



## Barking station – What passengers want

November 2010

## **Management Summary**

Passenger Focus is the independent passenger watchdog, set up by the government to get the best deal for passengers. London TravelWatch is the official watchdog organisation representing the interests of transport users in and around the capital.

Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch have been working closely with the rail industry in order to understand how Barking station might better serve the needs of passengers and commissioned BRDC Continental to carry out research in order to establish passenger satisfaction with 5 key areas highlighted below and passenger priorities for improvement at the station.

There were four key objectives for this research:

- 1) To understand current passenger satisfaction with Barking station.
- 2) To identify the passenger priorities for improvement at Barking station.
- 3) To determine whether there were any specific differences in the levels of satisfaction/priorities for improvement between passengers using C2C, London Overground and London Underground services to/from the station.
- 4) To undertake the research in such a way that the methodology could be used to assess the impact of any future station improvements on passenger satisfaction.

## **Key Findings:**

### **Passenger Profile**

- 67% of the passengers surveyed were commuters travelling, on average, slightly more than 4 times per week. 30% of passengers were leisure passengers with the remainder travelling for business.
- 13% of passengers stated that they had a disability or long term illness. A specific consultation exercise was undertaken to seek the views of disabled passengers.

### **Access to and from Barking**

- The main way passengers accessed Barking was either on foot, by bus or by tube. Most passengers were satisfied with their method of travel to and from Barking (Bus -76% satisfaction, walking - 80% satisfaction and tube - 82% satisfaction).
- 19% of passengers were changing trains when they were handed the questionnaire and this should be considered when viewing the results, particularly those around the provision of information.

- One key area passengers felt could be improved is the area immediately outside the main station entrance/exit. Passengers wanted the flow of passengers into/out of the station to be improved as well as the waiting areas for buses and other modes of transport, which are located directly outside the station.

### **Passenger Information**

- Passengers at Barking highlighted improvements to the provision of information at the station as one of the key areas requiring improvement.
- Passengers highlighted real time information about train running (noted by 46% of passengers), information on the platform (noted by 36% of passengers) and information boards on the concourse (noted by 35% of passengers) as the key areas for improvement.
- Information provision was seen as relatively important amongst London Overground passengers when compared to those using C2C and London Underground services.

### **Station amenities/key areas of the station**

- Under half (46%) of passengers were satisfied with the amenities and also with the key areas of the station used by passengers.
- The key improvement passengers would like to see to the amenities on the station is to the toilet facilities (noted by 55% of passengers). This figure is even higher for leisure/business passengers (noted by 62% of passengers).
- London Overground passengers wanted to see improvements to the waiting facilities and availability of seating on the station.
- Improving the lift provision was the amenity passengers most wanted to see improved (noted by 49% of leisure/business passengers and 38% of commuters). Commuters were also keen to see improvements made to the main entrance/exit to the station.

### **Safety and security**

- The key safety and security issue passengers wanted to be addressed is the visibility of station staff at night, which was the key priority for all groups of passengers (noted by 71% of passengers).
- Slightly less than half the passengers questioned (49%) were satisfied with the safety and security of the station.

## Retail outlets

- Passengers were asked about the retail facilities they wanted to see at Barking, regardless of whether those facilities exist. Cash machines and newsagents were the most requested outlets however passengers felt that addressing a number of other issues should take priority (see below).

## Passenger Priorities

Passengers were given a set of paired statements and asked to select the improvement they felt was most important. The greater the score, the more importance passengers place on the improvement.

**Priorities for improvement arising from Stated Preference analysis**

	Rank (all passengers)	Commuters	Other journey type
Security at station	1	1	1
More station staff	2	2	2
Real time information	3	3	7
Toilets	4	5	3
Less passenger congestion at the automatic ticket gates	5	4	6
Step-free access from the booking office to the platforms	6	6	4
Waiting rooms	7	8	5
Ease of entry/exit to the station through the main entrance	8	7	8
Access from the main concourse to the platforms via the stairs	9	10	10
Canopies covering the whole length of the platform	=10	9	12
Bus links	=10	11	9
Interactive help points	12	12	13
Lightning in the booking hall	13	13	11
Range of retail/catering facilities	14	14	14

**Base: All passengers 572**

Security at the station was the top priority for improvement amongst all passengers. As noted above, this was particular issue after dark.

The remaining priorities are largely consistent. The only minor differences were that commuters would like to see more station staff and improvements to the real time information as their second

and third priorities. Leisure/business passengers prioritised the need for more station staff and improvements to the toilet facilities as their second and third priorities for improvement.

