

Strategic Station Plan: Windsor Stations



SOUTHERN REGION
STRATEGIC PLANNING



Western
Route

2025

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Windsor &
Eton Central



1 Executive Summary

The town of Windsor is located in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in the county of Berkshire. Famous for its royal connections with Windsor Castle being one of the official residences of the royal family, Windsor also boasts a bustling high street, several tourist attractions, and is less than an hour's train ride from London. Given this, it is little surprise that Windsor proves a popular draw for tourists, shoppers, and commuters alike.

The two stations which serve Windsor are terminus stations, providing travel connections to London as well as a number of other destinations locally and nationally. Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) Council's Vision for Windsor document as well as upcoming changes to rolling stock offerings at Windsor stations provides context for the development of a new Strategic Station Plan focussing on the two stations. A passenger survey was carried out by the University of Surrey¹ to inform this study. Conducted at both Windsor & Eton Central (WNC) and Windsor & Eton Riverside (WNR), this survey provides important context to the findings set out below.

1.1 Tourism

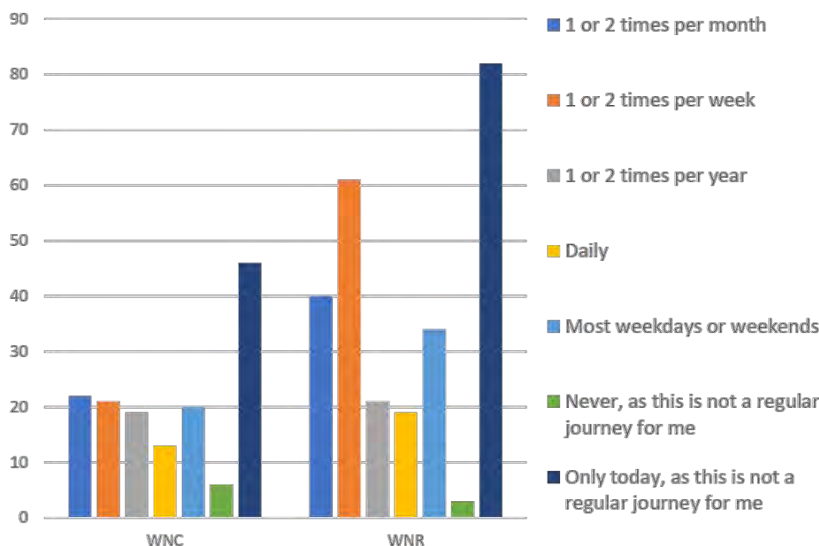


Figure 1 Survey Respondents' Travel Frequency. Source: Thomopoulos, Guragain, Hagen-Zanker, 2024.

A significant proportion of passengers using Windsor's railway stations are tourists, providing a unique challenge for the stations by catering to a base of passengers unfamiliar with the area and potentially the UK rail system more widely. Windsor is a draw for people for multiple reasons, be that retail and leisure options or more specific tourist attractions such as Windsor Castle or Legoland Windsor.

As shown in figure 1, the majority of passengers accessing Windsor's stations through the duration of the survey were accessing the stations as infrequent travellers. At WNC, a higher proportion of survey respondents indicated very infrequent travel than compared with WNR.

The biggest single draw for tourists to the area is Windsor Castle which sits only a short distance from each station. Whilst the castle is visible from Windsor and Eton Riverside, this is not the case at Central station. Additional Wayfinding utilising visuals at a more obvious height may prove beneficial in ensuring tourists are able to find the castle easily.

¹ Thomopoulos, N., Guragain, A., Hagen-Zanker, A. (2024) Windsor Strategic Station Plan: Rail Passenger Survey, Report, Guildford: University of Surrey: www.surrey.ac.uk/news/windsor-station-surveys-inform-strategic-plan-future-train-travel

Another large draw of tourists to Windsor is the Legoland Windsor Resort located approximately 3 miles from central Windsor. The resort is an amusement park themed around the Danish toy brand, Lego, and despite being located away from the town is accessible from Windsor by two regional bus services. Enhanced wayfinding or information for passengers hoping to continue onwards to Legoland resort would provide a significant improvement to the passenger experience for those arriving into Windsor by rail.

