



National Station Improvement Programme

Balham Station - Final report

January 2010

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National Station Improvement Plan
Balham Station Summary Report

Passenger Focus
April 2009

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Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Passenger Focus, Network Rail and the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) appointed Faber Maunsell to investigate passenger perceptions and satisfaction with the station environment and facilities at 25 stations across England and Wales. This study aims to provide evidence to establish the impact of the National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP) by measuring and benchmarking the level of passenger satisfaction with the station environment prior to any improvement work taking place. NSIP is a government-sponsored programme providing £150 million of funding to support improvements at 150 category A-E¹ rail stations across England and Wales. A similar study will be repeated in 2009/2010 at the same stations after improvement works have been completed, to identify the elements of the improvement works that had the greatest impact on passenger satisfaction levels.

Twenty seven reports have been produced for this survey; one overall report, twenty five individual station reports and one summary report for the five Anglesey stations.

1.2 Report Layout

This report summarises the findings from the research undertaken at Balham station prior to the implementation of NSIP. Following this introduction, **Chapter 2** discusses the methodology used in undertaking the 'before' surveys, **Chapter 3** reports on the findings of the survey and **Chapter 4** summarises the findings.

¹ National rail stations are categorised in six bands, broadly corresponding to their level of use. Major termini are found in category A, whilst unstaffed halts are found in category F.

Methodology

2 Methodology

2.1 Questionnaire Design

Faber Maunsell designed the questionnaire in conjunction with Passenger Focus, Network Rail and ATOC. The questionnaire identified which station the respondent was handed the questionnaire, whether each respondent was arriving, leaving or changing trains and the mode of travel to or from the station. Respondents were asked whether there was an alternative mode of travel they would like to use to access the station, what it was and what improvements would be needed for them to use this mode. Respondents were then asked to rate a number of station facilities and their overall satisfaction with the station, where they were handed the questionnaire. It is important to note that where respondents have expressed dissatisfaction with a facility that does not currently exist at the station, it may be because they feel such a facility should be provided. Respondents were then asked to indicate which facilities are important to them and which single new facility currently not available they would like to see at the station. They were then asked to rank existing facilities in need of improvement and whether they had noticed any improvement in the past year. General respondent profile and ticket information was also collected. A copy of the questionnaire can be seen in **Appendix A**.

2.2 Fieldwork

Self completion questionnaires were handed out to respondents at each station between 22nd November 2008 and 18th December 2008. Three six hour shifts were carried out at each station: one weekday morning shift 07:00-13:00; one weekday afternoon shift 13:00-19:00; and one Saturday shift 10:00-16:00.

Interviewers were provided with 210 questionnaires to hand out at each station over each six hour shift. This was possible at the busier stations but not at those stations with lower footfalls. On average around 160 questionnaires were handed out per shift. The questionnaires were handed out by trained interviewers, with pens and reply-paid envelopes.

Where possible, respondents were encouraged to return the completed questionnaires to interviewers, before boarding the train. If this was not practicable respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire at another time during the day and return it by post using the reply-paid envelope.

2.3 Additional Shifts

After completing three interviewer shifts at each station, the number of returned questionnaires at some stations was low. In order to boost the sample size at these stations, extra shifts, were conducted between the 15th and 19th December 2008. The additional shifts were all carried out over the morning peak. Interviewers were asked to start at 07.00 and continue until at least 10.00. Interviewers were asked to distribute 100 questionnaires at each of the stations.

Table 1 below highlights the number of shifts undertaken at Balham station and the number of returned completed surveys.

Table 1 Number of shifts and returned surveys

Station	Initial shifts (230 surveys to be handed out per shift)	Additional shifts (100 surveys to be handed out per shift)	Number of completed surveys returned	Daily Patronage Figures ²	Approx. response rate
Balham	3	2	142	7461	1.9%

2.4

Data Entry and Processing

All questionnaires received by 7th January 2009 (2,117) were data entered by F1 Data Services. Each questionnaire was checked and allocated a unique serial number for identification purposes by Faber Maunsell before it was sent off for data entry. F1 Data Services coded questions where necessary and data entered the surveys into a fixed-column ASCII file. To ensure data quality, F1 Data Services entered the data twice (double entry) and compared the two files for verification. Questionnaires (97) received between 7th January and 16th January 2009 were data entered and coded in house and merged with the data set from F1 data services.