## **Research context and objectives**

Passenger Focus is the independent passenger watchdog, set up by the government to get the best deal for passengers. London TravelWatch is the official watchdog organisation representing the interests of transport users in and around the capital.

In November 2009 the 'Better Rail Stations' report<sup>1</sup> highlighted a number of areas for the improvement of Britain's railway stations, including a recommendation that ten Category 'B' major interchanges, including Barking, required additional funding in order to bring them up to the minimum station standards outlined in the report. 3.8 million passengers used Barking to start or end their journey in 2008/09.

Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch have been working closely with the rail industry in order to understand how Barking station might better serve the needs of passengers and commissioned BRDC Continental to carry out research in order to establish passenger satisfaction and priorities for improvement at the station.

The current economic climate makes it more important than ever that passenger priorities for improvement at the station are considered in the development of any schemes, in order to ensure that these address the primary concerns of those using the station.

There were four key objectives for this research:

- 1) To understand current passenger satisfaction with Barking station.
- 2) To identify the passenger priorities for improvement at Barking.
- 3) To determine whether there were any specific differences in the satisfaction/priorities for improvement between passengers using C2C, London Overground or London Underground services to/from the station.
- 4) To undertake the research in such a way that the methodology could be used to assess the impact of any future station improvements on passenger satisfaction.

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<sup>1</sup> Better Rail Stations : An independent review presented to Lord Adonis, Secretary of State for Transport – November 2009

## Methodology and sampling

Passengers using Barking station were approached by a BDRC Continental interviewer at random and asked if they would fill in a self-completion questionnaire about the services and facilities provided at the station. To encourage participation, the interviewer explained the purpose of the survey and the importance of hearing their views.

Those that agreed were given a questionnaire to take away and complete, a pre paid envelope was also supplied to enable it to be returned to BDRC Continental for analysis. A full copy of the questionnaire is included in appendix 1.

All surveys at Barking were distributed between 18<sup>th</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April. To ensure a good spread of passengers the interviewers rotated between different platforms on the station and the shifts worked covered the following times of day:

- 06:00am to 10:00am
- 11:00am to 15:00pm
- 16:00pm to 20:00pm

*NB: On some occasions these shift times varied by up to 1 hour.*

Shifts took place both during the week and at the weekend in order to ensure a range of passengers were able to complete the questionnaire.

Passengers were asked how satisfied they were with a range of facilities/services at Barking. The scale used to rate each facility/service was: Very satisfied; fairly satisfied; neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; fairly dissatisfied or; very dissatisfied. Passengers were then asked about the things they would most like to see improved about each facility/service.

In order to produce a list showing the highest overall priorities at Barking, a 'paired statements' question was asked. Working with Network Rail, a total of 14 attributes that might benefit passengers were identified. These were an amalgamation of previously identified passenger priorities for improvements at other stations<sup>2</sup> and ideas for improvement being considered at Barking.

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<sup>2</sup> Passenger Focus National Stations Improvement Programme research, December 2009.

Using the paired preference question technique, comparisons were made between each to identify which were the most important (see Q24 on the attached questionnaire). For each pair passengers had to say which one of the two was the improvement they would most like to see. This information was then analysed to provide an importance factor for each attribute.

In total 2,775 questionnaires were handed out at Barking and 572 (21%) fully completed questionnaires were returned for analysis. Figure 1 below shows the operator of the train services that passengers were using on the journey where they were handed the questionnaire. These percentages add up to over 100% as some passengers were changing trains and therefore used more than one operator.

**Figure 1: Train company used to travel to/from Barking**

	All
C2C	57%
London Overground	22%
London Underground	57%

**Base: All passengers (572)**

29% of passengers were changing trains at Barking when handed a survey and this needs to be considered, particularly in the context of passenger priorities for improvement to information on the station.

Passengers were also asked about the purpose of their journey. 67% of passengers were commuters, making an average of just over 4 journeys per week. 30% of passengers were leisure passengers with the main journey purpose being to visit friends and relatives (10%) whilst only 3% were travelling for business.

C2C and London Underground passengers were more likely to be commuting (70% and 68% of passengers respectively were commuting) than London Overground Passengers (60%).

