



# HS2 Customer Community

November 2017 Task:

Station Common Design Elements

# Panel Participation

Average participation in 16/17  
88%

Task	Date	Participation
Workshop Feedback	11 <sup>th</sup> Oct – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	88%
Design of Station Interiors	23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct – 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec	100%
Toilet Facilities in Stations	23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct – 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec	85%



# Design of Station Interiors

Half of the Community saw this task

# Design of Station Interiors

## 🗨️ Let's talk about stations!

Take a look at the attached document which covers a few topics including how you access information whilst inside the train station. Feel free to add in any ideas that you might have if you don't see them here and share any pictures/photos to help show what you mean.

Q1. Which is most useful to you and why? Do you like more than one option?

A – One main information display screen on the concourse?

B – Multiple smaller information display screens located around the concourse?

C – All the travel information on your mobile device?

Q2. Imagine there is a 'hub' in the station with a member of staff who you can go to for information. Would this be better:

A – if it was fixed so always in the same place?

B – if it was mobile and could move around?

Q3. Should the 'hub' be accessible from multiple sides or just one? Why?

Q4. Would you prefer one main central 'hub' or multiple smaller 'hubs'?

Q5. Should these 'hubs' look functional and professional or artistic and creative?

Q6. Now for something quite different within the station... handrails!

· Do you prefer a certain material?

· Do you think braille or embossing on the end of handrails would be useful (for example, to indicate that you have reached the final step)?

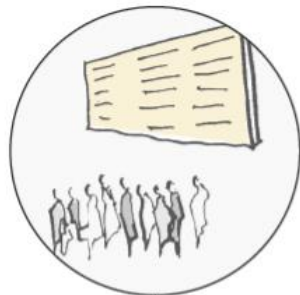
· What do you think of having a second lower handrail on stairs and ramps, for example, for children to hold on to?

Q7. Leading on from the handrail and thinking about the balustrade (railing/wall on the side of a staircase):

· What would you think of a glass balustrade?

· Do you have any thoughts on being able to see through to other parts of the building/other people?

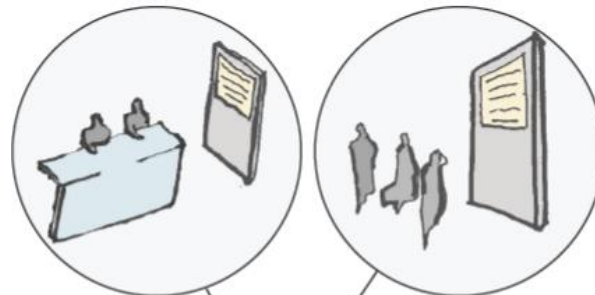
# Almost all respondents stated that they wanted more than just one of the Customer Information Provision options, with half opting for all 3



**A**

## Single Display

Single large screen on the main concourse area



**B**

## Distributed

Multiple smaller screens distributed around the station's concourse area



**C**

## Mobile / Personal

Customers rely on their smart phones for train information

- The Community highlighted that the amount of information on one main board in larger stations can be overwhelming and hard to understand

"I just travelled to Manchester over the weekend on the train and I almost got a stiff neck staring at the screen waiting for my platform to be announced."  
– Male, 41-50, Business

"Sometimes you can get confused with your train and other trains that are all going to the same destination.  
Maybe a mini interactive screen below the main screen would be good to allow you to further probe your query from the above board."  
– Female, 41-50, Commuter

# What Community members want from Customer Information Provisions

- The Community emphasised that the priority was getting the right information at the right time... and not too late!
  - The information screens must be in sync with PA systems
  - Accessing live train information on a mobile device was seen as essential, providing passengers with more freedom and choice (e.g. to get a coffee rather than standing in front of the boards), however it **MUST** be as reliable and trustworthy as the info provided in the station.
- From an accessibility standpoint, passengers with visual impairments would have difficulty interacting with options A and B (the screens). Mobile devices would enable the use of voice over or talkback to access the information audibly.
- Many stated that although they would prefer to use their mobile device as a primary information point, screens would always be needed in case of the 'dreaded dead battery!'

"The important thing with this displayed information is that it is perfectly in sync with any PA system announcements. When there are changes / delays etc., a sense of calm & reassurance is needed, as opposed to increased concern and irritation."