On receipt of the data file, Faber Maunsell created a syntax file which read the data into SPSS and checked the range, routing and logic of answers given by respondents. Checks included running frequency tables to ensure all responses were valid and all routing was correctly observed. In instances where data from linked questions was missing but could be deduced from subsequent questions syntax was written to cater for this. For example, if Q2 was blank but Q3 was answered, code 1 would be inserted at Q2. However, if it was not clear what the response should be, the data was cleared. For example if Q2 was blank but both Q3 and Q4 were answered the data for Q3 and Q4 would be cleared from the data set. For Q14 only comments accompanying a ranking have been reported. Any rankings numerically higher than three have been removed.

Once the checks on the data had been made, frequencies, cross tabulations and mean scores were run. As well as a data set for all responses, individual data sets were produced for each station. Due to the low sample size, a combined data set for the five Anglesey stations was also produced.

2.5

Response Rate and Respondents Profile

In total, 142 questionnaires were received from respondents at Balham station. 32.8% of respondents were male and 67.2% female. The highest proportion of

² Figures taken from Office of Rail Regulation website 2007 figures (data collated by Delta Rail)

respondents (39.1%³) was aged 26-34. The majority of respondents (132⁴) did not have a disability. However, one respondent had a mobility impairment, three had hearing impairments and two respondents had disabilities not listed in the questionnaire.

84.4%⁵ of respondents used Balham station at least once a week. Nearly two thirds (62.1%⁶) of respondents used Balham station due to their daily work commute. The majority (112⁷) of respondents who responded to the questionnaire at Balham were not travelling with any other adults; only nine respondents were travelling with another adult and one with a child.

2.6

Travel Habits

Table 2 Type of tickets used for journey at Balham station

What type of ticket did you use for your journey?	Number of responses
Anytime single or return	18
Off-peak single or return	7
Standard season ticket	36
Advance purchase	3
One day travel-card	11
Oyster	38
Freedom pass	15
Other	12

It can be seen from **Table 2** that out of the 140 respondents that answered the question 'What type of ticket did you use for your journey?', the majority used either an Oyster card (27.1% of respondents) or a standard season ticket (25.7% of respondents).

