



Getting to the station

Findings of research conducted at Witham
March 2007

Key findings

There are 101 station car parks in the Greater Anglia RUS area, of which approximately one in four are currently over 90% full on weekdays². Passengers are, therefore, already hunting for spaces and in many cases do not find one...



Colin Foxall CBE

Foreword

Getting to and from the station is an integral part of travelling by train. As part of its input to Network Rail's Greater Anglia Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), Passenger Focus commissioned independent transport consultancy Steer Davies Gleave (SDG) to examine access to the railway – looking in particular at station car parking capacity to 2016 in the context of forecast growth in demand for rail travel emerging from the Greater Anglia RUS itself. Our motivation in doing so was to provide greater depth of understanding about an issue that the RUS may not otherwise have examined in detail.

Passenger Focus fully supports measures to encourage passengers to travel to stations other than by private car – walking, cycling, bus, taxis and motorcycles all have key roles. It is important to acknowledge, however, that for many people using routes covered by the Greater Anglia RUS – in particular in the 'outer' areas – the car will remain the most practical way of getting to the station. Examination of car parking capacity therefore forms the major part of SDG's report. In addition to looking at the RUS area as a whole, studies were carried out at four specific locations: Grays, Harlow Town, Royston¹ and Witham.

SDG's report has been shared with Network Rail and other industry stakeholders involved in developing the Greater Anglia RUS. We are now publishing SDG's report on Witham in order to stimulate debate about access to the railway at a local level.

Passenger Focus calls on the rail industry, Government and local stakeholders to consider the policy implications highlighted in this report and to enter into dialogue with us about how access to the railway issues can be addressed through Route Utilisation Strategies, Franchise Agreements and other mechanisms.

Colin Foxall CBE
Chairman

Findings from passenger research at Grays, Harlow Town, Royston and Witham show that:

- most passengers who live within walking distance of a station will generally walk to it
- passengers travelling to a station from rural, semi-rural and edge of town locations will generally choose to drive and park at the station
- many passengers drive to a station with a better (in terms of train frequency or speed of journey) service than the station nearest to their home.

When asked what they would do if it became difficult to park at the station they currently use, passengers said they would:

- get a lift to that station (18% of respondents at Harlow Town) and be collected by car again later
- drive to another station (38% of respondents at Royston)
- make the complete journey by car instead (17% of respondents at Witham)
- travel earlier in order to secure a space in the car park at their station (24% of respondents at Witham).

Suppressed demand

It is impossible to determine future demand for car parking by simply applying a growth factor to current demand. The calculation would take no account of current demand that is suppressed because the car park is already full. Therefore work was undertaken to determine the true requirement of additional parking capacity – focusing on stations on the Great Eastern Main Line between Chelmsford and Marks Tey and the Braintree branch.

¹ Please note that recent discussions between First Capital Connect and Network Rail regarding parking at Royston are not reflected in the SDG report

² Please note that station car parks that are free of charge are excluded from these figures and calculations because reliable data are not available

Taking into account use of rail across the whole Greater Anglia RUS area, population demographics, station catchment, train frequency/journey time and distance from London, SDG has calculated that there are 19% fewer rail trips generated at Witham than would be expected. Based on the transport mode that passengers currently use to access Witham station, this would fill 123 additional parking spaces straight away – with a further 50 required by 2016, based on Atkins¹³ forecasts provided for the RUS itself. The shortfall in parking spaces – including parking outside stations – for this group of stations as a whole is currently 2,953 – with a further 650 required by 2016.

Cost of parking

The SDG study did not deal in detail with passenger attitudes to car park pricing. However, recent Passenger Focus research for the Scotland RUS found that approximately two-thirds of passengers who currently drive to the station might not travel by rail at all if car parking charges became what they regard as unfair. The benefit of higher revenue from car parking must be weighed against the charges suppressing use of rail altogether. Free parking at weekends could generate more revenue in extra ticket sales than is currently raised through parking charges.

Policy implications

- Investment to encourage passengers to walk or cycle to the station (including improved lighting, CCTV coverage, signage and cycle parking) will have a positive result where a station has a confined urban catchment. Encouraging walking and cycling could play a small part in releasing parking spaces for those who need to come by car.



Cycles at Witham



Cut Throat Lane car park, Witham

- Assuming no major change in the transport modes used to access stations, demand for car parking will significantly outstrip supply. Only car parks that are currently at under 80% capacity would not be full by 2016.
- If car parking capacity at stations is not expanded in line with expected increases in demand for rail travel this is likely to result in increased traffic and additional carbon emissions. In two of the four specific studies the local authority was resistant to increasing car parking capacity at the station to increase the use of public transport and control congestion. These studies suggest that councils which do not permit station car park expansion, may, in fact, encourage more traffic.
- The level of suppressed demand that has been calculated at Witham suggests that there is a good commercial case for the rail industry to invest in extra car parking provision – not only will extra parking revenue be generated, but extra revenue will come through the farebox.
- If a station car park becomes full during the morning peak, it becomes a barrier to off-peak use when spare seats are available and additional passengers represent no extra cost to the railway.
- At Grays, 35% of passengers who currently park at the station said they would walk if it became difficult to park. For passengers travelling further it seems unlikely that alternatives to the car will be attractive. At Witham just 7% of passengers who currently park at the station said they would walk if car parking became difficult.
- As station car parks reach 90%+ capacity it will force passengers who currently travel towards the end of the peak to travel at a busier time to be sure of getting a parking space.
- Showing parking space availability in real time on websites/text services would allow passengers to make informed choices, avoiding use of alternative modes because they *think* the station car park is full.

¹³ Demand forecast analysis undertaken by Atkins rail consultants for Network Rail in relation to rail demand within Greater Anglia area to 2016

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of report

1.1 This study has been commissioned to investigate and understand station access, and in particular demand for station car parking, in the Greater Anglia RUS¹ area. The study is composed of a number of elements, or strands, aimed at understanding the ‘transport to the station’ issues of a range of users. This report also explores the detailed situation at a number of case study stations and then goes on to consider possible solutions.

1.2 The four case study stations are:

- Harlow Town
- Grays
- Witham
- Royston

1.3 These case studies have been chosen in order to provide a representative cross-section of station types and passenger groups within the Greater Anglia RUS area.

1.4 **Note:** For the purposes of this report the route from Shepreth Junction, south of Cambridge, to Baldock is deemed to be within the Greater Anglia RUS area (it is actually covered by the East Coast Main Line RUS).

Current situation parking data

1.5 A key element of this study was the collation of a database of car parking provision relating to both station car parks and other car parks close to the station. Both these ‘databases’ are provided for use by Passenger Focus in Excel format.

Station car parks

1.6 For car parks operated by (or operated on behalf of) train operating companies data has been sourced:

- Directly from the train operating company
- From our own research

1.7 Findings include the number of spaces, charges and average car park utilisation.

Other car parks

1.8 A key element of the study was also to look at ‘non station’ car parks, used by people travelling by train. The study therefore included the compilation of a database of ‘long stay’ car parking close to the 50 busiest stations in the study area. Where data has been available we have recorded car park name, number of spaces, charges and

¹ RUS stands for ‘Route Utilisation Strategy’

distance from station (in two bands – up to 500 yards and 500 to 1,000 yards).

Summary of station car park data

- 1.9 The table shown below summarises station car park utilisation data which we have collated from the train operating companies and car park operators. Generally train companies and car park operators do not collect car park utilisation data for free car parks.

TABLE 1.1 STATION CAR PARK UTILISATION

Number of car parks by utilisation %					
Train Operating Company	Less than 70%	70-80%	80-90%	Over 90%	No data
'one'	18	12	12	13	23
First Capital Connect	4	0	0	4	3
c2c	7	7	1	1	1

- 1.10 Of the 79 car parks in the Greater Anglia RUS area for which we have utilisation data, 31 are generally between 80% and 100% utilised. This is almost half of the car parks for which we have utilisation data.

Detailed station studies

- 1.11 In order to gather as full a picture as possible of the complex relationship between supply and demand it was agreed that four stations should be selected for detailed analysis. These stations were chosen on the basis of a number of factors including:
- Current levels of passenger demand
 - High utilisation of car park spaces
 - The train operating company
 - Geographic location
(a balance between suburban/rural and reasonable distribution across the region)
 - Passenger demographic profile.
- 1.12 The four stations chosen for detailed studies were Harlow Town ('one'), Grays (c2c), Witham ('one') and Royston (First Capital Connect).
- 1.13 The detailed evaluation of each station included:
- A comprehensive site visit.
 - A survey of rail passengers to help to understand issues at each station regarding station access and car parking.
 - Interviews with stakeholders including the train operator, local council and any local rail user group.

Harlow Town

Background

- 1.14 Harlow Town station is located to the northern edge of the new town, it is served by 'one'. The journey to London Liverpool Street takes around 35 minutes. The station car park in Harlow has a capacity for 365 cars and during the week is currently between 91% and 99% occupied.
- 1.15 There are no other public car parks close to the station and very limited on-street parking. The local council is keen to promote increased cycle usage as a means of access to the station.
- 1.16 Harlow District is forecast a high level of household growth in the period to 2021. The independent panel's report following the examination in public of the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy recommends an increase of 13,500 new dwellings by 2021.

Survey findings

- 1.17 Current access to the station by bus is high, at 17%, reflecting the location of the station on the edge of the town and a good bus interchange at the station entrance.
- 1.18 Cycle use to access the station is low, despite the general good provision of cycle routes in Harlow.
- 1.19 39% of people who parked at or near the station felt there was insufficient car parking at the station, with almost half reporting that by 9:30am the car park is full.
- 1.20 Respondents indicated that should demand for parking space increase, many (commuter) users, who currently drive to the station, would travel earlier to secure a car parking space.
- 1.21 **Note:** A clear implication of these findings is that unless action is taken there is likely to be a consequential 'knock-on' effect of reducing car parking availability for leisure and business users (*who tend to travel later than commuters*). This may have the effect of shifting some trips from rail to car.

Options

- 1.22 There is no significant undeveloped land close to the station which could be used to expand the existing car park.
- 1.23 The station car park site in Harlow is flat and (given planning permission) there is the scope to provide additional car parking by building a decked or multi-storey car park.
- 1.24 The rail operator 'one' is supportive of plans to provide additional car parking, but commented that it would be hard to justify large capital investment at Harlow over the franchise period.
- 1.25 The local council is not supportive of any plans to provide additional car parking at

the station, preferring to promote alternate access modes, such as bus and cycle. However, the council did comment that any such shift in access mode to the station might be hard to achieve in an area of high car ownership, such as Harlow.

Summary Conclusions

- 1.26 Overall there would appear to be a case for providing additional car parking at Harlow Town station. The station car park is generally full after the am peak, and bus use is high. A combination of improvements to cycle parking at the station, promoting cycling in combination with additional car parking is recommended. Increased bus use from within the urban area may be possible, with more frequent bus services, or revised bus routes.
- 1.27 This study leads to the conclusion that work exploring ‘suppressed demand’ for rail travel from Harlow Town because of a lack of car parking, would be valuable next step, quantifying the level of additional parking needed.