– Male, 61-70, Commuter

"There are ways the sender can ensure the recipient has read the message like in WhatsApp. Should that not occur perhaps a call can be placed. Without it I would be quite nervous."

– Male, 41-50, Business

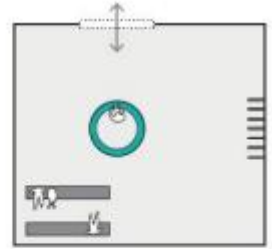
"Having a real human to go to would be beneficial for me if any of my smart devices failed and I still need information. Being honest I tend to rely on human staff at the stations a lot, I would be lost without them, especially assistance."

– Visually impaired Community member

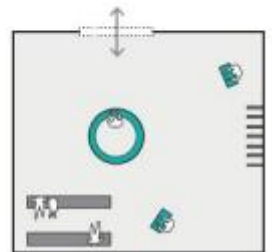
# Should Customer Experience Hubs be in a fixed location or mobile?

- The Community saw value in having a central fixed hub so that regular users of the station would know the location and it would help to foster a sense of familiarity
- A visually impaired Community member stated that guide dogs are trained to recognise familiar surroundings and memorise routes, therefore fixed would be better, saving time for these passengers when trying to locate the hub
- Some suggested that mobile hubs might be useful, **in addition to the fixed hub(s)**, at times where more support is likely to be necessary e.g. on event days, where they can be positioned in the most useful locations. However, they must be noticeable and easy to identify.

A. Single - Central



B. Multiple - Satellites



“I can see it (mobile) being useful if you anticipate higher ticket sales or are experiencing lengthy queues, it would be useful to have one on 'stand by' to be able to be used if needs be.”  
– Male, 18-23, Leisure

“If there was a special event then maybe having the ability to have smaller portable information stands, this way tourists/people not familiar with the station could use these.”  
– Female, 31-40, Commuter

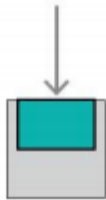
About Birmingham New Street - “...there are usually staff available in random places who carry tablets and give information for our journey if we need it. This service means that numerous passengers can enquire at different locations so it eases up on queues and time restraints.”  
– Female, 41-50, Leisure

# How would the Community like to access the Customer Experience Hubs?

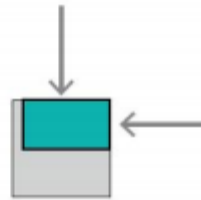
## Single or multi-sided access?

- The Community saw single-sided access as a lost opportunity to address as many customers as quickly as possible and prevent queues from building up
- However, there were significant concerns regarding other customers' behaviour and the queueing system of a multi-sided hub

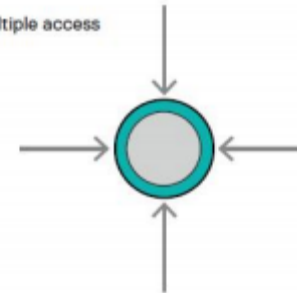
Single-sided



Two-sided



Multiple access



“The information hub at the Westfield City shopping centre in Stratford, London seems to work very well. A single side design would give a rather formal feel rather like a post office and less welcoming than one with multiple sides. It is critical however that this has sufficient staff to operate it. If there is a single member of staff then a one sided design would be better.”

– Male, 18-23, Leisure

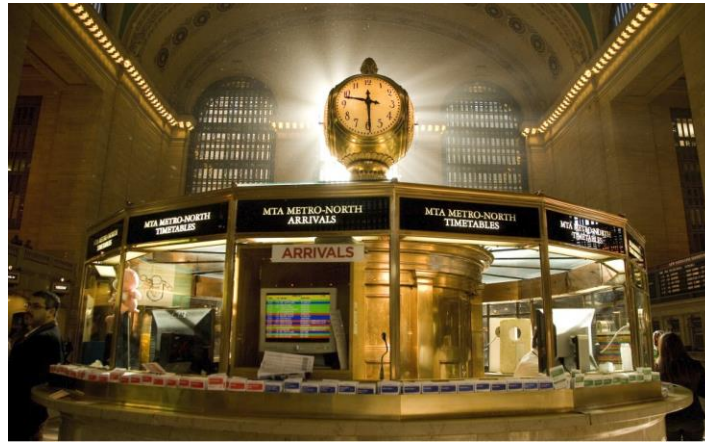
“This is a bit of a difficult one. I think multiple sides to enable more people to be served at the same time, but that can create issues with queuing if it is not carefully managed.