³ N=128

⁴ N=142

⁵ N=141

⁶ N=140

⁷ N=121

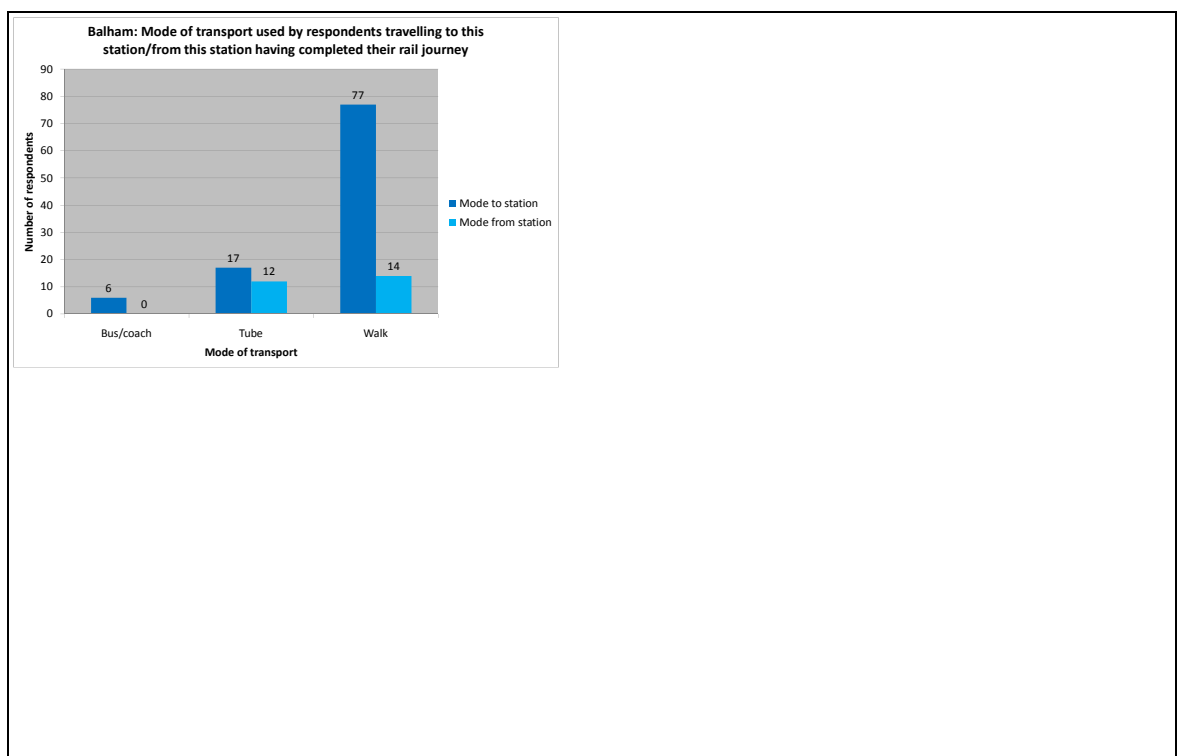
Analysis

3 Analysis

3.1 Journey to/from the Station

Most respondents (70.9%⁸) that completed the questionnaire at Balham were arriving at the station whilst 19.1% were leaving and just 9.9% were changing between trains.

Figure 1 Mode of transport to and from station



It can be seen from **Figure 1** that over three quarters (77.0%⁹) of respondents questioned walked to the station. Amongst those who were leaving the station¹⁰, it can be seen that 53.8% intended to walk and 46.2% intended to use the tube.

The majority of respondents, 86.6%¹¹ (travelling to the station) and 84.9%¹² (travelling from the station), said that there wasn't an alternative method of transport they would like to use to get to and from the station if circumstances were different. Amongst those that listed alternative methods of transport, the most popular method for both arriving at and leaving Balham station was

⁸ N=141

⁹ N=100

¹⁰ N=26

¹¹ N=119

¹² N=106

bus/coach, chosen by 33.3%¹³ and 31.3%¹⁴ of respondents respectively. The most popular additional facilities/services to enable the use of alternative methods of transport were found to be discounted fares (6 respondents) and better connection timings between trains and buses (eight respondents). This was out of a total of 49 multiple responses. More frequent buses/coaches, transport earlier/later and combined fares were also popular; all were chosen by four respondents.

¹³ N=15

¹⁴ N=16

Table 3 Station satisfaction

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
1. Car parking at the station						
The number of spaces	0.0	6.7	53.3	6.7	33.3	2.33
Car park security	0.0	8.3	66.7	8.3	16.7	2.67
2. Bicycle parking facilities						
The number of cycle parking facilities	3.2	3.2	35.5	35.5	22.6	2.29
The security of the cycle parking facilities	0.0	0.0	44.8	31.0	24.1	2.21
Cycle routes to and from the station	0.0	18.5	44.4	14.8	22.2	2.59
Protection from the weather	0.0	17.1	37.1	22.9	22.9	2.49
3. Ease of drop off by car:						
Secure and well-lit waiting area	2.4	24.4	26.8	34.1	12.2	2.71
Protection from the weather	2.3	20.5	25.0	34.1	18.2	2.55
Waiting area for cars picking up/drop off	0.0	7.3	31.7	36.6	24.4	2.22