The ticket types used by passengers are shown in figure 2 below:



**Figure 2: Type of ticket used**

	All
Weekly or monthly season	31%
Oyster Pay As You Go	26%
Freedom pass	17%
Anytime ticket	9%
Day travelcard	7%
Other	7%
Off peak ticket	3%

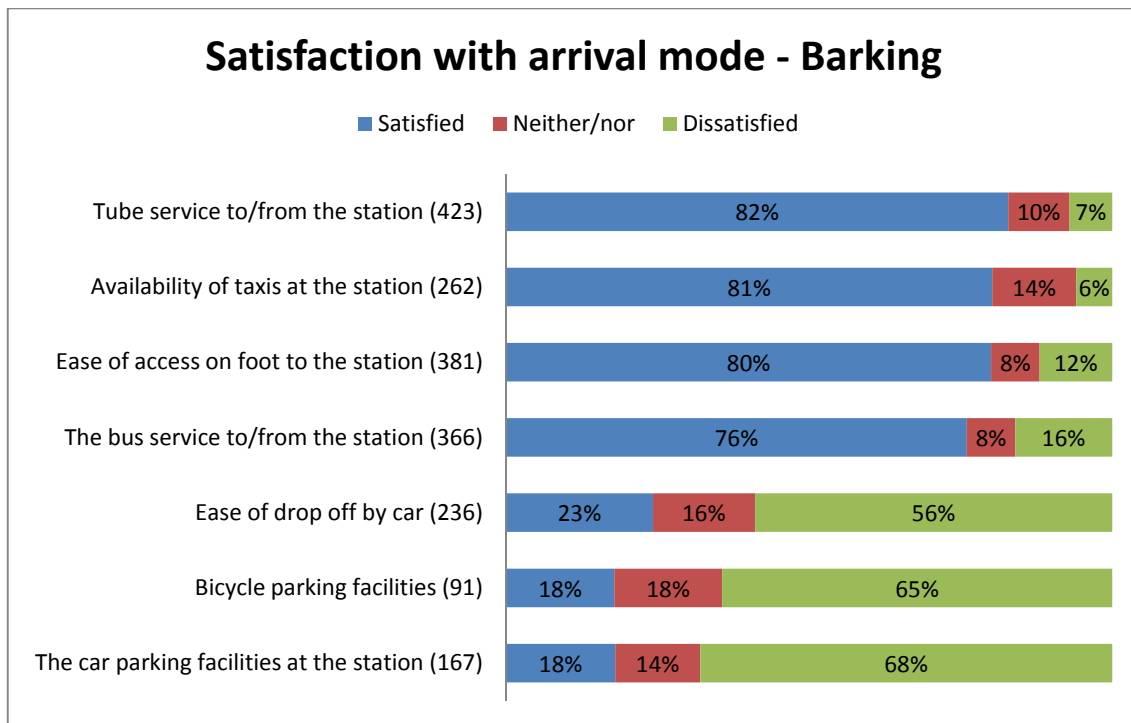
**Base: All passengers (572)**

## Findings

### Travel to and from the station:

31% of passengers surveyed were arriving at the station to start their journey. Of these passengers, 54% walked to the station, 38% used the bus with very few passengers used other modes of transport to arrive at the station. Figure 3 below shows satisfaction with the different modes used to access Barking station, the sample sizes for mode are shown in brackets.

**Figure 3: Satisfaction with arrival modes at Barking**



It should be noted that the low response rates and satisfaction levels for car and bicycle parking are likely to be due to the lack of facilities at Barking, and consequently the low numbers of passengers who stated they arrived at the station by car/bike.

19% of passengers would like to use an alternative mode of transport to get to or from the station. This may reflect high levels of satisfaction with walking and using bus and tube services to get to the station. Half of those wanting to travel by an alternative mode would like to arrive by bus or tube. There were a wide range of potential improvements suggested which would lead to passengers using an alternative mode of transport, with no one factor standing out as particularly important.

Passengers were asked to note areas which they felt would most improve their journey to/from the station. Passengers were given free-text box to record their views and the main factors mentioned

are noted in figure 4 below. Passengers were able to record as many observations as they wished so the percentages in the table total more than 100%.