Grays

Background

- 1.28 Grays is located in Thurrock, to the east of London and is served by c2c providing services to Fenchurch Street station. Travel time from Grays to Fenchurch Street is around 35 minutes.
- 1.29 Grays has a relatively small station car park, with 146 spaces. Before 9.30am use of the car park is restricted to car park season ticket holders. This results in the car park being primarily used by commuters. Data from the rail company shows utilisation of 73%, although interviews with station staff indicate that this is inaccurate, with the car park full by 8.30am most weekdays.
- 1.30 Grays also has two other car parks which are close to the station and are used by both commuters and other rail users.
- The council car park at Crown Road has approximately 200 spaces and is well used. The cost per day is £3.00 (vs. the station car park at £3.90).
 - The Multi-Storey car park is large, and has spare capacity on most weekdays. The cost is however relatively high at £5 per day (we understand that there is a discount for season holders).
- 1.31 **Note:** On street parking is limited as there is a residents’ parking scheme in place to discourage commuter parking on the street.
- 1.32 The local council strongly objects to any plans to increase car parking in Grays, including at the station, and has a policy aimed at reducing car trips to the town centre.
- 1.33 The representative from c2c commented that the current car park cannot meet demand for spaces, which could restrict rail trips being made from Grays.
- 1.34 Thurrock is forecast for high growth in the draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy. The majority of this additional housing in the Grays area is likely to be to

the south of the railway line towards the river and therefore within walking distance, or a short bus ride, of the station.

Survey Findings

1.35 Amongst those respondents who currently drive to the station, our survey indicates that, should car parking at Grays become more difficult in the future:

- 35% of people would walk to the station
- 24% would switch to using public transport.

Options

1.36 The site of the current station car park is not ideal for expansion, being located to the south of the station on the opposite side of the railway line to the majority of the town and accessed by a narrow road, which also provides the main pedestrian link across the railway to the town centre.

Summary Conclusions

1.37 It appears that whilst there is insufficient car parking at the station car park in Grays, there is capacity in the nearby Multi-Storey car park. This car park is currently relatively expensive for occasional use, at £5.00 per day. If rates at the Multi-Storey car park could be negotiated to a similar level to the station car park, for occasional rail travellers, some additional parking capacity could be released.

1.38 We note that the council is currently re-tendering its sponsored bus services, with one of the objectives being to provide bus services timed to link better to rail services. If this is successful, greater bus usage may be able to relieve some pressure on car parking for the station.

Witham

Background

1.39 Witham is located in Essex between Chelmsford and Colchester, close to the A12. Witham has a fast service to London provided by 'one', with the journey to Liverpool Street taking between 45 and 50 minutes. The nearby mainline stations of Hatfield Peverel and Kelvedon have a less frequent service, as does the branch line to Braintree, which runs to the north west of Witham.

1.40 Witham station car park has 430 spaces, and is estimated to be between 93% and 100% utilised, on average.

1.41 Witham has a number of other car parks, close to the station, which can be used by rail commuters including the council-run White Horse Lane (100 spaces) and the privately-run Cut Throat Lane (354 spaces). Both tend to be full with commuter parking during the week.

Survey Findings

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- 1.42 Very few people in the Witham urban area drive and park at the station.
- 1.43 Survey results show that 40% of respondents using Witham station travel more than 4km to the station. In many cases these people are travelling to Witham, rather than using their nearest station. The more frequent and faster service from Witham is likely to be the main reason for this. Unless there is a major change in rail services, it is likely that this trend will continue.

Options

- 1.44 For those people travelling from outside Witham (40% of passengers), particularly those living in rural areas, travel to the station other than by car is not seen as practical.
- 1.45 The council is supportive of the provision of additional car parking, recognising the demand for additional spaces for rail users. There are a number of potential options for increasing car parking at Witham station.
- The owner of Cut Throat Lane car park has recently had an application refused for a multi-storey car park on the site of his existing car park. The application was rejected on the basis of restricted highway access. The solution to this access problem would be to purchase a strip of land from the nearby Morrisons supermarket, although discussions between the developer and the supermarket have so far not been fruitful.
 - Another option to increase car parking at Witham would be to add a deck to the existing car park. Again it is likely that highway access would have to be improved, as there is currently a difficult junction to negotiate at the entrance to the car park. There is scope to add an additional entrance/exit to the south east of the existing car park.
 - An alternative, suggested by the rail user group, is a park and ride service from the edge of Witham offering a high quality bus link service, or a rail shuttle, to the station.
 - The train operating company also mentioned the concept of a parkway station, to relieve pressure on the roads in the Witham area.

Summary Conclusions

- 1.46 There is clearly a car parking issue at Witham, and this relates to people accessing the station from outside the town. For these people, if they are to continue to use Witham additional car parking is required. There are a number of options and the local authority appears broadly supportive.
- 1.47 Our work exploring ‘suppressed demand’ uses the Witham area as an example. Our results are shown in paragraphs 1.54 to 1.60 of this Executive Summary.

Royston

Background

- 1.48 Royston is located in rural Cambridgeshire, to the south west of Cambridge. Rail services are provided to Cambridge and Kings Cross by First Capital Connect. The

service to Kings Cross is frequent and certain services offer a faster journey than adjacent stations (quickest journey time is 43 minutes).

- 1.49 The station has two car parks, located on both sides of the railway, with a total of 262 spaces. There are no other car parks near to the station and on street parking is restricted within a 10 minute walk of the station. The car park becomes very full in the week, with utilisation of spaces recorded at 99%.

Survey Findings

- 1.50 The majority of station users who live in Royston walk to the station. The station car park is mainly used by people travelling into Royston from the surrounding rural areas.
- 1.51 Due to the rural nature of Royston's catchment area, bus services are not seen as a feasible option for many rail commuters, particularly those living in small villages or the countryside.

Options

- 1.52 Our survey indicates, and stakeholders report, that the current car park is poorly laid out and does not make the best use of the land available. We understand that the train operator has plans to reorganise the car park layout in the near future, which may add a limited number of additional spaces.
- 1.53 The train operator has also recently commissioned a site survey and feasibility study looking at the possibility of adding extra car parking on disused Network Rail land to the west of the northern car park. The local council have commented that they would be supportive of plans for additional car parking at Royston. However, any plans would need to incorporate measures to increase access by other non-car modes, for example providing additional secure cycle parking.

Suppressed demand analysis

- 1.54 As part of this report we were requested to provide an indication of future demand for car parking at seven stations based on future growth in passenger demand, provided by Atkins. The majority of car parks in our study currently have utilisation between 90% and 100%.
- 1.55 Forecasting car parking demand based on a currently full car park, by applying forecast growth in passenger demand, does not provide an indication of demand that is suppressed the current lack of car parking – i.e. people choosing not to travel from a particular station because there is insufficient car parking.
- 1.56 When a car park is above 90% capacity some people are dissuaded from using the station. As an example, data for Witham currently shows a 93% utilisation of spaces. Our survey shows that 38% of people parking at Witham wasted time trying to find a space.
- 1.57 To help to understand 'suppressed demand' we have selected a study area in the Greater Anglia RUS area, and calculated the level of suppressed demand, due to a lack

of car parking at stations the area. This example is based on the Witham area, including the stations from Chelmsford to Marks Tey and the Braintree branch line.

1.58 Suppressed demand compares current levels of demand for rail travel to expected demand for rail travel, on a station by station basis. Our analysis to calculate expected demand for each station takes into account:

- Population profile – the propensity for different types of people to use rail
- Station catchments – based on current rail service to London
- Rail service frequency and journey time to London
- Population distance from station (station accessibility)
- Station distance from London
- Car park data (both at station and near to the station)
- Share of rail travellers accessing the station by car

1.59 This work is covered in detail in Chapter 5. Key findings are:

- In the study area we calculate there is currently 19% suppressed demand (this is the difference between actual and calculated expected demand)
- Suppressed demand at Witham station could currently fill 123 more spaces than are currently provided.
- This number of additional spaces increases to 173 based on passenger demand projections to 2021 provided by Atkins.

1.60 These numbers of additional spaces are a **minimum** requirement. As illustrated in the para 1.56 above, when a car park is at over 90% utilisation a significant proportion of people waste time finding a space, discouraging use of the station. On this basis we would suggest that it would be worthwhile to expand this work to quantify suppressed demand at all stations where car parking utilisation is current at 90% or over.

Overall Conclusions

1.61 This work has highlighted the important relationship between the availability of car parking and demand for rail travel.

1.62 The case studies demonstrate that where car parking is currently close to, or at, capacity it is important to treat each location ‘on its merits’ rather than applying a generic solution. Specifically, the study has found:

- Where most of the passenger traffic is coming from a relatively concentrated (urban) catchment area it is both practical and realistic to promote non-car access modes, such as cycling, walking and public transport. These modes can be encouraged by providing better facilities for cycling, such as secure cycle parking, improving bus routes and the timing of bus services to better connect to rail services. Walking to the station can also be encouraged by investing in safe, direct, signposted, well lit walking routes.
- However, where the catchment area is rural or even semi-rural, or where the geography of an area dictates, these sustainable modes (walking, cycling and travelling by bus) are not be perceived as a realistic option (compared to either not travelling, or using cars).

1.63 This research has also demonstrated that deliberately limiting the expansion of car parking at stations where there is a demonstrable lack of spare capacity (in order to discourage car trips to the station), is likely to have the opposite of the desired effect, and generate more or longer trips by car. The examples described below generate more congestion and vehicle emissions than a passenger driving to their closest station:

- With car parking supply limited there is likely to be an increase in kiss and ride trips (the rail user being dropped off at the station by car and picked up on the return journey). This potentially generates twice the number of car trips than somebody parking at the station. *18% of survey respondents at Harlow Town would get a lift to the station if in future car parking was more difficult.*
- A full car park may result in a rail user driving to a more distant station with space in the car park, resulting in longer trips by car. *38% of survey respondents at Royston would drive to another station if car parking was more difficult.*
- A full car park could also discourage someone from travelling by rail at all and drive instead. *17% of respondents at Witham would drive all the way if in future car parking was more difficult.*

1.64 The studies have also found that many travellers do not necessarily travel from their closest station. Travellers will frequently travel further for a faster or more frequent train service. This has the effect of ‘concentrating’ travellers at those stations with the best service. In some circumstances it may therefore be appropriate to consider revisions to service delivery levels, looking at wider catchment areas including several stations.