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
4. Public transport availability						
Frequency of local buses serving the station	7.4	50.0	27.7	11.7	3.2	3.47
Information on the services available	5.2	41.7	32.3	16.7	4.2	3.27
Ease of getting to the bus stop	11.7	57.4	24.5	6.4	0.0	3.74
Overall	9.4	52.1	27.1	11.5	0.0	3.59
5. Availability of taxis						
Signage	6.9	29.2	30.6	22.2	11.1	2.99
Queuing arrangements	7.2	26.1	39.1	18.8	8.7	3.04
Overall	5.5	28.8	37.0	19.2	9.6	3.01
6. Ease of access on foot to station entrance:						
Lighting	12.4	63.6	17.8	4.7	1.6	3.81
Signage	10.8	62.3	17.7	6.2	3.1	3.72
Safe walking route	12.8	60.2	13.5	8.3	5.3	3.67
Overall	10.4	65.7	14.2	6.7	3.0	3.74

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
7. Passenger information services:						
Direction signs to the station	8.7	50.8	26.2	11.1	3.2	3.51
Direction signs to find your way around the station	10.2	60.6	21.9	5.8	1.5	3.72
Electronic departure boards	12.4	65.0	7.3	10.2	5.1	3.69
Visibility of electronic departure boards	13.8	57.2	8.0	15.2	5.8	3.58
Up to date timetable posters	9.6	52.0	29.6	8.0	.8	3.62
Provision of real time information screen displays	8.7	61.4	14.2	11.0	4.7	3.58
Visibility of real time information screen displays	8.0	60.8	15.2	12.0	4.0	3.57
Local area information e.g. places of interest, maps, direction to buses	5.0	16.5	52.9	19.8	5.8	2.95
Audibility of public-address announcements	10.2	48.9	24.1	13.9	2.9	3.50
Information on where to buy your ticket(s)	8.7	57.9	26.2	7.1	0.0	3.68

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
Information on the different types of fares	3.3	19.0	38.8	28.1	10.7	2.76
Information on what to do if the ticket office is closed/ticket machines not working	2.4	17.1	38.2	30.9	11.4	2.68
8. Passenger facilities:						
Appearance of booking office	1.5	28.6	36.1	28.6	5.3	2.92
Availability of seating on platforms	1.5	22.1	16.9	44.9	14.7	2.51
Availability of shelter on platforms e.g. a canopy	2.9	48.6	19.6	21.0	8.0	3.17
Condition of shelter on platforms	3.7	42.2	24.4	22.2	7.4	3.13
Availability of waiting rooms	2.4	13.0	17.9	38.2	28.5	2.23
Security of waiting rooms	3.5	19.8	37.2	23.3	16.3	2.71
Lighting in waiting rooms	3.5	23.3	40.7	19.8	12.8	2.85
Heating in waiting rooms	2.4	16.5	41.2	22.4	17.6	2.64
Availability of toilets	.9	2.8	16.5	34.9	45.0	1.80
Condition of toilets	0.0	5.4	35.7	25.0	33.9	2.13
Availability of platform seating	1.6	23.8	17.5	39.7	17.5	2.52

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
Condition of platform seating	2.3	31.0	34.9	19.4	12.4	2.91
Refreshment facilities	8.7	59.8	25.2	3.9	2.4	3.69
Retail outlets (newsagents etc.)	4.6	38.9	31.5	17.6	7.4	3.16
Public telephones	0.0	11.0	58.2	19.8	11.0	2.69
Availability of rubbish bins	1.5	22.6	22.6	35.3	18.0	2.54
Clocks	5.2	41.0	30.6	14.2	9.0	3.19
9. Station areas						
Main station entrance/exits	4.4	41.9	24.3	22.1	7.4	3.14
Other entrance points/walking routes to platforms	4.8	38.4	21.6	25.6	9.6	3.03
Ticket office/sales points	3.7	34.8	25.2	27.4	8.9	2.97
Platforms	5.9	53.7	31.6	6.6	2.2	3.54
Subways	5.2	38.3	31.3	18.3	6.1	3.28
Footbridges	5.8	36.5	46.2	5.8	5.8	3.31
Lifts	17.5	41.7	34.0	4.9	1.9	3.68
Escalators	4.9	31.7	34.1	22.0	7.3	3.05
Track bed free from litter and vegetation	3.8	33.1	38.5	19.2	5.4	3.11