**Figure 4: Improvements passengers would like to see; Getting to/from the station**

Secure, well lit areas when waiting for lift/bus/connection	48%
Less pedestrian congestion at the bus stops	44%
Better protection from weather when waiting	41%
A safer walking route to and from the station	37%
Better information of transport services to and from the station	34%
More frequent buses	31%
Better parking/waiting areas for cars meeting you	29%
Better lightning on approach to station when arriving on foot	27%
Ease of car access to and from the station	23%
Better signage to buses/information about buses	22%
Better cycle routes to and from the station	11%
Better signage to find taxis	6%
Better taxi queuing arrangement	5%

**Base: All passengers (572)**

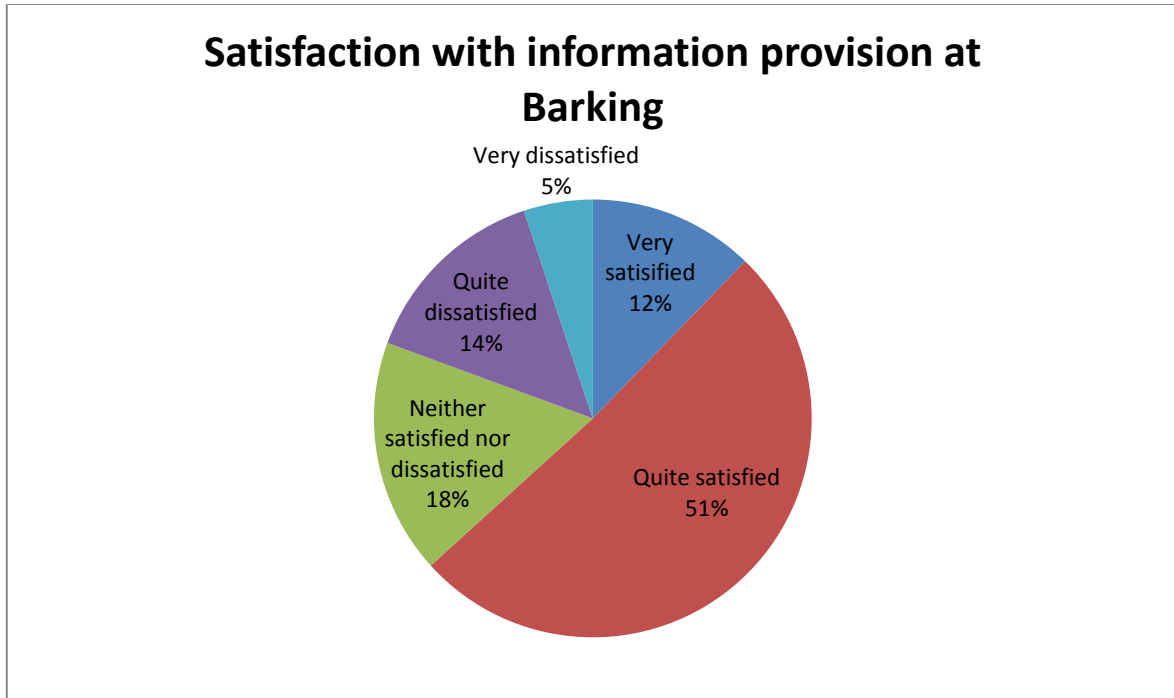
The results were similar irrespective of the train operator used or the journey purpose with factors relating to the current arrangements around the entrance being flagged as those which passengers feel are in greatest need of improvement.

Passengers also commented on concerns about their security when walking to, or waiting for, onward travel from the station.

**Provision of passenger information:**

Figure 5 below shows passenger satisfaction with the passenger information services at Barking. 62% of passengers were satisfied with the provision of information and this figure was consistent across passengers using all three operator's services.

**Figure 5: Satisfaction with information provision**



**Base: All passengers (552)**

Respondents were then asked: *'thinking about the passenger information services at this station which, if any, of these do you think need to be improved?'* Figure 6 below shows passenger responses to this question. It should be noted passengers were able to select more than one option.

**Figure 6: Improvements needed to information services at Barking**

	All
Real time train running information on platforms	43%
Information about which platform to catch my train from	36%
Electronic train departure boards (on station concourse)	35%
Information about local bus services	30%
Direction signs to find your way around the station	29%
Local area information	27%
Up to date timetable posters	26%
Public address announcements	23%

**Base: All passengers (479)**

Information about train running on platforms was the area where passengers most wanted improvement (46%) with information about the platforms that trains depart from (36%) and electronic departure boards (35%) also important.