4. DETAILED STATION STUDIES

Specific objectives

- 4.1 As part of detailed station studies, four of the seven shortlisted stations were selected for further analysis. The two specific objectives for this work were as follows:
- i. To gain an understanding of why existing passengers choose the method they do to get to the train station in four of the areas selected.
 - ii. To carry out detailed studies for up to four locations selected. Focusing on possible solutions to the projected shortfall in parking spaces.
- 4.2 In this section of the report we cover each location in turn, firstly presenting the results of at station surveys, we then present the results of our stakeholder meetings with the train operating companies and local councils. Appendix A lists details of who we have consulted with as part of individual station studies.

Selection of four study stations

- 4.3 From the shortlist of seven stations, we selected, after discussion with Passenger Focus and the Greater Anglia RUS demand SubGroup, four stations to undertake further primary research and stakeholder interviews.
- 4.4 From the list of seven Cambridge was excluded, as it was agreed that the parking situation in the city is very different to anywhere else in the region and any lessons learnt would not necessarily be applicable in other locations.
- 4.5 Thetford was also excluded. No data is available about current car parking occupancy at Thetford station as a result of free station car parking.
- 4.6 Norwich was the last station to be excluded. It was felt that Witham offered a more interesting case study, with particular car parking issues mentioned in our initial contacts with the train operator.

Station visits

- 4.7 Having selected the four stations, we undertook a station visit to each of the four stations, non-station car parks and also to nearby relevant stations, to confirm our data sources and provide us with an ‘on the ground’ understanding of local issues, before our primary research and stakeholder interviews.

Primary research

- 4.8 Primary research was carried out at the four study stations with rail users waiting to board the train. The questionnaire lasted approximately 5 minutes with an average of 25 completed interviews per shift. Eight shifts took place at each station with a mixture of morning and afternoon shifts (7.00-13.00 & 13.00-19.00) The surveys took place at Harlow Town on the 24th and 25th July and at Grays, Witham and Royston between the 11th and 15th September inclusive. The summer school holiday period was excluded to ensure that the survey sample and travel patterns were representative of an average travel day. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

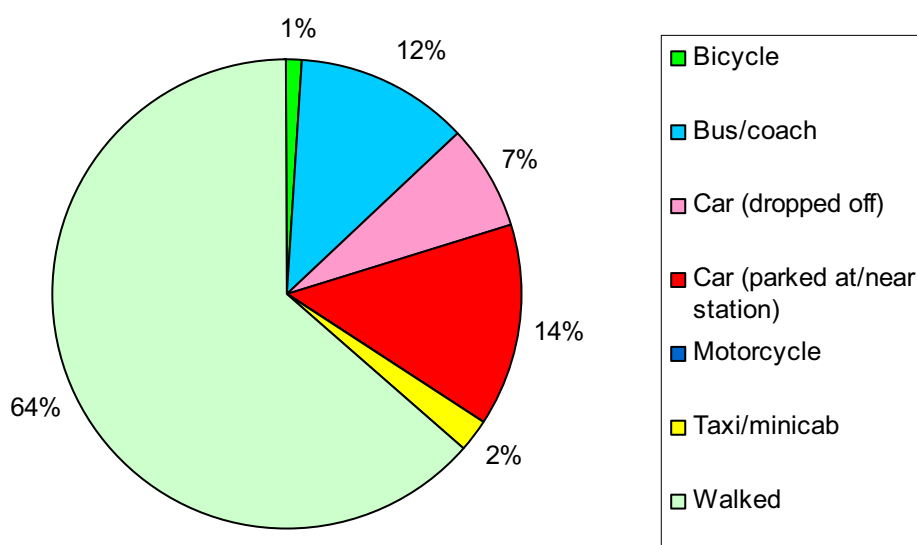
Stakeholder interviews

- 4.9 We arranged interviews with industry and local stakeholders for each of the four study stations. We met with train company representatives and local council officers for each location to understand local views, issues, aspirations, any planned new schemes and council policy. Topics which we discussed included the current parking situation, access to the station by road, public transport, walk and cycle, locations of new housing developments, council policy on car parking and options for increasing car parking in the area.

Background data

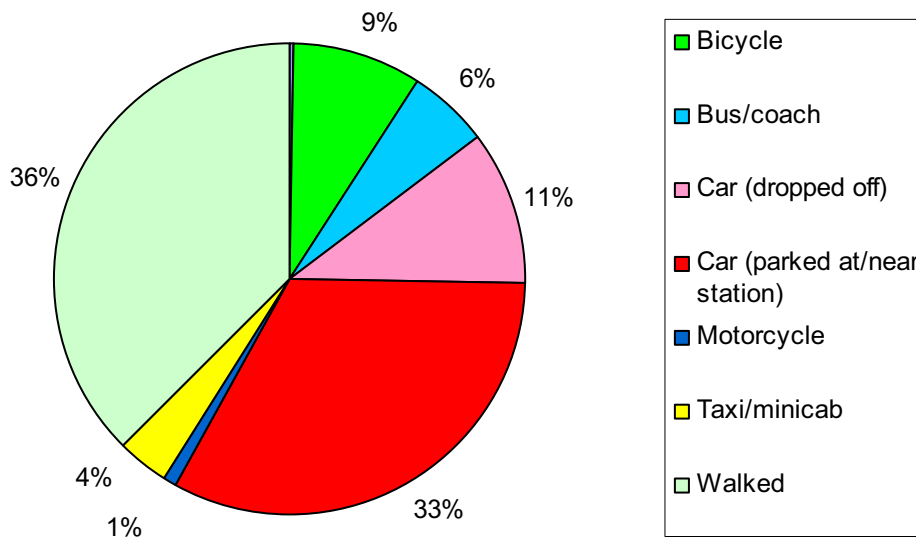
- 4.10 To provide some background base data about modes used for accessing stations in the Greater Anglia RUS area we have analysed data from the 2001 London Area Transport Survey (LATS). To provide a benchmark we have analysed survey respondents' data from people using all Greater Anglia stations. We have split the data by distance from London, based on two distance bands. Stations less than 25 miles from Liverpool Street and stations over 25 miles from Liverpool Street. This distance split shows how access mode changes by distance from London.

FIGURE 4.1 STATION ACCESS MODE - STATIONS LESS THAN 25 MILES FROM LIVERPOOL STREET



Source: London Area Transport Survey (LATS) 2001

FIGURE 4.2 STATION ACCESS MODE - STATIONS MORE THAN 25 MILES FROM LIVERPOOL STREET



Source: London Area Transport Survey (LATS) 2001

Witham

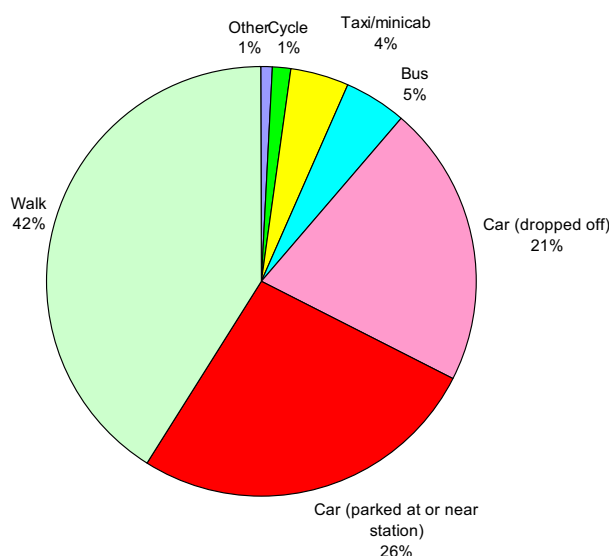
4.75 Witham is located in Braintree district between Chelmsford and Colchester, just off the A12 - the main dual carriageway out of London to Essex and Suffolk to the north east. Witham has two nearby adjacent stations, both very close to the A12. Hatfield Peverel is to the west, closer to London, whilst Kelvedon is to the east. Both adjacent stations have a less frequent service to Liverpool Street than Witham. All services are operated by 'one'. North of Witham station the Braintree branch line splits from the mainline, and stops at three small stations, terminating at Braintree. Witham has a large station car park, with 430 spaces, with a significant amount of other parking nearby available to rail users.

Primary Research

4.76 In Witham car access accounts for almost half of all those accessing the station. Amongst these more park in the station than are dropped off, although the proportion of people dropped off at the station is almost double what might be expected, compared with data from LATS. Two fifths of all respondents walk to the station. Only 5% of people use a bus to reach Witham station, consistent with LATS survey results.

4.77 Access to Witham station is displayed by the postcodes of respondents in Figure 4.40. This shows that passengers travel from quite a distance to reach Witham station, and it is those who are travelling from furthest away who park at or near the station. Those who use buses generally do so from outside Witham itself, whilst those who walk are located much closer to the station.