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
Areas around platforms free from litter/unwanted vegetation	6.9	40.8	27.7	21.5	3.1	3.27
Flower beds/vegetation	3.0	10.4	40.3	34.3	11.9	2.58
10. Safety and security						
Number of visible staff in the daytime	6.7	56.0	23.9	10.4	3.0	3.53
Number of visible staff after dark	4.8	17.6	29.6	32.8	15.2	2.64
Level of CCTV provision	4.1	25.2	58.5	10.6	1.6	3.20
Station lighting	3.8	54.5	31.8	7.6	2.3	3.50
Provision of Help Points	3.1	35.4	40.2	18.1	3.1	3.17
Location of Help Points	3.2	34.4	40.8	18.4	3.2	3.16

3.2 Station Satisfaction

When asked, 'How satisfied are you with facilities at the station from a scale of 1-5, when 1 is very unsatisfied and 5 is very satisfied?' respondents at Balham Station were generally satisfied with (see **Table 3**):

- The ease of access on foot to the station entrance
- The availability of public transport
- The passenger information services available

Respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with:

- The availability of taxis
- Station areas and the safety and security of the station
- The ease of drop off by car
- Passenger facilities

Respondents were dissatisfied with:

- Car and bicycle parking
- The availability of toilets

Information received from the client showed there to be no bus or taxi rank available and no parking or cycle storage facilities at the station. Furthermore, none of the respondents questioned cycled or drove to Balham station. The dissatisfaction of these facilities that are currently none existent at the station suggests that respondents would like these facilities.

When asked, 'Thinking overall, how satisfied are you with this station from a scale of 1-10, when 1 is very unsatisfied and 10 is very satisfied?', the mean level of satisfaction with Balham station was found to be 5.87¹⁵ i.e. neutral to slightly satisfied.

Most (58.9%¹⁶) respondents questioned felt that over the past year Balham station had got better, 29.9% felt the station had stayed the same and just 11.2% felt it had got worse.

The main reasons given for these changes were:

- The installation of a new lift (noticed by 41 respondents)
- The painting of the station (noticed by 12 respondents)

Most (61.2%¹⁷) respondents felt that there had been noticeable improvements to Balham station over the past year. Improvements noticed included:

- A lift (noticed by 61 respondents)