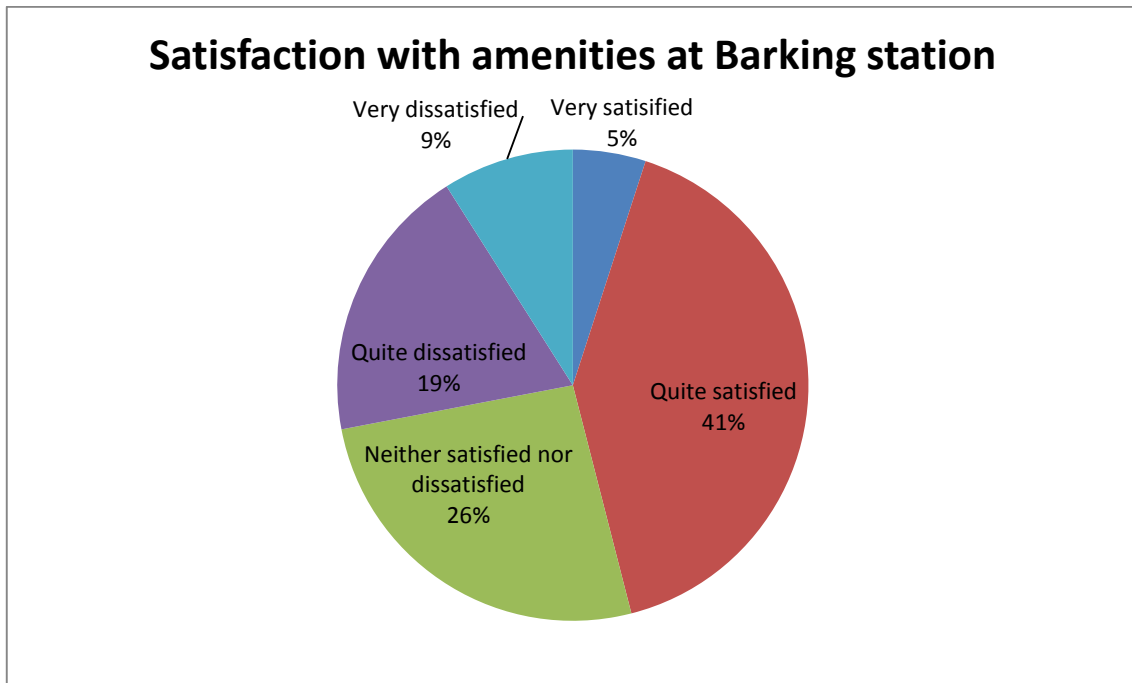
These factors were particularly important to London Overground passengers. 51% rated real time running information on platforms as a priority, (compared to 46% of London Underground passengers and 35% of C2C passengers) and 49% noted that improvements were needed to information about departure platforms, (compared to 35% of London Underground passengers and 32% of C2C passengers.)

These priorities for improvement were consistent regardless of passengers journey purpose.

**Provision of station amenities:**

Figure 7 below shows passenger satisfaction with the amenities, (namely toilets, waiting facilities and retail outlets) at Barking. Overall satisfaction was 46% and this was consistent across all passengers regardless of the train operator used or journey purpose.

**Figure 7: Satisfaction with the station amenities**



**Base: All passengers (556)**

Respondents were asked to consider which passenger facilities most needed to be improved at Barking. Figure 8 below shows the passenger responses to this question. As in previous questions, passengers were able to select more than one option.

**Figure 8: Improvements wanted to passenger amenities**

	All
Availability of toilets	55%
Availability of waiting rooms on platforms	48%
Bins	48%
Condition of the toilets	43%
Availability of seating on platforms	41%
Condition of seating on platforms	26%
Condition of waiting rooms on platforms	22%
Provision of retail and catering facilities	17%
Canopies over the platforms	16%

**Base: All passengers (479)**

Regardless of the train operator, a high percentage of all passengers wanted to see improvements to the availability of toilets at Barking. Leisure/business passengers were particularly keen to see this improvement (62% noted the need for improvement compared to 51% of commuters.)

The availability of waiting rooms was the second highest priority for leisure/business passengers (51%) and the third highest (46%), behind the provision of more bins, for commuters.