FIGURE 4.39 ACCESS MODE



Source: Q4. Base: All respondents 213

FIGURE 4.40 MAP SHOWING WITHAM ACCESS MODE BY POSTCODE OF RESPONDENTS

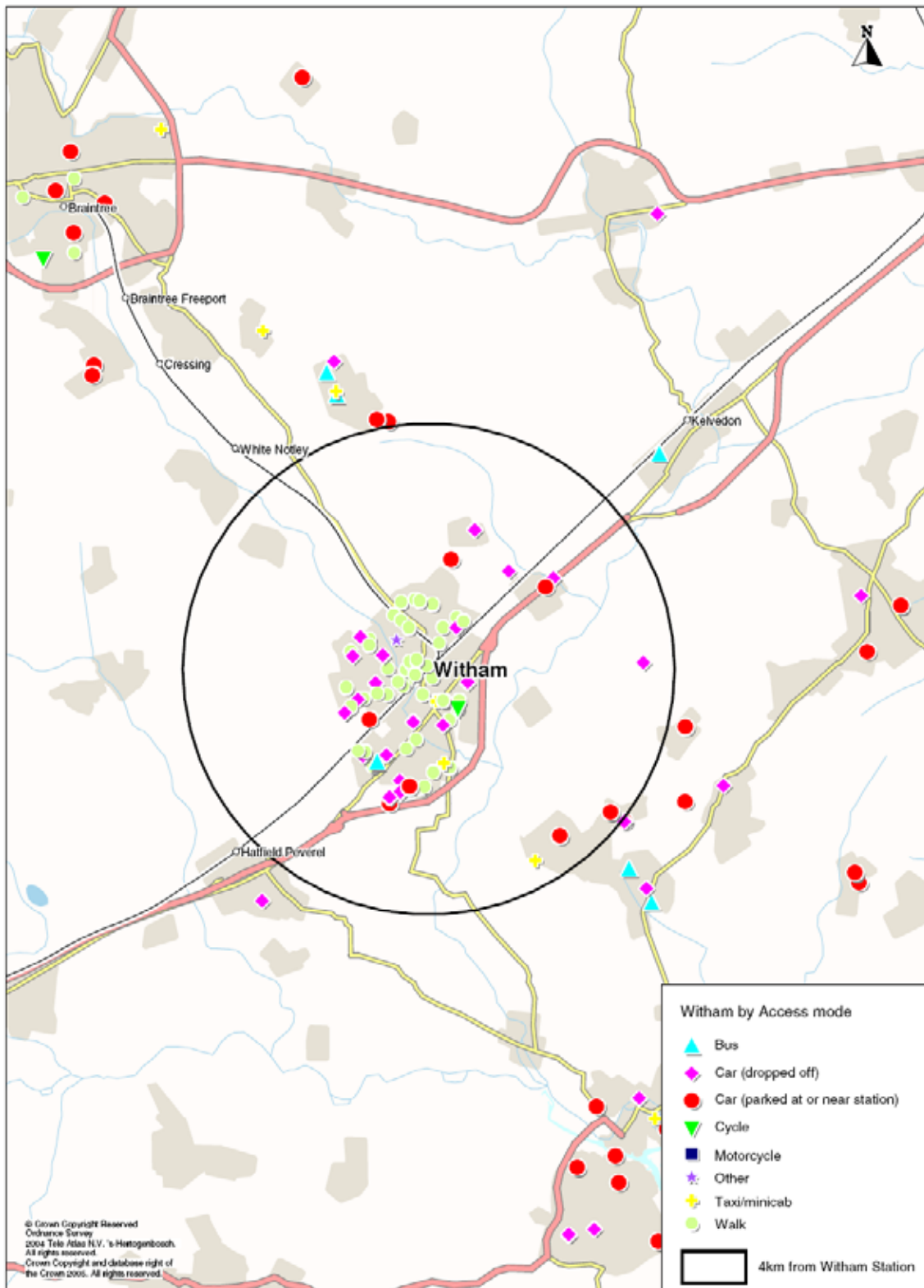
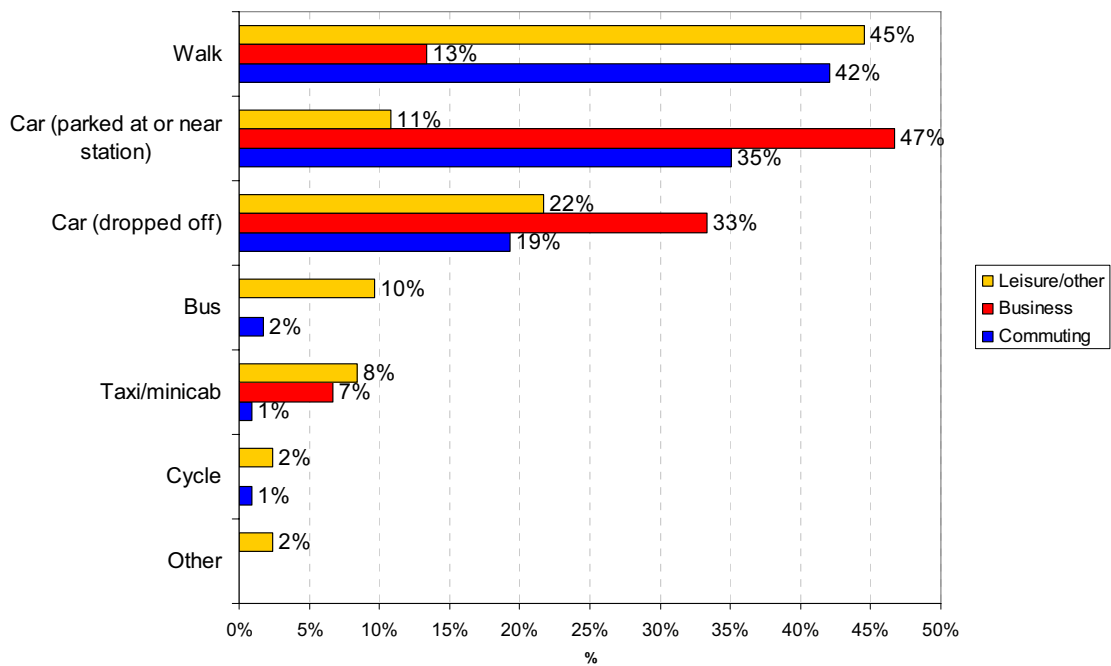


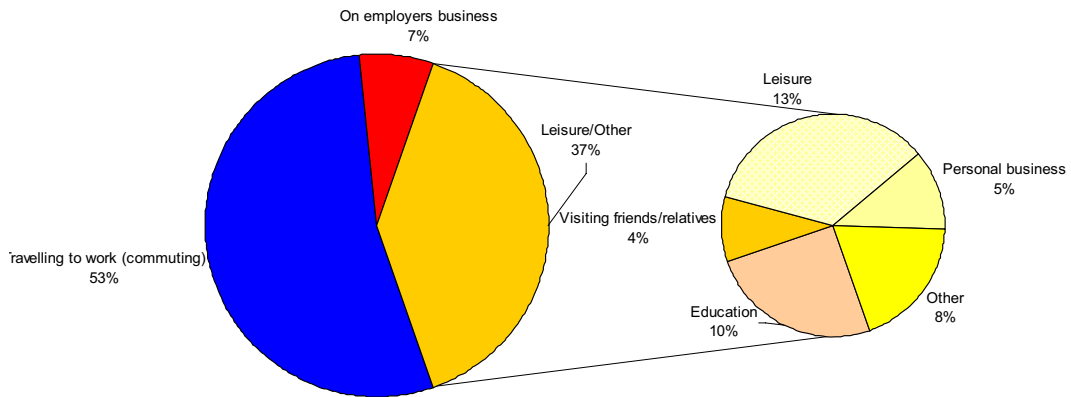
FIGURE 4.41 ACCESS MODE SHARE BY JOURNEY PURPOSE



Source: Q4. Base: All respondents – Commuting 114, Business 15, Leisure/other 84

- 4.78 Leisure customers and commuters were more likely to walk to the station compared to business customers, who were more likely to use a car (either parking or dropped off). Buses were more likely to be used by leisure customers than commuters, and not at all by business customers.
- 4.79 Just over half of the respondents at Witham station were commuting, whilst around two fifths were travelling for leisure purposes. Very few were travelling on business.

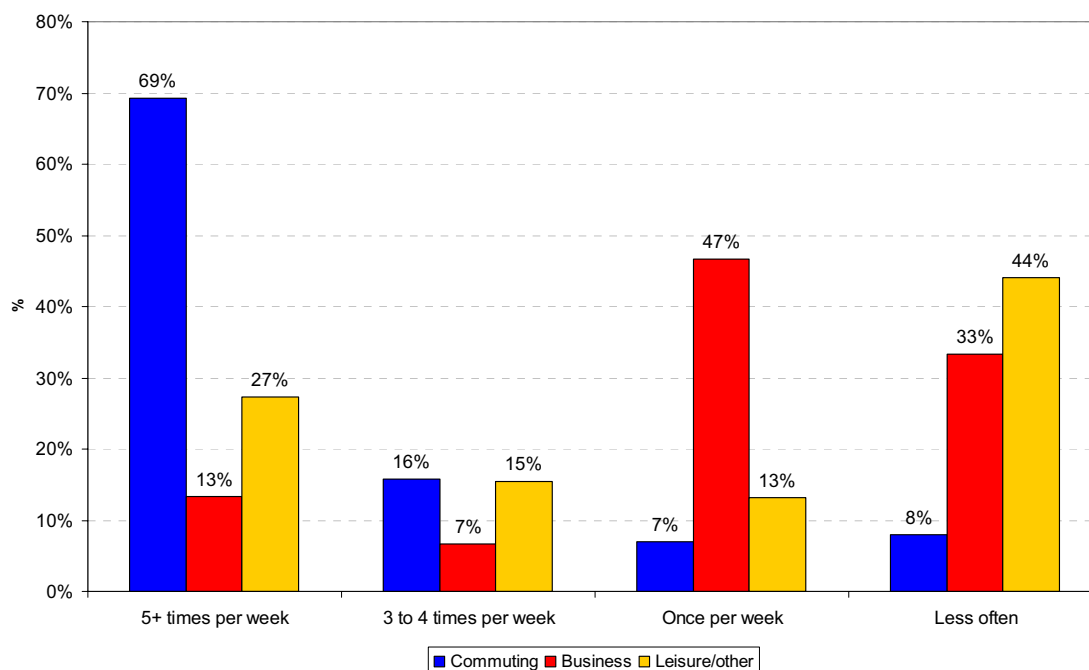
FIGURE 4.42 JOURNEY PURPOSE



Source: Q2. Base: All respondents 213

4.80 A large proportion of respondents travel five times a week or more. Frequency of travel is high due to the large proportion of commuters. The majority of commuters travel five or more times a week, whilst fewer travel once a week or less often. Business travellers are more likely to travel less frequently, with almost half travelling once a week. Leisure customers travel least frequently with over two fifths travelling less than once a week.

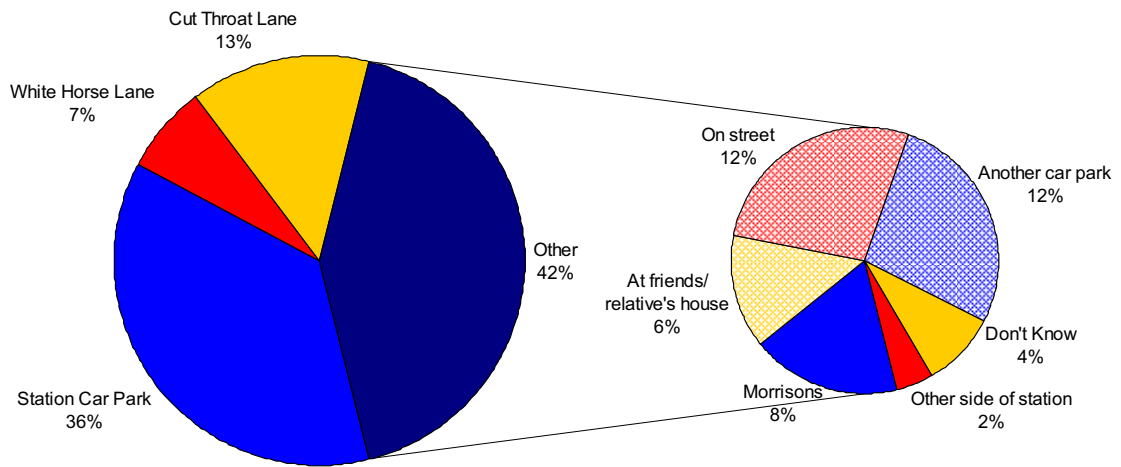
FIGURE 4.43 FREQUENCY OF MAKING JOURNEY BY JOURNEY PURPOSE



Source: Q2b. Base: All respondents – Commuting 114, Business 15, Leisure/other 84

- 4.81 As seen in Figure 4.39, 26% of respondents parked at or near the station. The locations used for parking are shown in Figure 4.44.
- 4.82 Over a third of respondents who parked used the station car park, and much smaller proportions used the council-owned car parks at White Horse Lane and the private car park at Cut Throat Lane. The remaining two fifths parked in other locations including Morrisons, the Labour Party building, and on street.
- 4.83 A map of car park locations is shown in Figure 4.40.