¹⁵ N=141

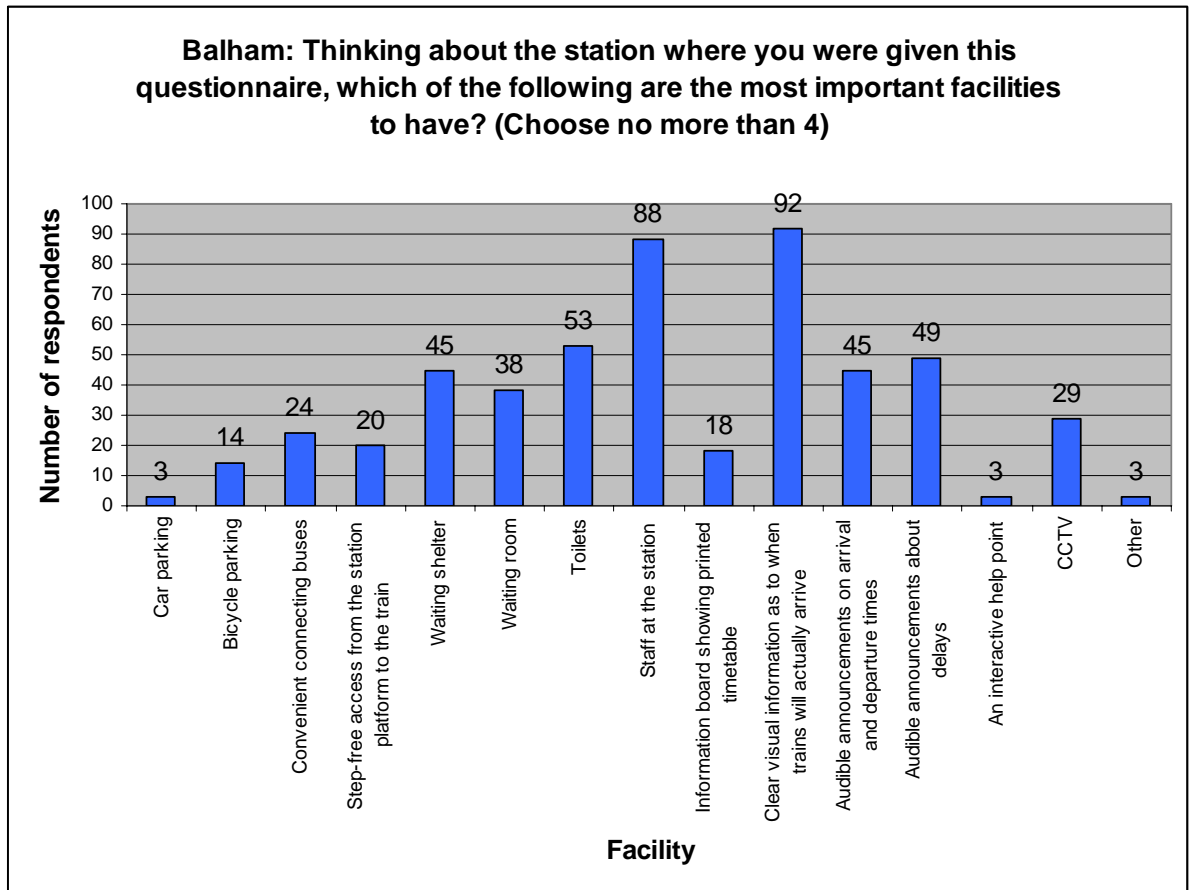
¹⁶ N=134

¹⁷ N=129

- Station painted/smartered up (noticed by 15 respondents)
- Station looking cleaner/tidier (noticed by 12 respondents)
- More staff/security staff (noticed by eight respondents)

3.3 Important Station Facilities

Figure 2 Facilities deemed important



Respondents were asked to select from a list up to four facilities they feel it is important to have at their station. Out