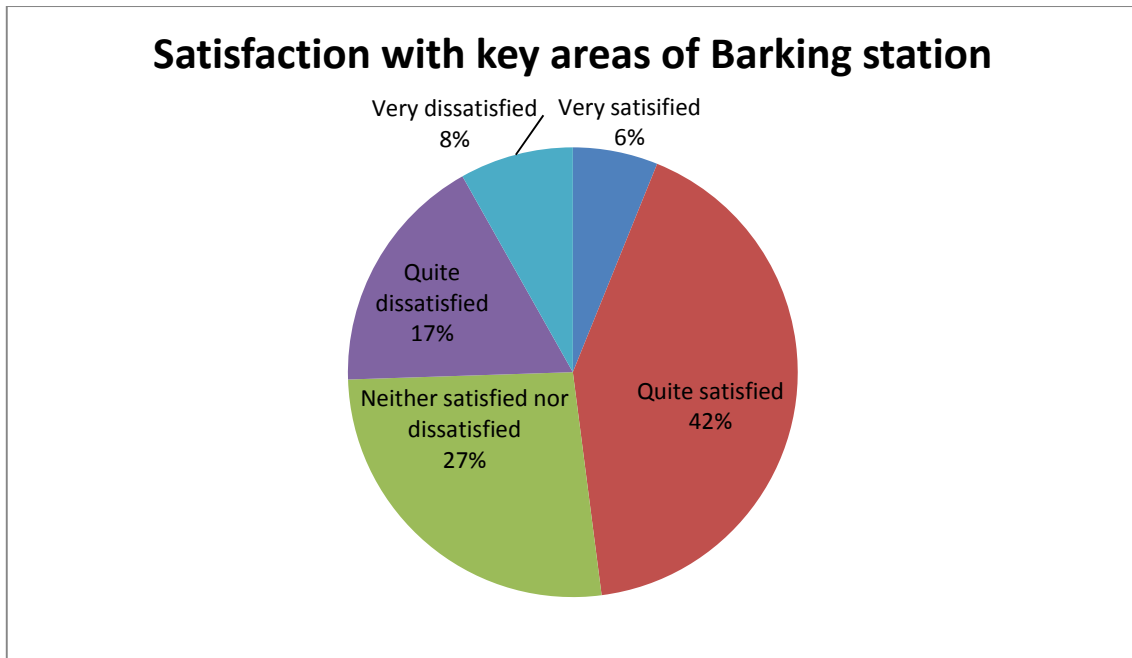
London Overground passengers were particularly keen to see improvements to the waiting facilities rating the availability of seating (57%) and availability of waiting rooms on platforms (55%) as their top priorities. This is likely to be due to the frequency of the service for London Overground passengers (2 trains per hour at the time of the survey) which has subsequently been increased.

**Key passenger areas of the station:**

The survey looked at the areas of the station that passengers commonly use and established which areas passengers felt were the highest priority for improvement. The key areas in question included the entrances and booking halls, key walking routes around the station and the platform areas.

Figure 9 below shows 46% passengers were satisfied with the key areas of the station. This figure rose to 57% satisfaction amongst leisure/business passengers.

**Figure 9: Satisfaction with key areas of the station**



**Base: All passengers (542)**

In order to understand which areas of the station were of greatest concern to passengers, respondents were invited to highlight areas which they felt were a priority for improvement. These are shown in figure 10 below. As for previous questions, more than one option may have been selected.



**Figure 10: Key station areas needing improvement**

	All
Lifts	42%
Main station entrances and exits	36%
Appearance of the booking hall	32%
Access to the platform from the booking hall	29%
Ticket office sales points	29%
Subway(s)	26%
Cleanliness of platforms	25%
Track area free from litter/vegetation	22%
Platforms – size of gap between train and platform	12%
Footbridge(s)	12%

**Base: All passengers (468)**

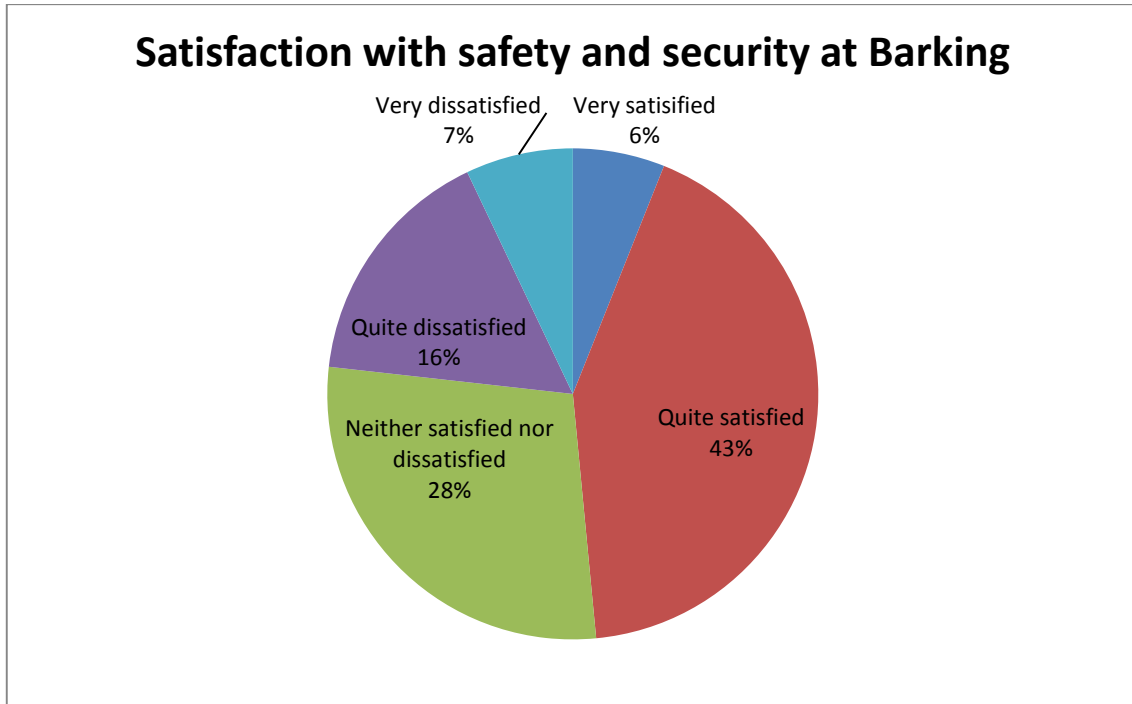
Passengers key priority for improvement was the lift access onto the station platforms (42%). This area was significantly more important for leisure/business passengers (49%) than commuters (38%) who rated it as their second highest priority. Whilst it is noted that there is lift access from the concourse to platforms, this is a staff-operated facility and interchange between platforms is difficult.