FIGURE 4.44 PARKING LOCATION



Source: Q7. Base: All respondents 56

- 4.84 Although a range of reasons were given by 31% of respondents, 30% stated that they chose the car park because it is nearer to station. Price also appears to be an issue with a fifth choosing a parking location because it is free and a further 15% because it is cheaper.
- 4.85 'Other' reasons that were given were that it was convenient, that there was a lack of space elsewhere/a space was guaranteed, and a number of people did not know of any other parking options.

FIGURE 4.45 MAP OF WITHAM STATION AND CAR PARKS

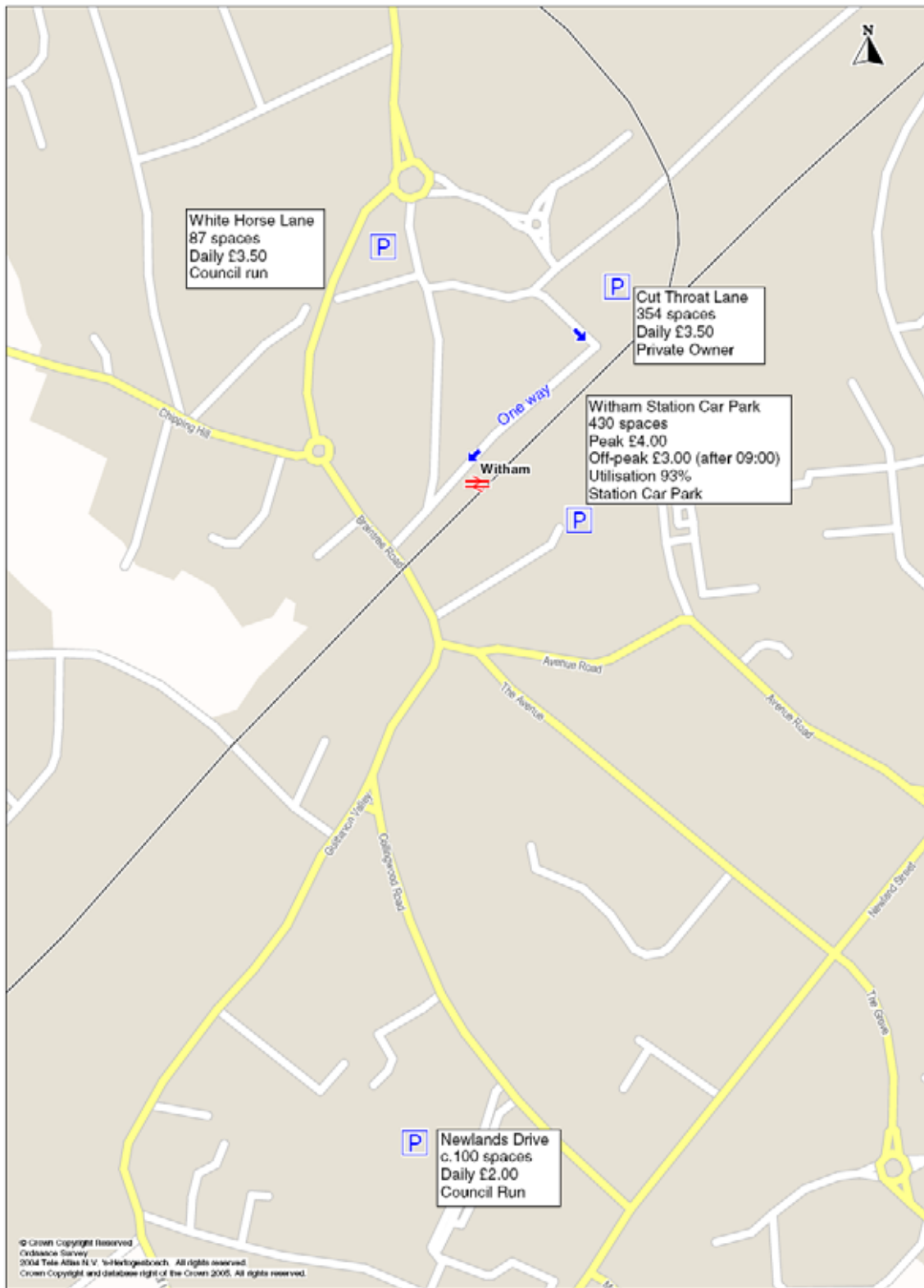
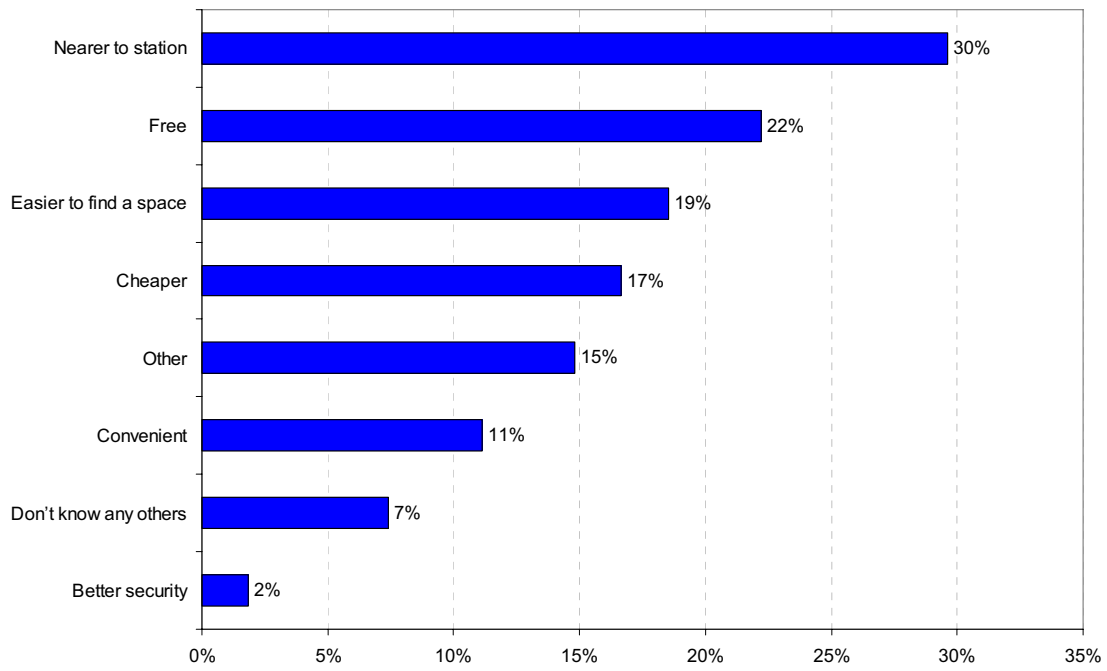


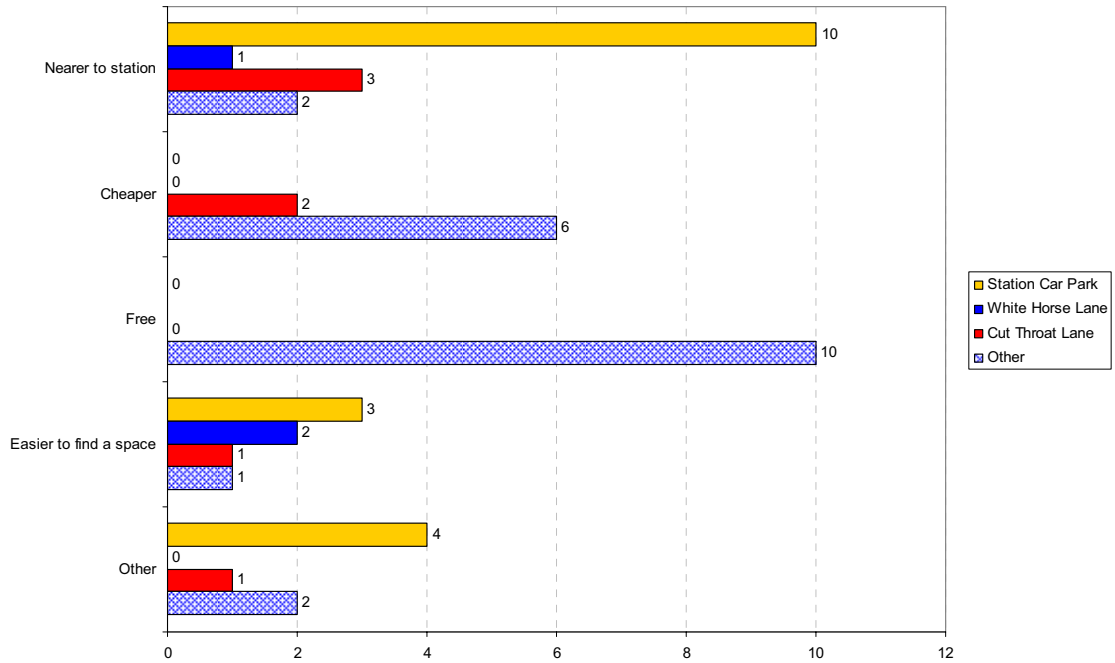
FIGURE 4.46 PARKING LOCATION SELECTION



Source: Q8. Base: All those who parked at or near station 56

4.86 The station car park tended to be chosen because of its proximity to the station, and respondents also felt it was easy to find a space. Cut Throat Lane car park was chosen because it was cheaper (on a daily basis) and still relatively near the station.

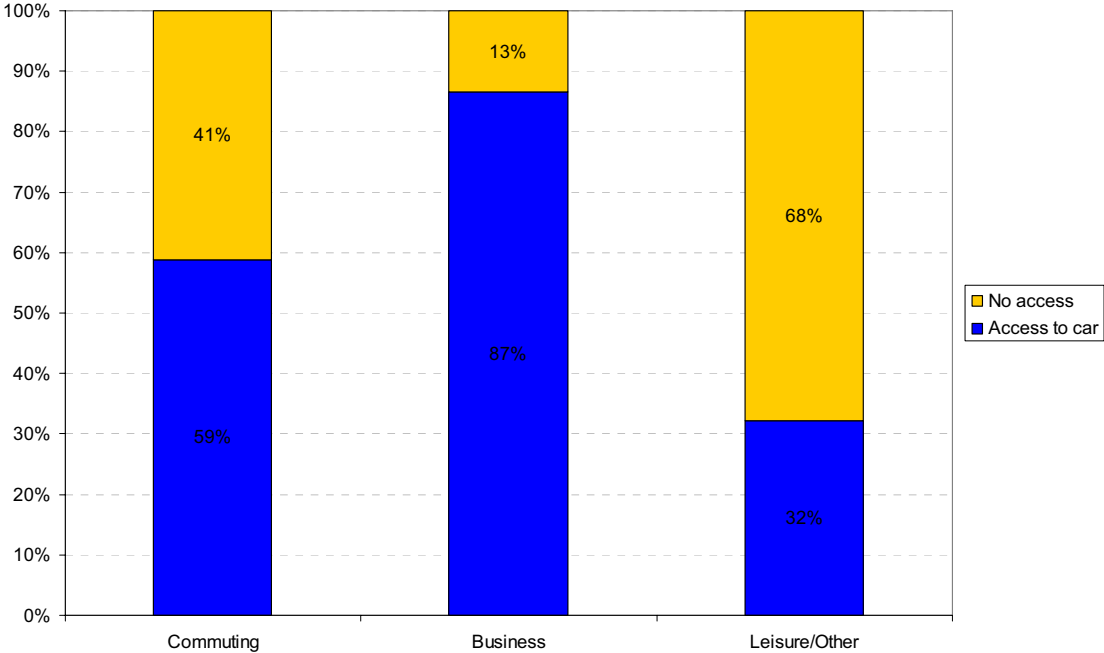
FIGURE 4.47 PARKING LOCATION SELECTION BY PARKING LOCATION



Source: Q8. Base: All those who parked at or near station: Station car park 21, White Horse Lane 4, Cut Throat Lane 8, Other 22

4.87 Overall, 50% of respondents have access to a car. Of those people who didn't park at the station only 24% of respondents had access to a car (although 28% did not answer the question). Business customers at Grays were most likely to have access to a car compared to commuters or leisure customers. Leisure customers are least likely to have access to a car.