Whatever system is used, it should be well staffed and the queue should be managed so as not to impede other rail users and so that the order of service was clear.”

– Female, 61-70, Business



# Customer Experience Hubs



Information point at Grand Central

“Grand Central Station has a very attractive information point - think something like this would be brilliant. They even have different sections for different information/queries I believe.

I often find that when seeking out information in stations with multiple hubs, you run from one to the other finding the shortest queue and end up losing out from to-ing and fro-ing! One way to counter this is to have a circular multiple access main hub. Even if there are queues then you won't be rushing around looking for another hub, and because of the multiple access points you'll be dealt with as quickly as possible.”

– Female, 18-23, Commuter

# The Community gave mixed feedback on whether the hubs should look functional or artistic

They agreed that the primary function must be clarity of information, but some thought that there was room to make them more interesting...

## Functional & professional

- Prevent from appearing gimmicky
- Portray the 'right' image
- Artistic design can appear obscure

## Artistic & creative

- Opportunity for HS2 to do something different
- Make it stand out

"The overall look of a station should have design flair and creativity particularly the upper levels and roof. The best stations and airports have this. However the functional aspects such as information hubs should look functional and professional."  
– Male, 61-70, Leisure

"As HS2 is going to be so cutting edge artistic would suit better."  
– Female, 31-40, Commuter

"Is it not possible to be both professional looking and creative/artistic at the same time? Perhaps local art groups could be asked to contribute to the design to enhance a sense of community."  
– Female, 61-70, Business

## Examples of where this is well-executed:

Euston station – season decoration  
York station – large and accessible, bright red in colour and plays music

# The Community felt able to comment on some aspects related to handrails

## Material

Stainless steel was preferred for being more hard-wearing, sturdy and attractive.

Stainless steel/metal – fresh, clean, expensive, reflect light, classy, durable

Wood – splinter, degrade over time, traditional, grimy, high-maintenance

Plastic – cheap and nasty, paint would chip



Some were focussed on hygiene; they didn't mind what the material was but wanted HS2 to consider the best way to keep germs at bay!

Some members expressed no preference or didn't feel qualified to give an appropriate response regarding the choice of materials.

There was a suggestion to colour-code rails to direct customers around the station (like tube lines on the floor).

# The Community felt able to comment on some aspects related to handrails

## Second lower handrail (for children)

- Some Community members thought that this might be a good idea from a health and safety standpoint.
- Others thought it was an unnecessary feature and wondered whether it would create an obstruction. Establishing the appropriate height could be a challenge therefore research would need to be done to understand more.

“This is a great idea and would help struggling parents with prams, luggage and possible other children. It also teaches children on hand rail and stair safety.”

– Female, 41-50, Leisure



“Simply no. Having had young children you want them hanging on to you not a handrail and they will concentrate on that rather than you as a parent. Just no!”

– Male, 51-60, Business



“Would this create an obstruction and actually cause more issues? It would need to be tested out carefully to see if it worked in practice. The height at which it was placed might also cause challenges as children are very varied in size.”

– Female, 61-70, Business

# The Community felt able to comment on some aspects related to handrails

## Braille embossed on end of handrail

- Some able-bodied members of the Community thought this was a good idea and great for inclusive design, also suggesting having braille at the midpoint and audio feedback
- Some others didn't like the idea as it seemed like a breeding ground for bacteria

"Not all blind and VI users can read braille so even to blind travellers that is not a universal way to communicate.

### **Nice idea in theory but not practical as a blind user.**

Blind and visually impaired people when cane and guide dog trained are versed in tactile paving and steps and to feel for these with our feet at curbs, stairs and escalators. This is standard in our mobility training with Social Services and Guide dogs.

It would be better to place tactile paving at the top and bottom of stairs to indicate the beginning and the end of the steps, rather than placing indicators somewhere WE WOULD NOT INSTINCTIVELY LOOK (feel for). Also there is a great possibility that the braille or embossing will be missed by taking hands off too soon or if in a rush.