Commuters highest priority (39%) and the second highest priority across all passengers (36%) was improvements to the main station entrance/exit. As noted above, passengers mentioned the congestion and the current location of the bus stops just outside the main station entrance/exit.

**Passenger safety and security:**

Passengers were asked to rate their satisfaction with safety and security on the station. Just under half of passengers were satisfied (49%) although this figure was higher among London Overground passengers (57% satisfied) when compared to London Underground (51% satisfied) and C2C (46% satisfied) passengers. Figure 11 below shows overall satisfaction with safety and security.

**Figure 11: Satisfaction with safety and security**



**Base: All passengers (560)**

Passengers were asked to note their key areas for improvement; the key issue for all passengers, regardless of journey purpose or train operator used was the number of staff visible after dark (71%). Whilst still the top priority for London Overground passengers, this area was of less concern with 57% of passengers highlighting it as an issue.

Leisure/business passengers also wanted to see more staff presence during the daytime (49%) and improvements to the lighting on the station (42%). Improvements to the lighting were the second highest rated issue for commuters (37%). Figure 13 below shows the overall passenger priorities.

**Table 12: Improvements wanted to safety and security**

	All
Number of visible staff after dark	71%
Number of visible staff in the daytime	39%
Station lighting	38%
Level of CCTV provision	30%
Overcrowding on platforms	29%
Provision of help points	28%
Location of help points	22%