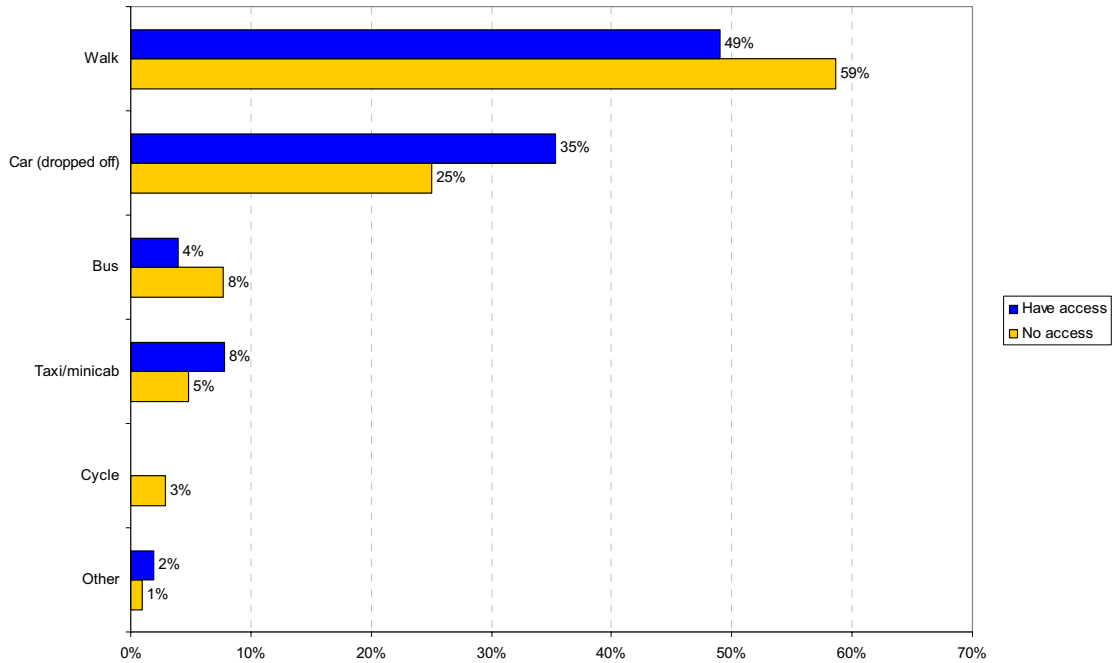
FIGURE 4.48 ACCESS TO CAR BY JOURNEY PURPOSE



Source: Q5. Base: All respondents - Commuting 114, Business 15, Leisure/other 81

4.88 Respondents with no access to a car are more likely to walk to Witham station than those with access. They are also more likely to use the bus. However, those with access are more likely to be dropped off at the station.

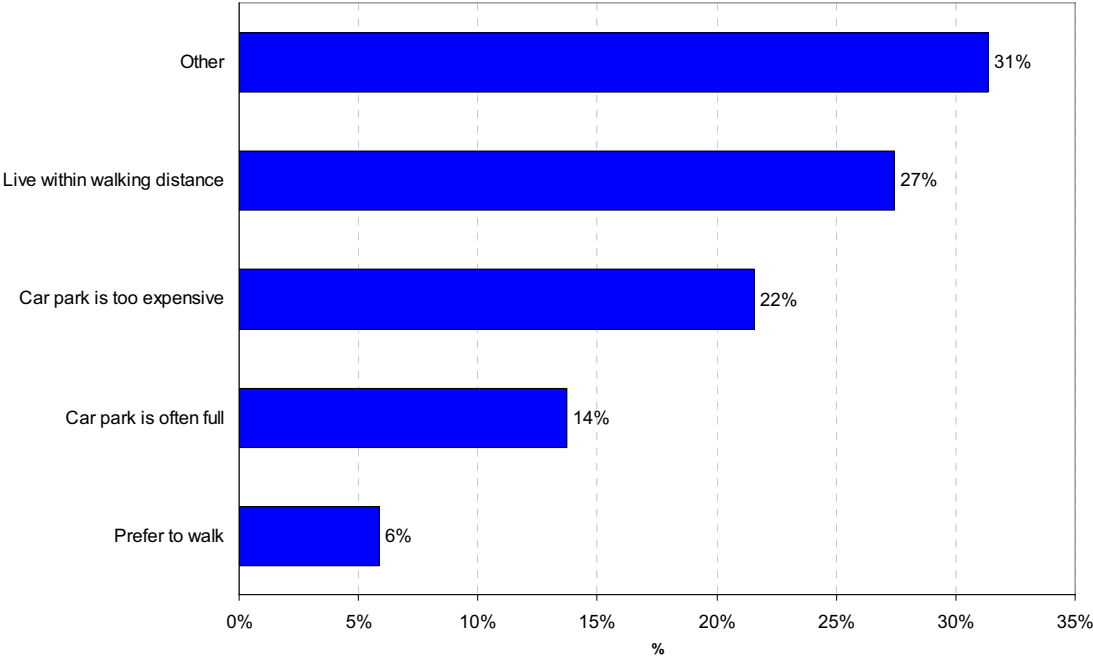
FIGURE 4.49 ACCESS MODE BY ACCESS TO CAR



Source: Q4. Base: All respondents – Access to car 106, No access 104

4.89 All those who have access to a car but did not use it to park at or near the station, were asked their reasons for not using the car. The most frequently given answer was that they live within walking distance of the station. Issues with the car park were also mentioned by a substantial proportion of respondents. Amongst the ‘other’ answers given were other people using the car during the day, car not working, and unable to use the car later (drinking, going different route home).

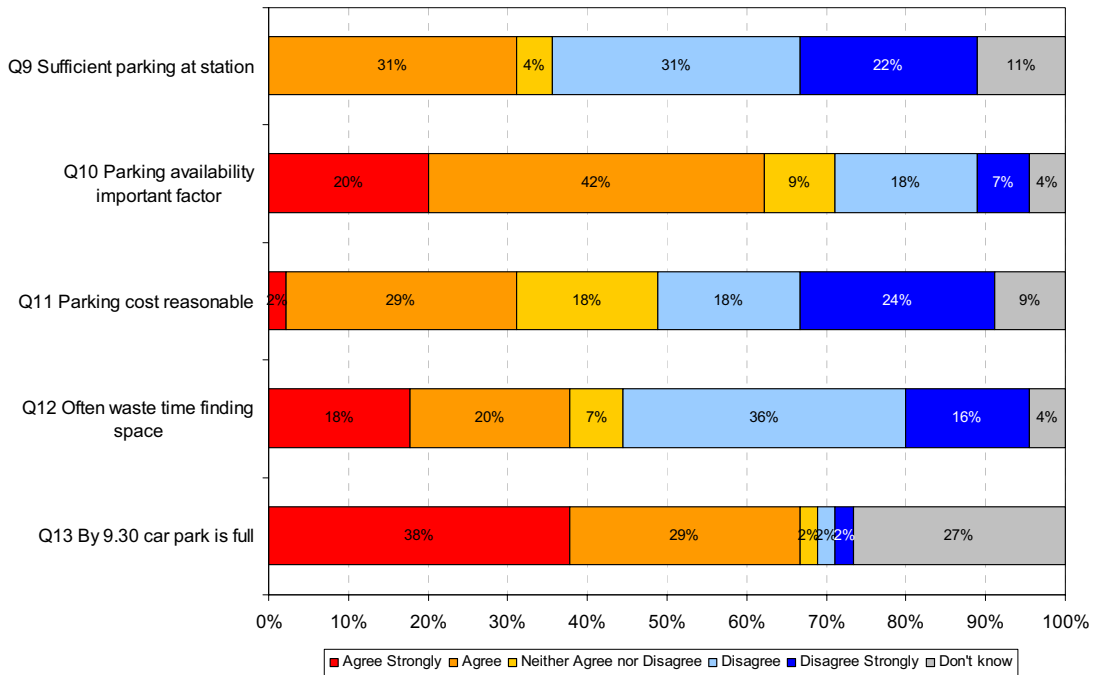
FIGURE 4.50 REASON FOR NOT USING CAR



Source: Q6. Base: All respondents who did not use car 51

4.90 Respondents who parked at or near the station generally felt that parking availability was an important factor but that the car park fills up early. No one agreed strongly that there was enough parking at the station and almost two fifths felt they often wasted time finding a space.