Also, I don't think you should have audio prompts here as suggested elsewhere. The audio will have to be quite loud to compensate for background noise, as so not to miss it, but a loud noise when you can't see well when you aren't sure when it's really coming can be a jumpy and nervy experience and disorientating.

The audio could be irritating if it goes off all the time as everyone passes it,

**how will it differentiate between me and a seeing human?"**

– Visually impaired Community member

*These feedback tasks show the importance of asking the right people the right questions and getting input from those with experience who will be most affected!*

# Open plan design and glass elements were generally considered to be attractive features

- The perceived benefits of a glass balustrade that the Community identified were:
  - Letting in light and giving the impression of more space
  - Easier to identify unaccompanied bags and an advantage for security in general
  - Assists with seeing if a train is already in the platform

“Glass would definitely fit the theme, would make it look more professional and modern at the same time. To me glass structures almost always look great.”  
– Male, 18-23, Leisure

“Some people do find it uncomfortable or worrying seeing lower levels in a building. It can also give a sense of vertigo. In other aspects the feeling of open views give a sense of comfort in that you can see where you are in the station. It can help give confidence as to the way to your destination within the complex.”  
– Male, 61-70, Leisure

- However, Community members also recognised that some passengers may find too much open space overwhelming, and that there should be adequate more private waiting rooms/areas to provide people with choice.

“So have nice open glass spaces, but also have the option of smaller enclosed waiting rooms for the people who don't want to feel like they're in an aquarium.”  
– Female, 31-40, Commuter

- Concerns also included keeping the stations looking and feeling clean.

## Could HS2 do more?

“Glass balustrades are a very common feature in shopping centres, airports etc. and no longer help give a building the wow factor. These can look very good but it would be good if HS2 could be create something a little different such as a practical yet ornate design with another material.”  
– Male, 61-70, Leisure

# Toilet Facilities in Stations

Half of the Community saw this task

# Toilet Facilities in Stations

## 🗨️ Let's talk about toilets!

This task looks at what makes a good public toilet and how this could be implemented in train stations. Feel free to add in any ideas that you might have if you don't see them here.

1. What do you look for in a good public toilet? Share any examples of ones that have really impressed you (including pictures); this can be both in a train station or elsewhere (shops, airports, restaurants).

2. Now thinking more specifically about toilet facilities in train stations:

- How would you feel about toilets that could be used by everyone (both men and women could use all)? Why?
- (If applicable) if you were to use a urinal whilst travelling with luggage, would you try to keep your bag near you (next to/behind you) or place elsewhere?
- What do you think about cubicles where the door goes from floor to ceiling? Should there be a gap at the top/bottom?
- Thinking about the sink, would you prefer to have one within your cubicle or for there to be a separate hand wash area? And if sharing a hand wash area with other customers, do you prefer an individual sink or a communal trough basin? (see picture in accompanying file)
- When drying your hands, do you have a preference for a hand dryer or paper towels? Is it important that these are close to the sinks?
- What do you think about where mirrors are placed e.g. above the sink, elsewhere in the toilet?
- How would you feel about being able to use an item such as an electric shaver in a station toilet?
- Thinking about toilets and sustainability, how would you feel to know that your toilet was water-efficient? Flushed with harvested rainwater? Or would it not make a difference?



# Paying for Toilet Facilities

- Generally, the Community expressed that they did not want to pay for access to standard toilet facilities
- Over half of the Community thought that these facilities should be available without a cost
- Those that were willing to pay explained that they expected an offering that was more than an average public facility

“I was recently in the toilets at Liverpool Arndale (St. Johns) and was impressed by the manned toilets. I paid 20p to go in and was happy enough to pay to use a clean toilet that was being monitored by an attendant, all the cubicles were clean and well stocked...

