus-rail ticket may be introduced – especially when the line is formally designated as a Community Rail Line by the Department for Transport

The project is being carefully monitored in order to provide useful data to influence future similar initiatives. While this may seem an obvious thing to do, it is surprising that many organisations ignore this opportunity both to gain from the excellent publicity and to justify by example the development of future schemes.



The new interchange. Emphasis on 'interchange' improved fundability

PHOTO: ATOC, THE ASSOCIATION OF TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Case Study:

Liverpool South Parkway

Introduction

Liverpool South Parkway (LSP) is Merseyrail's 'most modern station in Europe'. Located in what was one of Liverpool's most deprived areas, Speke Garston, some seven miles south of the city centre, LSP is a multi-modal interchange project forming part of a huge regeneration scheme. The station opened in June 2006 and levels of use are around double the number of people predicted.

The problem

The problem was how Speke Garston was to cope with future transport demands.

During the 1980s, the communities of Speke and Garston suffered from a loss of heavy manufacturing and port employment. The area was in steep decline, with high unemployment, poor housing, poor educational attainment and half of its households living in poverty. Against this background, a tri-partite agency approach was formed, with separate but complementary aims. A successful partnership, the agencies together have achieved a transformation of one of the UK's largest regeneration areas, now known as Speke Garston.

New jobs and housing, improved quality of life, and expansion of Liverpool's John Lennon Airport have all generated new demands for travel in and around

Speke Garston. Up to 11,000 new jobs are planned. The regeneration agencies were conscious that access was a constraint on future growth, and Merseytravel was keen to encourage public transport access.

The solution

Merseytravel steered a partnership to look at how to meet the travel needs of the area. Appraisal and local consultation identified a new station as the appropriate transport solution. However, the project was never 'sold' as simply a station project. Instead, the Liverpool South Parkway project was presented as a multimodal transport gateway to the Speke Garston regeneration area, including John Lennon Airport. The project had to be attractive to motorists, to achieve a switch from car to public transport, and to be socially inclusive, with good links to the local community via flexible bus services. As a bonus, the project is a showcase for low-carbon construction and energy use.

The project includes an excellent point of access to the national rail network; a single integrated booking office and information point, encompassing bus, rail and airport services; a bus station; a 24-hour high frequency airport link; a 240-space park and ride facility and secure cycle and motorcycle parking.

Environmental aspects of LSP include:

- Use of waste and recycled products in the building construction instead of environmentally damaging materials, for instance waste slag in place of cement
- Rainwater harvesting, aided by the distinctive slope of the building's roof
- Renewable energy systems, including geo-thermal heat pumps and solar photovoltaic cells, to reduce ongoing carbon emissions and energy costs.

These environmentally friendly innovations formed part of the case for funding.

Merseytravel continues to foster good community relations at the station. For example, local schoolchildren planted a wildflower area at the station in June 2007.



Station interior. Note the use of recycled aluminum as a roofing material. Innovation improves fundability.

PHOTO: ATOC, THE ASSOCIATION OF TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

The project has won a number of awards, not just from the rail sector but also reflecting LSP's environmental and community credentials.

Funding

The steering group led by Merseytravel also included Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Land Development Company, Government Office for the North West, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Network Rail and train operators Northern, Central and Merseyrail Electrics. This range of partners contributed a varied skills base and ensured that wide-ranging outputs were incorporated into the project from the outset, which led to a comprehensive approach to securing funding.

The total project cost was £32 million. The perspectives and financial contributions of the various funding partners were:

Merseytravel: The agency contributed £14 million in pursuit of its goal to encourage public transport in Liverpool

Liverpool City Council: Funding from a city council can be difficult to justify on transport benefits alone. The city council's contribution of £1 million recognises the scheme's contribution to economic development, social inclusion and regeneration

Department for Transport (DfT): Securing DfT support required some flexibility on the part of Merseytravel. The DfT was not directly funding rail-based schemes in 2004. In this year, the LSP project met DfT funding criteria by downplaying the rail elements of the project and placing a strong emphasis on the multimodal role of the scheme as a gateway linking buses, regeneration opportunities and the airport. Some £6 million was raised from the DfT in this way

Government Office for the North West: Regional Government Offices often play a key role in the development of major public transport initiatives and a key role in terms of European funds. The potential value of European funding means early involvement of regional Government Offices can be an astute move, as in this case. European Regional Development Funding of £11 million was secured with the support of the Government Office.