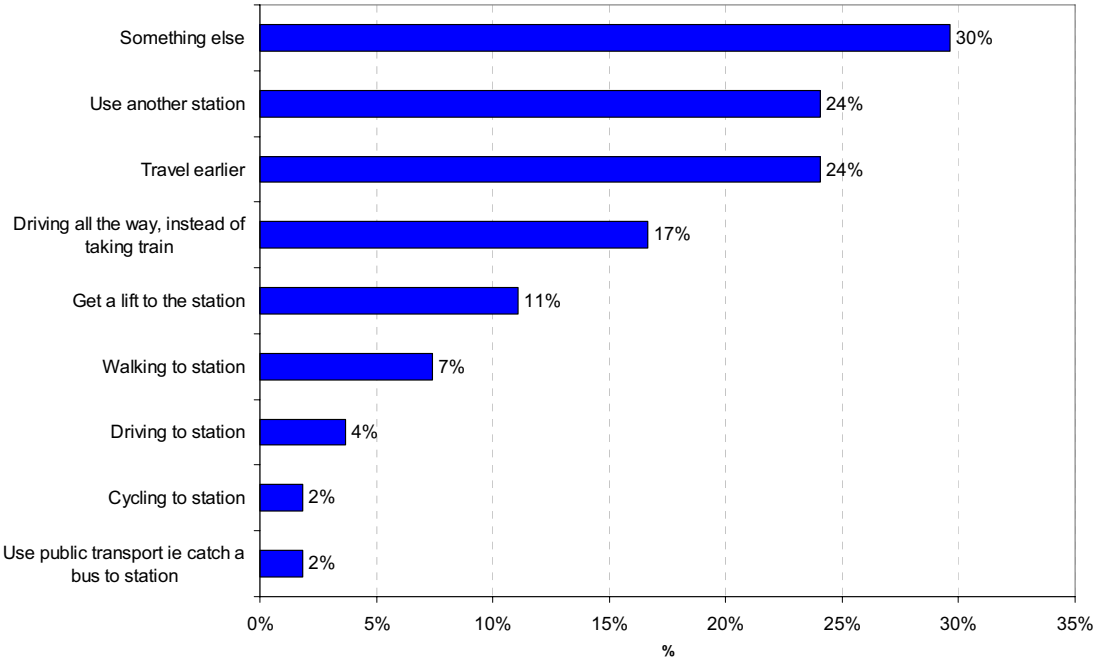
FIGURE 4.51 ATTITUDE STATEMENTS



Source: Q9-13. Base: All those who parked at or near station 56

4.91 Almost a quarter of respondents said they would use another station if car parking became difficult at Witham. Other stations considered were Braintree, Chelmsford, Braintree Freeport, Hatfield, Kelvedon, Shenfield and Wickford. Alternatively other parking locations would be found. A further quarter would travel earlier. Very few respondents stated that they would use public transport or another mode to reach the station, with a larger proportion (17%) saying they would drive all the way instead of getting the train.

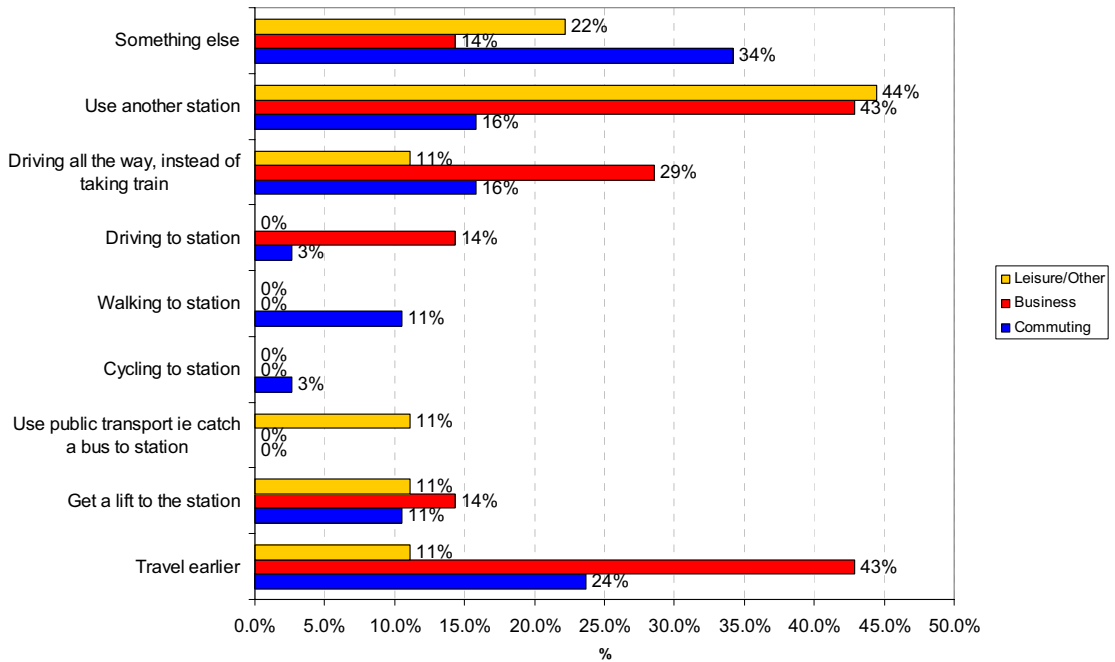
FIGURE 4.52 FUTURE PARKING



Source: Q14. Base: All those who parked at or near station 56

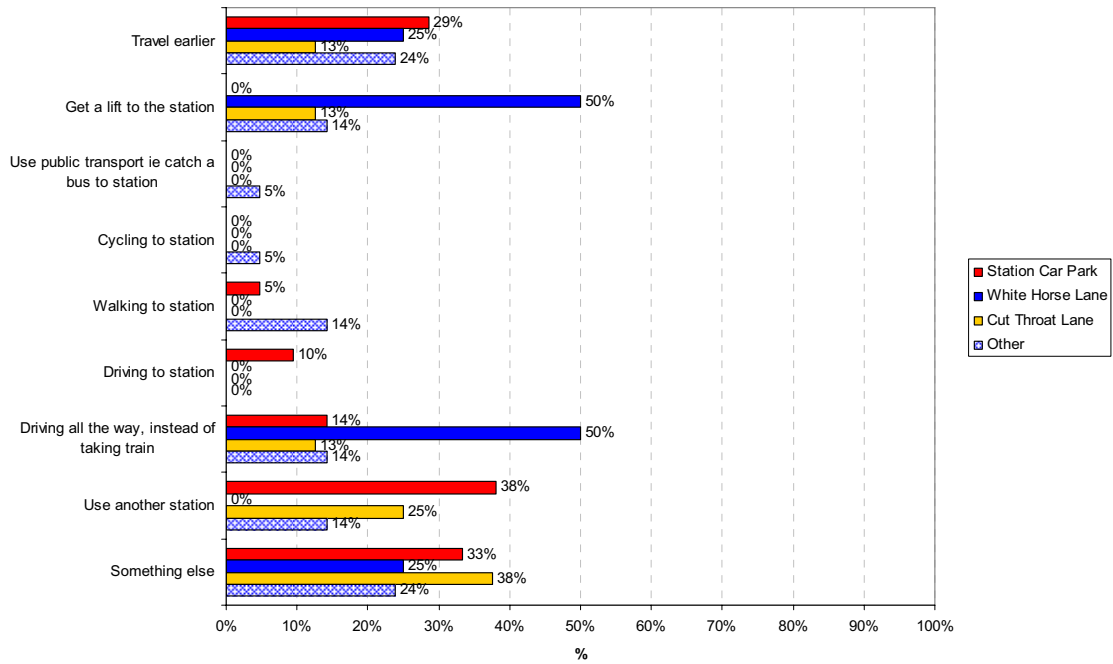
4.92 Commuters were a lot less likely to say they would use another station, but were the only group to say they would walk or cycle to Witham. Business customers were the most likely to say they would drive all the way to their destination or travel earlier (note: this is based on a small sample).

FIGURE 4.53 FUTURE PARKING BY JOURNEY PURPOSE



Source: Q14. Base: All those who parked at or near station – Commuting 38, Business 7, Leisure/other 9

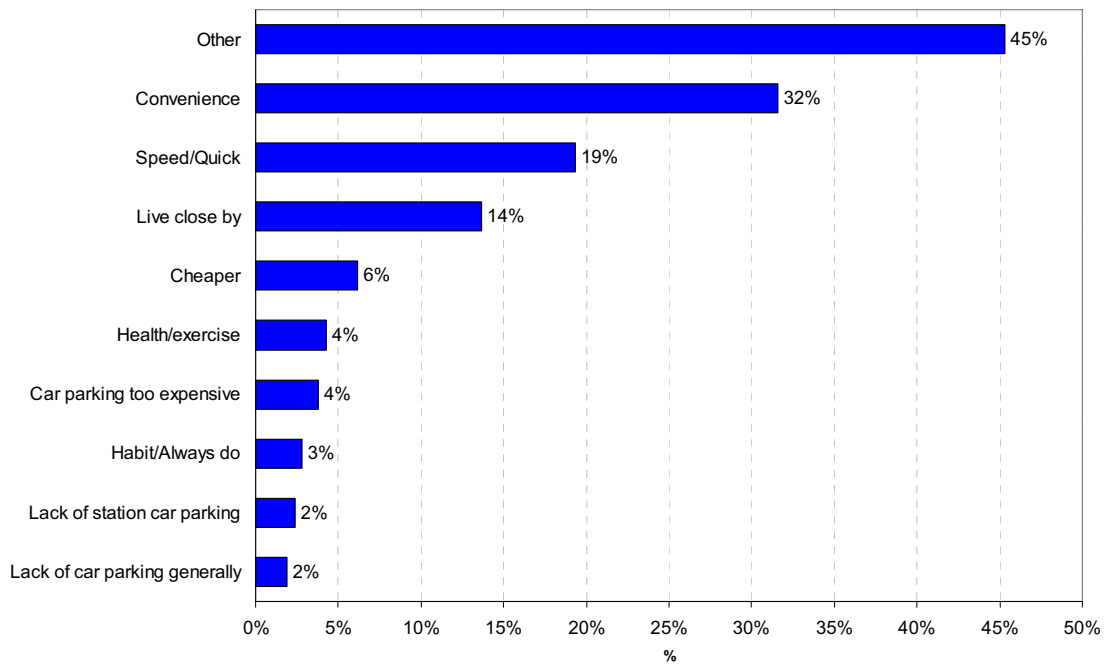
FIGURE 4.54 FUTURE PARKING BY PARKING LOCATION



Source: Q12. Base: All those who parked at or near station - Station car park 21, White Horse Lane 4, Cut Throat Lane 8, Other 22

- 4.93 Access mode was chosen by almost a third of all respondents because of convenience. The speed of the mode was also important as was proximity to the station. Cost reasons were mentioned by a few.
- 4.94 'Other' reasons given included the bus services being unreliable, living too far for any other mode, weather, personal reasons and ease/effort.