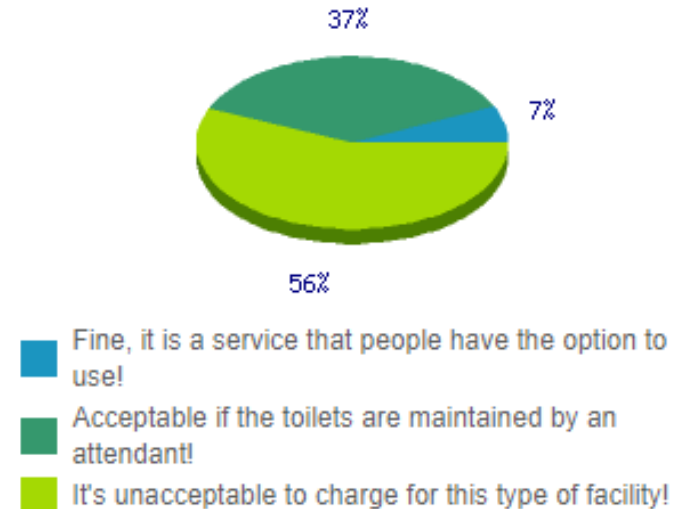
I would pay up to £1 if it were upper class with things like hot towels or aftershave to use”  
– Male, 31-40, Business

“I am willing to pay for toilets that have a permanent attendant that wipes over with disinfectant after every use as can be found in some countries abroad. I strongly object to paying for a filthy cubicle with no toilet paper or other facilities provided.”

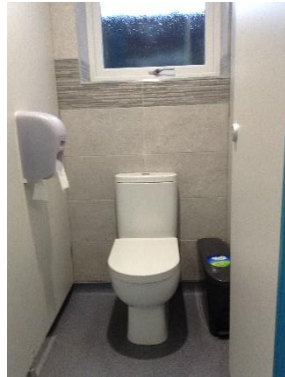
– Female, 70+, Leisure

## Poll

How do you feel about paying to use station toilet facilities?



# What makes a good public toilet?



spacious  
modern  
**clean**  
functioning  
accessible



“My number 1 priority is cleanliness, space and hot water. The nicest one I have used recently where in fact the toilets at the HS2 building in Birmingham, They were really nice.”

– Female, 31-40, Commuter

# What makes a good public toilet?

“Personally, no matter what a toilet facility looks like, if it isn't looking or smelling clean, I won't use it. I think **Singapore Airport** have a great way of doing this, by placing rating points on the way out of the bathroom, this point has a picture of the cleaner which attends the bathroom. I think this is good as it gives a sense of ownership to the employee and potentially improves the facilities' cleanliness.



“They used slanted urinals, with a glass partition, which again I thought was a great design. In all modern public bathrooms I really think there should be as little physical contact with the facilities as possible, so toilets flush should be motion sensors, not a handle, same for the taps and if applicable the hand sanitiser dispenser.”

– Male, 24-30, Leisure



# Community members liked the idea of having sinks within individual cubicles, however recognised that this would slow the throughput of customers

- Some thought that trough sinks were a good use of space and would be effective at preventing water spilling over the sides onto the floor, however some felt that they were less hygienic than individual basins

“In communal wash areas I am partial to a trough, seems a good use of space and plenty of taps/water access.”  
– Male, 24-30, Leisure

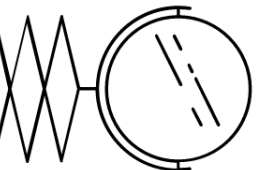
“I prefer individual sink basins due to water flowing into the sink hole easily. Whereas with the communal trough basin and the design of it, I have seen hair or other things in the basins that have not reached the sink hole. This creates a messy environment.”  
– Female, 31-40, Business



“Mirrors over basins can cause a 'logjam' if someone is fussing with hair and makeup and thereby blocking a sink. Perhaps a small 'freshener' area could be provided away from sinks?”  
– Female, 70+, Leisure

- Mirrors should be placed above sinks as this is what people are used to and expect
- Full-length mirrors are also appreciated, but located away from the sink area to avoid congestion
- There were some requests from male Community members for mirrors within cubicles to prevent “feeling stupid” sorting hair at a communal sink

“Mirrors in the toilets I would say as it's awkward doing your hair in the sink ones and feeling paranoid.”  
– Male, 24-30, Commuter