of the 524 responses to the question ‘Thinking about where you were given this questionnaire, which of the following are the most important facilities to have?’ **Figure 2** shows the three most important facilities were:

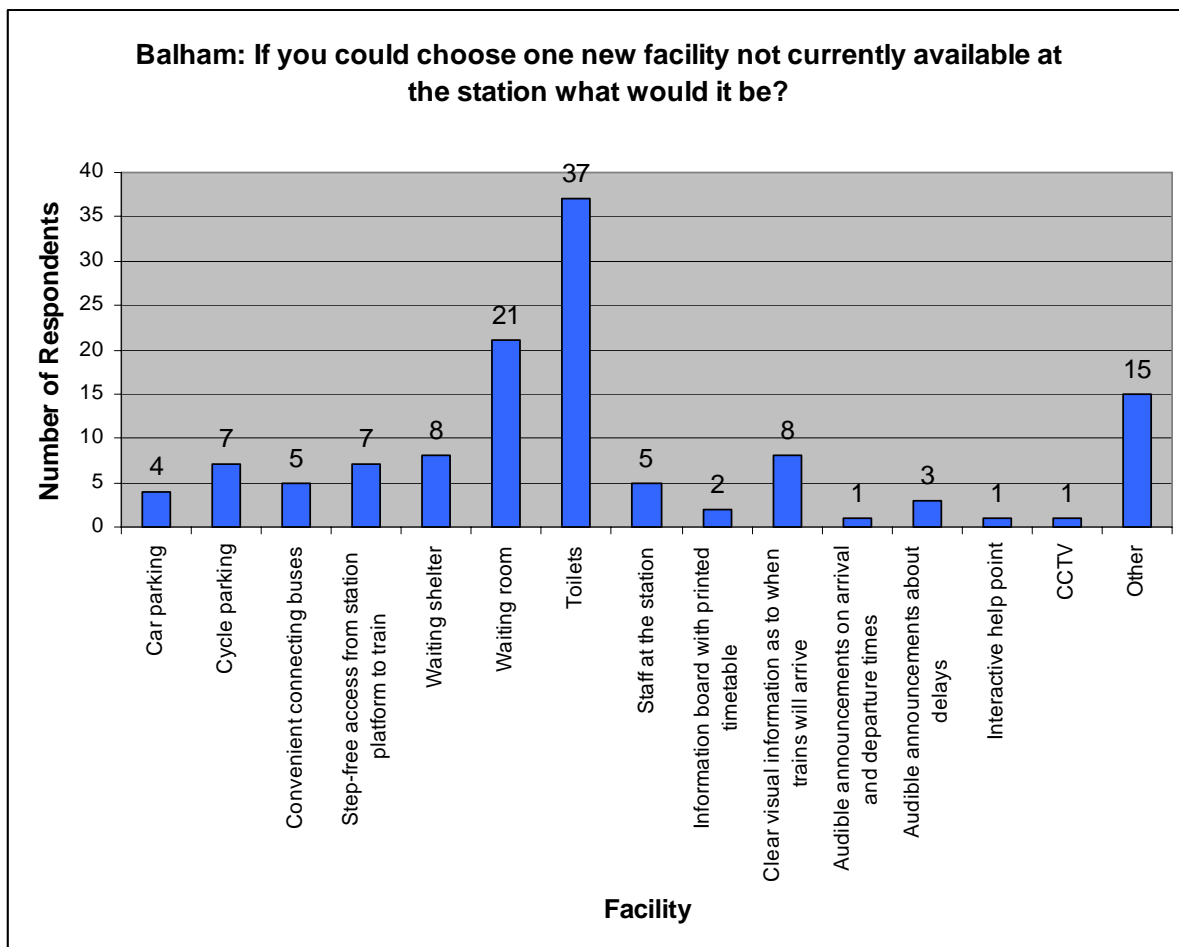
- ‘Clear visual information as to when trains will actually arrive’ (chosen by 92 respondents);
- ‘Staff at the station’ (chosen by 88 respondents);
- Toilets (53 responses),