**Base: All passengers (479)**

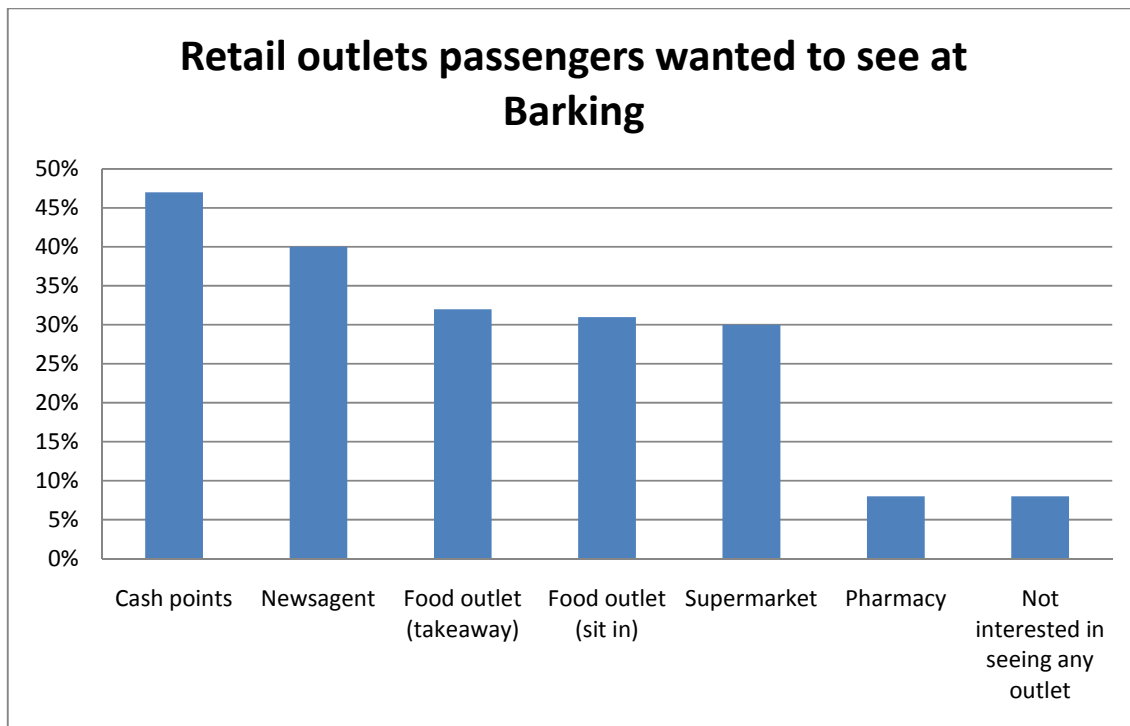
**Retail outlets:**

Passengers were asked which, if any, types of retail outlet they would like to see at Barking, regardless of whether the facility is already available at the station. Figure 13 below shows that cash machines were the facility passengers would most like to have at the station (47%).

Leisure/business passengers generally wanted the facilities more than commuters and rated having a newsagent (47%) and sit-in food and drink outlet as their second and third highest priorities. A higher proportion of London Overground passengers, when compared to those using London Underground and C2C services, wanted facilities on the station and is suggested that this is likely to be due to the lower service frequency.

10% of passengers expressed no interest in having retail facilities on the station. This was consistent across all passengers regardless of their journey purpose or the train operator used. It should also be noted that passengers put low importance on the improvement of retail facilities at Barking in their overall priorities for improvement.

**Figure 13: Retail outlets wanted at Barking (regardless of whether the facility is already available at the station)**



Base: All passengers (529)

### Passenger Priorities for Improvement:

Whilst looking at the 5 key areas of satisfaction with the station and passenger priorities provides a good indicator of the priorities in each area, it is important to consider which of these factors are of the highest overall priority for passengers using Barking station.

Passengers were given a set of paired statements and asked to select the improvement they felt was most important. These were analysed and the priorities shown in figure 14 were obtained. The higher the score, the greater the passenger priority for improvement.

**Figure 14: Priorities for improvement arising from Stated Preference analysis**

	Rank (all passengers)	Commuters	Other journey type
Security at station	1	1	1
More station staff	2	2	2
Real time information	3	3	7
Toilets	4	5	3
Less passenger congestion at the automatic ticket gates	5	4	6
Step-free access from the booking office to the platforms	6	6	4
Waiting rooms	7	8	5
Ease of entry/exit to the station through the main entrance	8	7	8
Access from the main concourse to the platforms via the stairs	9	10	10
Canopies covering the whole length of the platform	=10	9	12
Bus links	=10	11	9
Interactive help points	12	12	13
Lightning in the booking hall	13	13	11
Range of retail/catering facilities	14	14	14

**Base: All passengers (572)**

Passengers highest priority for improvement was security at the station, and as noted above, this is particularly after dark. As with the questions regarding security above, London Overground passengers gave a lower score, although it was still their top priority.

The rank of priorities is largely similar amongst all groups of passengers although leisure/business passengers rated the provision of toilets are their third highest priority (commuters rated this is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest priority). Commuters placed greater importance on improving real time information.

## **Passengers with Disabilities**

As Barking has poor step free access from the main station entrance to the platforms and limited facilities for disabled passengers, it was felt that the views of disabled passengers may be under-represented within the results.

With this in mind, we invited a number of external stakeholders to comment on the current facilities at these stations. A copy of the correspondence is included in Appendix II.

There were no responses received from stakeholders regarding Barking station, however 13% of respondents to the questionnaire stated they had a disability or long term illness (including 7% who were mobility impaired).

**Next Steps:**

This research has identified in detail the current levels of passenger satisfaction with Barking station and the main priorities for improvement. Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch will now be working closely with the operators at Barking and Network Rail in order to ensure that they are aware of passenger aspirations and that these are considered in any future schemes.

In the current economic climate, it is imperative that any improvements works taking place at stations, reflect and address passenger priorities. Whilst the funding previously identified for Barking has been withdrawn, Passenger Focus will continue to put across the needs of passengers in any future developments at Barking, and will also use this research as part of any future consultations on the Essex Thameside franchise.

## Appendices

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX II: LETTER TO STAKEHOLDERS