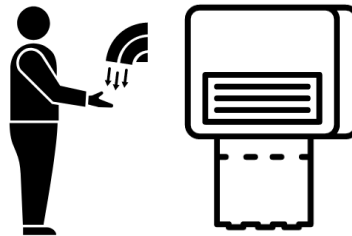


# Preferences for hand dryers or paper towels varied amongst Community members

- Some thought that paper towels were the more hygienic option and could be recycled
- However, some stated that paper towels provide an opportunity to litter and can make facilities look unkempt
- Some wanted the option of both
- All agreed that either option should be located sensibly close enough to sinks to prevent the floor from becoming unnecessarily wet, but far away enough that didn't cause a build up of people

"I prefer a hand dryer to paper towels, much easier to use when you have hand problems, no mess of badly aimed paper towels on the floor, and more hygienic. If you're a wheelchair user and the dryer is not adjacent to the basin, you then have to use wet hands to propel your chair to the dryer, which makes a nonsense of washing them in the first place. And at the right height, please."  
– Wheelchair user

"I think a good idea would be to have a dispenser that limits the amount we can pull out at a time. So, you need to pull a lever or wait a few seconds for another one to come out. I generally wouldn't wait too long for another so I'd use what I had in my hand."  
– Male, 31-40, Commuter



"I like the option of both - hand dryers are quick to dry, but paper towels are quick to pick up. I would prefer a powerful hand dryer over paper towels, but paper towels over those weak 'blowing' hand dryers."  
– Male, 24-30, Business



# Travelling with luggage can present challenges when considering using a urinal

- Community members of both genders highlighted the importance of keeping personal possessions, such as luggage, close by and in sight
- Some suggested that they would avoid using a urinal in this scenario
- Current workarounds included holding luggage off the ground or placing in between legs
- Solutions centred around ways to keep luggage within close range but far enough away from the facilities to protect from getting wet. Suggestions included a shelf or hook nearby to hang luggage.

“I like to keep my luggage with me or fairly near, certainly in sight.”  
– Male, 51-60, Business

“Place it behind me but if travelling with a bag wouldn't really go to the urinal.”  
– Male, 24-30, Commuter

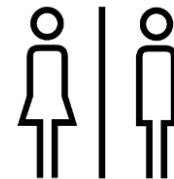
“I would keep the bag near me, probably in between legs, left on a sink behind me, or off to the side.”  
– Male, 24-30, Business

“I usually prefer to keep my luggage close, but wouldn't put it on the floor anywhere near a urinal, as the floors can get in a state. somewhere to put luggage above the urinal would make sense.”  
– Male, 31-40, Leisure

“If there is urine on the floor then I'd try to hold it or, ideally, put it on a dry surface - like a sink top or shelf/hook?”  
– Male, 31-40, Commuter

“From a female perspective on a male issue, I think it would be useful to perhaps have like a bag rack like you sometimes have on trains, especially if it's a public toilet in a train station, where they can leave their luggage by the door. But the rack would still be visible from the urinal so they can watch their luggage whilst using the toilet.”  
– Female, 18-23, Business

# The concept of gender neutral toilets received mixed responses from the Community



- Those 'for' stated that it works in some environments (such as on board a train) so why not elsewhere?
- Those 'against' noted that different genders have different behaviours that were best kept separate
- There were also many mentions of security and safety, with some members stating that they would prefer mixed toilets to be monitored by a member of staff
- Differences of opinion were not gender-specific, with perspectives from males and females reflecting both ends of the spectrum

"Unisex toilets are fine and I think embraces more. The place I work has both unisex and split gender."  
– Male, 24-30, Commuter

"I would only trust toilets for both sexes if they were manned at all times - I think any large volume area of intimacy leaves itself open to attacks and drug abuse."  
– Male, 31-40, Business

"Personally I have no problem with combined male and female use."  
– Female, 70+, Leisure

"I think that's not ideal. I've used this kind of loo before and have to say that men and women have very different toilet habits/manners and I believe that never the twain shall meet."  
– Male, 31-40, Commuter

"Perfect. As a non-binary person, I don't really care about gender-specific toilets. You go to the toilet, it's not a complex problem. So, not a problem."  
– Male, 24-30, Business

"I think toilets shared by men and women is ok as it seems to work ok now on trains."  
– Female, 51-60, Commuter

"Toilets should be separate for men and women and the reasoning for that is due to cleanliness. I do not mind if washing facilities are the same like some toilets at McDonald's but the actual toilets should be separate. I would not like mix toilets as I would feel uncomfortable using them."  
– Female, 18-23, Business

# Opinions on the topic of gender neutral toilets informed thoughts around other design areas

“If gender mixed then the doors should most definitely go from top to bottom. If not then it should make no difference if they did not. Toilets at train stations are obviously public, if they were gender mixed then safety aspects need to be explored further. Sometimes toilets are not just used for using the toilet itself, they are used to get changed, do your hair. These days toilets are multi functional.”