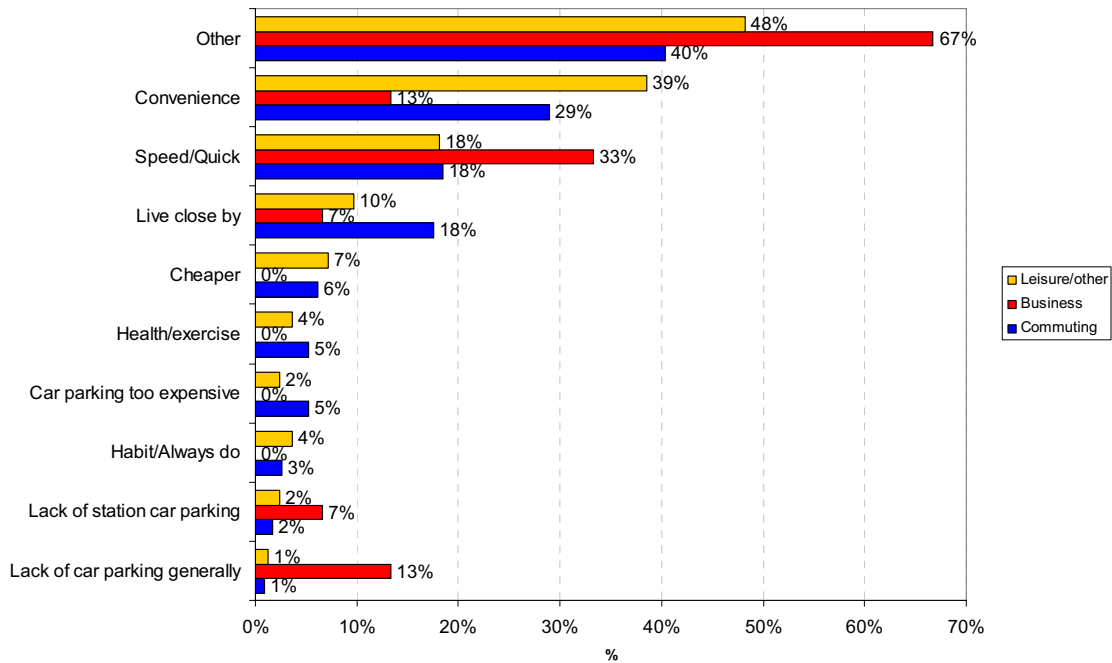
FIGURE 4.55 INFLUENCES ON ACCESS MODE



Source: Q15. Base: All respondents 223

4.95 Proximity to the station appears to be more of an influence on commuters, whereas speed is more important for business customers. Cost and convenience are less of an issue for business customers.

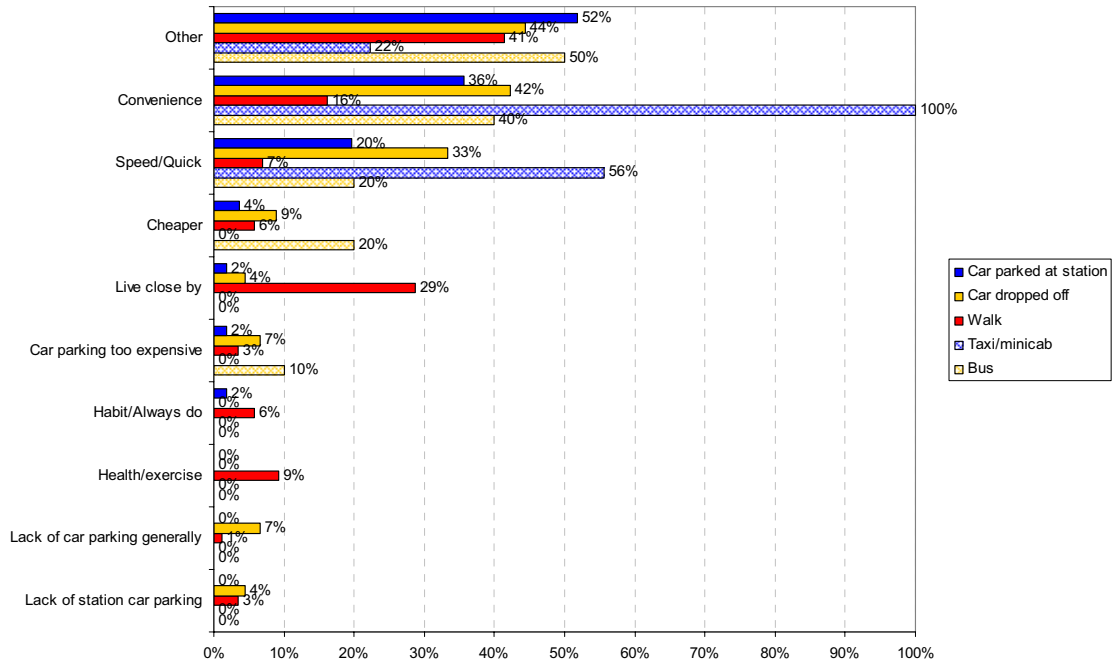
FIGURE 4.56 INFLUENCES ON ACCESS MODE BY JOURNEY PURPOSE



Source: Q15. Base: All respondents – Commuting 114, Business 15, Leisure/other 84

4.96 Those who park at or near the station are more likely to state convenience and speed, with very few giving any other reason. All those using a taxi state convenience as the reason.

FIGURE 4.57 INFLUENCES ON ACCESS MODE BY ACCESS MODE



Source: Q15. Base: All respondents – Car parked 56, Car dropped off 45, Walk 87, Taxi/minicab 9, Bus 10
 NB: Other modes not included as base sizes very small

Stakeholder Research

- 4.97 As part of our stakeholder research at Witham we met with representatives from ‘one’ and Braintree District Council. We also sought feedback from the Braintree & Witham Rail Users Group.

Car park capacity

- 4.98 Witham has a significant amount of parking provision on several parking sites. The station car park is located to the south of the station and has 430 spaces. Figures provided by ‘one’ and NCP, who manage the car park show occupancy levels between 93% and 100%. Data from the TOC show that car park season ticket holders comprise most of those parking, with around 70-80 spaces remaining for users without a season ticket for the car park. An area of land to the north east of the railway at Cut Throat Lane is owned privately and used for rail car parking, charged on a daily basis at £3.50, less than the £4.00 daily charge at the station car park, although no season tickets are available. Spaces at this car park total 354 and the car park is generally full by 8:30am.

FIGURE 4.58 WITHAM STATION – CAR PARK, BUS INTERCHANGE, CUT THROAT LANE CAR PARK



- 4.99 There is also a council-owned long stay car park at White Horse Lane, opposite Cut Throat Lane, with around 100 spaces, costing £3.50 per day; this had very few spaces available on our field visit, in the early afternoon. There is limited on street parking, with Essex County Council extending residents parking schemes to discourage rail commuters parking on the street. The Rail User Group commented that rail passengers were prepared to ignore restrictions and risk being fined, with anecdotal

evidence that enforcement was lax. Morrisons supermarket is slightly further away from the station and recent council surveys show some evidence of rail commuters parking in the car park.

Road access to station

- 4.100 Road access, and in particular exit from the station car park can be difficult, due to the road layout. A possible solution would be to ban right turns from the station car park. Other options include a new exit from the existing station car park, to the south east, which could alleviate congestion. Since a one way system has been introduced in the roads around the station entrance, to the north of the railway tracks, there are fewer problems with congestion outside the station building.

Public Transport

- 4.101 Bus services in Witham pass the station, with a drop off and pick up point close to the station. Bus mode share to the station in Witham is around 5%, similar to the 6% reported in the LATS survey for stations a similar distance from central London. A new development of housing at Maltings Lane will have a new bus route to the station, funded by the developer including free travel for residents for the first 2 to 3 months. The rail user group commented on ‘poor bus services’ in Witham. ‘one’ representatives commented that bus services are not particularly well used, and there are currently infrequent services.

Walking and cycling

- 4.102 Currently pedestrian access to the platforms is possible only from the north side of the railway, with proposals for a pedestrian bridge connecting to the car park to the south of the railway currently being considered by Essex County Council. A new footbridge would give the opportunity to provide more formal provision for secure cycle parking on the south side of the railway. Currently up to 50 bicycles are chained to railings by the station entrance, on a weekday; there is not space in this location for cycle racks or covered parking. If a footbridge were constructed the local council would consider funding improvements to cycle provision.

New housing developments

- 4.103 Braintree district was allocated 7,700 new dwellings from 2001 to 2021 in the draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy, this is a total increase of 14%. The local council has suggested that a high proportion of these allocations have already been allocated or constructed. There remains around 250 new dwelling per year to be constructed, new sites in Witham include Spring Lodge, high density flats within walking distance of the station and Maltings Lane – 1,000 homes for families (with bus link to station). Other developments are likely to be in-fill developments in the urban area. The council commented that, increasingly, new properties are smaller, flat type developments which are sold to London commuters, who can’t afford prices in the London suburbs.

Future options for enhancing car parking and station access

- 4.104 The local council at Witham recognise the need for additional car parking at the

station and have recently conducted a car parking count, to help understand long stay car parking in car parks close to the station. Essex County Council is responsible for highways in the area, this includes consideration of new schemes which may affect traffic flow and controlled parking areas. It is noted that Essex County Council are likely to increase the area covered by the controlled parking zone around the station, putting additional pressure on the existing car parks.

- 4.105 The car park located at Cut Throat Lane has recently had an application for a multi-storey car park refused by the district council on the basis of a lack of sufficient road access highlighted by the county council highway department. A small area of land, owned by the adjacent Morrisons superstore is central to the application. The developer suggests the inability to obtain this land to provide improved highway access is the barrier to this application being accepted. An alternative option is to add a single deck to the site, although this is likely to be subject to the same highway access requirements. It is possible that this site could provide additional car parking capacity, but currently there appears to be a planning hurdle to overcome.
- 4.106 The current station car park at Witham is on a flat, if slightly awkwardly shaped site. Conversations with the council suggest that exploring options for decking the existing station car park would be another way to expand car parking at the station. Any expansion of car parking on this site would have to include improved highway entry/exit to the site, which could be achieved with a new access point to the car park in the south eastern corner of the site, onto Avenue Road.
- 4.107 Conversations with representatives from 'one', confirm that there is a desire for additional station car parking in the Witham area. It was suggested that developing a parkway style station would allow easier car access than to the current station site, although there is not an obvious location for such a development in the locality. The provision of cycle parking and the resulting cycle use at stations across Essex has grown significantly over the last 5 years, resulting in a change in access mode from 1% to 3%. Motorcycle access has also seen strong growth. The TOC is keen to promote both modes, which reduce pressures on car parking. The local station manager was concerned that the Park & Ride development at Chelmsford may reduce demand for car parking at the station. A reduced bus service after 7pm may mean that this service, designed primarily for shoppers in Chelmsford, is unlikely to be attractive to commuters.
- 4.108 There is a proposal for additional car parking at Kelvedon, as part of a mixed use scheme, although this planning application has not yet been approved, this would only add 35 additional spaces if approved. The rail user group has a number of suggestions to provide additional parking capacity including a new station on the Braintree branch line near to the Cherry Tree pub, on the Cressing road. Options for this location include a rail shuttle service or a park and ride style shuttle bus service to Witham station.
- 4.109 The suppressed demand analysis work in chapter 5 explores demand for rail use in the Witham area that is currently being suppressed due to a lack of car parking.
- 4.110 The majority of car users are driving from outside of the Witham urban area, in many cases rail-heading from locations where the service to London is slow, or less

frequent, for example the Braintree branch line, Hatfield Peverel and Kelvedon. Our survey showed that 40% of respondents using Witham station resided more than 4 km from Witham, with a similar proportion to the north, around Braintree and south of the A12. There is a possibility that expanding car parking at Witham may increase this trend.

Contact us

If you want to know more about the work we are doing on your behalf to ensure you get a better deal when you travel by rail, contact us:

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