However, audible announcements in some form were cited by 94 respondents:

- ‘Audible announcements on arrival and departure times’ (45 responses);

- Audible announcements about delays (49 responses); and

Figure 3 Facilities desired

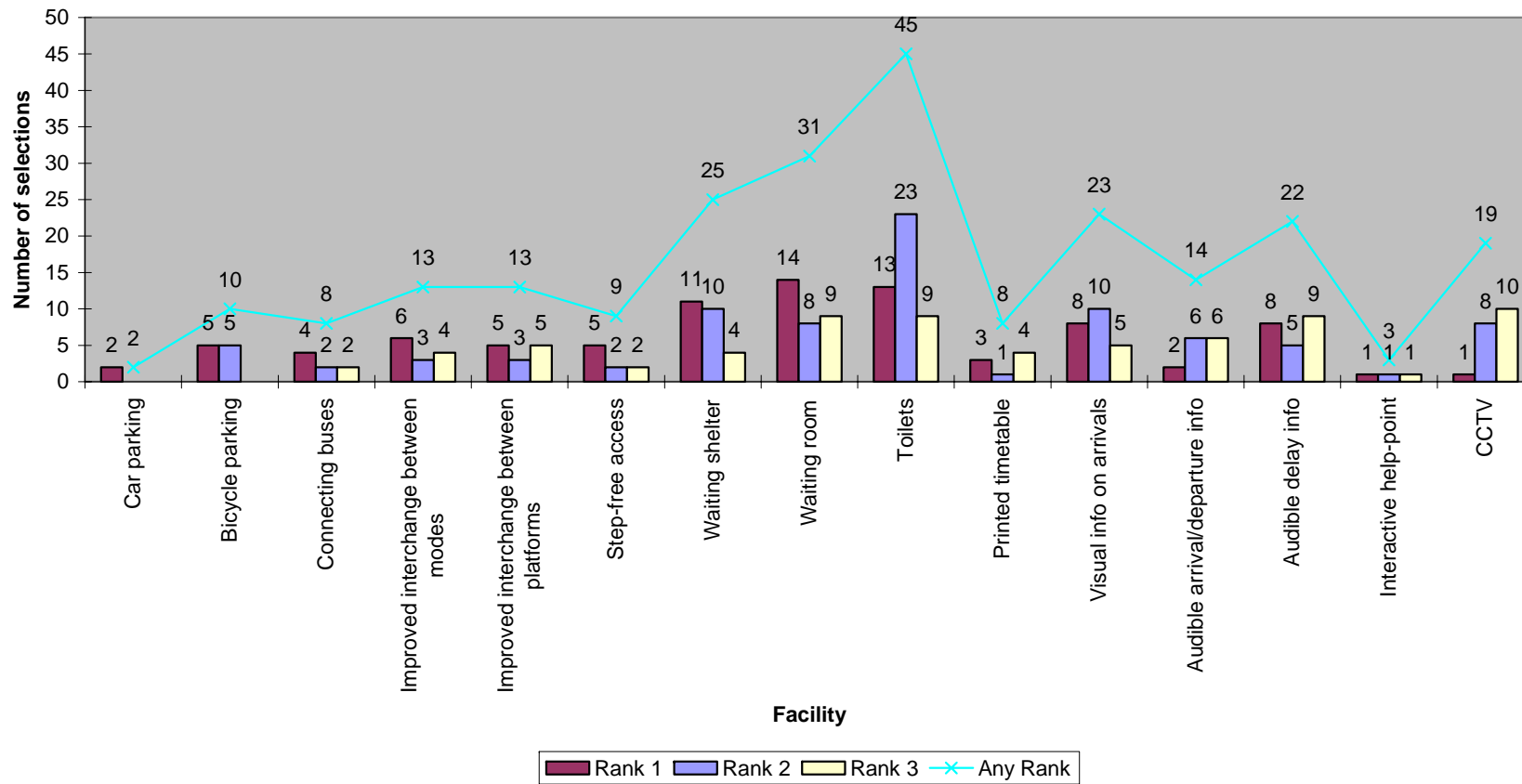


Respondents were asked to choose from a list which single facility not currently available at their station they would like to see added. It can be seen from **Figure 3** that toilets, chosen by 29.6%¹⁸ of respondents, were the single most popular facility wanted by respondents at Balham station. These were followed in popularity by a waiting room (16.8%) and ‘other’ facilities (12.0%). Facilities listed under ‘other’ included an automated ticket purchase facility, more ticket offices, more seating, taxi ranks and a wider entrance/better access to the station from the street.

¹⁸ N=125

Figure 2 Important station facilities in need of improvement

Balham: 'Of the existing facilities at the station you were given this questionnaire, please rank your top three facilities in need of improvement (with 1 being the most important, 2 being 2nd most important and 3 being third most important)?'



3.4 Facilities in Need of Improvement

Respondents were asked to rank the top three facilities in need of improvement at the station where they were given their questionnaire and to state why. It can be seen from **Figure 4** that overall the most ranked facility in need of improvement at Balham was:

- Toilets (ranked by 45 respondents).
- The waiting shelter (ranked by 25 respondents)
- The waiting room (ranked by 31 respondents)

Comments made about toilets included: toilet facilities are insufficient; toilets are often locked/not open enough; you shouldn't have to pay for toilets; and the toilets are unpleasant.

Comments made about the waiting room and shelter includes: shelter is very limited; and more shelter is needed, especially when it is cold or raining.

Amongst the respondents questioned, the facilities that were most likely to be ranked first in terms of need of improvement were:

- The waiting room (ranked first by 14 respondents)
- Toilets (ranked first by 13 respondents)
- The waiting shelter (ranked first by 11 respondents)

Facilities deemed to be of second greatest importance included:

- Toilets (ranked second by 23 respondents)
- The waiting shelter (ranked second by ten respondents)
- 'Visual information as to when trains will actually arrive' (ranked second by ten respondents)

Finally, the facilities most likely to be ranked of third greatest importance in terms of need of improvement were:

- CCTV (ranked third by ten respondents)
- The waiting room (chosen by nine respondents)
- 'Audible announcements about delay' (chosen by nine respondents)



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