– Female, 18-23, Business

- Some Community members felt that they would be less comfortable using an electric shaver in mixed facilities
- Electric shavers were considered by some to be extremely useful, however others felt that it just wasn't necessary

“Electric shavers - don't really see the need, seems a bit over the top and could mean the toilet being occupied for extended times and big queues.”

– Female, 61-70, Leisure

“Shavers. I think this is definitely something worthwhile. As an additional comment on sinks, I have previously had a wet shave in the station toilet after getting off a sleeper train before going to a business meeting. While it wouldn't be embarrassing for me, I would feel I was being rude to others doing this in a mixed gender toilet, and I would also feel I was being rude doing this in a trough type sink, if the foamy water had to flow past other users on the way to the plug hole. In that circumstance now I'd look for a private cubicle..”

– Male, 51-60, Business

“There's another point on this topic. I think there's a difference between facilities at a major transport interchange compared to at a commute station. The one at Birmingham might need bigger and better toilet facilities as people could be switching between air, local train, coach and HS2., and might have longer waiting periods between connections.”

– Male, 51-60, Business



# The Community thought that passengers would like to see HS2 doing what they could for sustainability – and this extended to toilets



- Many felt that there were lots of ways to make toilet facilities sustainable and more environmentally-friendly

“I think we should all be trying to doing things to save the planet, so any initiatives to use 'rainwater', short flush, water efficient in any way would be great.”

– Female, 61-70, Leisure

- This seemed to some as an opportunity for HS2 to display their commitment to sustainability

“I'm a sucker for saving the world. I see the signs in the 'no water' urinals and think that they show how we can all do things differently to help the world. I reckon it's our responsibility to do these kind of things and get our kids doing it too, so it's second nature and then they can go on and do more... I do think it's important to not only do these things but show people that organisations/groups are doing them too.”

– Male, 31-40, Commuter

“In all honesty when I've gotta go I've gotta go, so at that point in time it perhaps wouldn't cross my mind what flushed it, but I love the idea.”

– Female, 51-60, Business

- However, some expressed that they would not be deterred from using the facilities if it wasn't as sustainable as it could be, and that they did not want the customer experience to be compromised as a result

“I would be amazed if I was using a bathroom and I saw a little sign which told me the facility was ran by using harvested rainwater! There's so much of it in all the cities HS2 is going to travel through I think it'd be great. As for other points, making sure the taps are timed and not free flowing and using waterless urinals is also important.”

– Male, 24-30, Leisure

“Sustainability is always good, McDonalds' waterless urinals are memorable for being environmental. If it can be done sustainably, it should be.”

– Male, 31-40, Leisure

“I love sustainability! If it was energy efficient too, this would be ideal. Makes me happy to know I'm helping the environment.”

– Male, 24-30, Business

“If there is no difference in the suction of the flush then harvested rainwater would be preferable. But if it meant you would need to flush the toilet a couple of times then normal water should be used, as in such environments time is precious.”

– Female, 18-23, Business

# Summary and Conclusions

- The Community were able to comment on many of the station common design elements
- They want the option of accessing live information in various different ways, and expect each source to be correct, trustworthy and easy to use
- Customer experience hubs should be easy to identify, regardless of if a passenger is familiar with a station, in addition to being well-staffed and able to cope with demand
- There were various features related to accessibility, such as an additional handrail lower than the existing one, that received varied feedback on the proposed benefits and might find value in user testing
- The open plan design was seen to be an effective way to give a sense of space and help passengers to become familiar with the station more quickly, particularly from an accessibility perspective
- They acknowledged the volume of traffic that would use toilets and expressed a strong preference for facilities that are easy to maintain and keep clean. Viewpoints on gender neutral toilets differed with some members finding it to be a rather normal concept, whilst others were strongly against.