The current revamp of European funding presents a range of opportunities for capital projects relevant to the rail industry. Station buildings are prime candidates

Innovation is often important in the European funding process. LSP met the innovation criterion by embracing environmentally friendly building technologies. There is a growing enthusiasm across the European Union for raising the profile of low-carbon technologies. The current revamp of European funding presents a range of opportunities for capital projects relevant to the rail industry. Station buildings are prime candidates, because they tend to offer good accessibility and to be high profile in their communities.



Cycle parking. Note choice of equipment and natural surveillance through use of large window

PHOTO: ATOC, THE ASSOCIATION OF TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Lessons learnt

This project would not have got off the ground without the wider regeneration scheme. Its success is also due in part to Merseytravel’s inclusive and flexible approach, involving the appropriate stakeholders at the outset and tailoring the project specification and outputs to be attractive to funders.

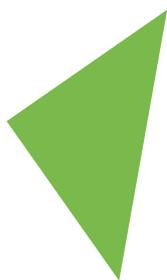
Replicating good practice

If you wish to improve and develop your local rail network, keep the following in mind:

1. Extend the scope of the scheme so it attracts a range of stakeholders from the outset. This will mean thinking beyond the conventional areas of funding.
2. Gather appropriate expertise within the team. Thinking creatively beyond transport is as vital as commitment to the project. Transport is, fundamentally, not an end in itself but a means of enabling other activities. Consider tackling issues such as:
 - **Development and regeneration.** Vast investment is often bound up with development and regeneration programmes. Accessibility can be a pre-requisite for their success, so improved rail accessibility and local transport integration should be part of development frameworks. The rail industry can feed into the development process, and help development planners to understand the current accessibility problems and barriers and how they can be practically addressed
 - **Social exclusion.** Deprived communities often suffer from problems in getting to work, health care facilities, and education and training opportunities. Transport schemes can be targeted to address these issues. In-kind support, for example the value of time contributed by a hospital travel plan coordinator, will be counted as matched funding in some cases. Local transport plans – the vehicles for public investment in local transport – should aim to address exclusion and poor access. By addressing social exclusion, rail improvement schemes can attract the support of local authorities. The rail industry can feed into the local transport plan by looking at how rail could contribute to wider local authority objectives
 - **Security.** This can be key to encouraging greater use of the public realm and public transport. Local authorities, the Home Office and Crime Reduction Partnerships may have an interest. Beyond capital investment schemes, there may be ongoing opportunities for joint working and sharing staff resources and IT
 - **Tourism.** Improved rail accessibility and facilities can help generate tourist activity and, ideally, bring specific benefits to existing tourism operators
 - **Built heritage and redevelopment opportunities.** Consider the vast number of listed railway structures and the potential to make more use of now redundant railway buildings. This can attract specialist support, for example through the Railway Heritage Trust or local trusts
 - **Community engagement.** Involving the community may raise opportunities for trust and other funding. Local businesses may see synergies with their own plans. A sense of local ownership can help ensure future maintenance of improved facilities. Community engagement is an element of the Department for Transport's Community Rail Development Strategy
3. Commit enough resources to ongoing communication with partners and keep them all on board. Different stakeholders will have their own agendas and timescales. Maintaining their motivation and support through what can be a frustratingly long development process demands effective project management, sensitivity to their interests and ongoing communication.
4. Small can be beautiful. A small partnership scheme can create goodwill and a positive climate for other benefits.

A good example is the work of the Runton and District Women's Institute (WI), which not only looks after the community notice board that displays railway information, but also cares for and develops the award-winning station gardens at West Runton. This is paid for with money from the Bittern Line Partnership, supplemented by funds raised from an annual platform tea party. Caring for the station gardens has led to a wide range of benefits for the line and the communities it serves: the train service is more frequent and passenger numbers have more than doubled over three years.

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Campaign for Better Transport is the new name of Transport 2000, which has been securing better transport policies and programmes since 1973.



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