Key recommendations for enhancing passenger experience for tourists include:

- Enhanced Wayfinding
- Improved Passenger Information
- Improved Access to Bus Routes

1.2 Interchange & Integration

Figure 2 highlights the range of modes used to access the railway at Windsor stations. Clearly the most common mode of accessing WNC is by foot, whilst WNR has a much more varied access mode. Given the range of access modes shown below, opportunities are explored for car parking, bus travel, and active travel.

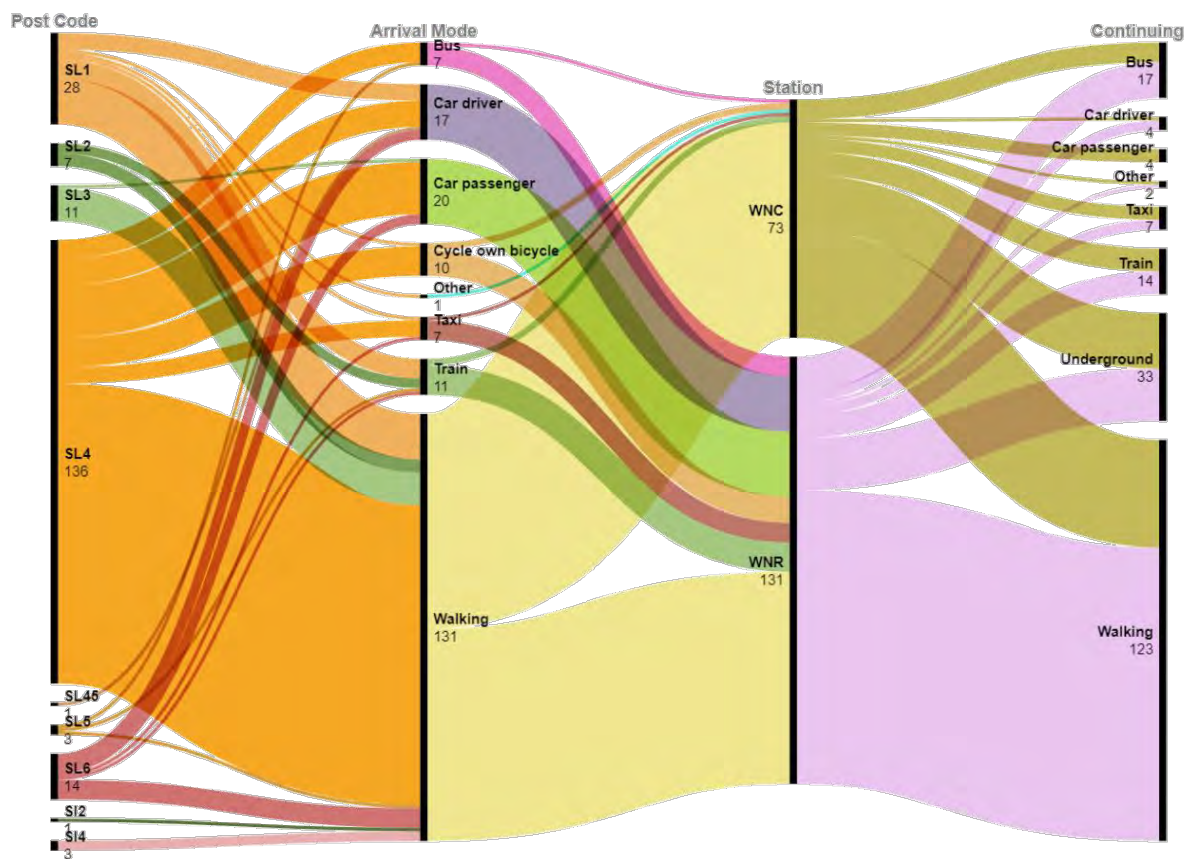


Figure 2 Trip-Changing Travel Overview of Survey Respondents. Source: Thomopoulos, Guragain, Hagen-Zanker, 2024; based on Saud and Thomopoulos, 2021.

There is a large car park to the North of Windsor and Eton Riverside station and a smaller site to the south of the station providing approximately 194 parking spaces (2 accessible). There is also no dedicated Kiss & Ride facility at the station making the dropping off of passengers difficult. Windsor and Eton Central station on the other hand does not have a dedicated car park at all. There is a

council-owned Pay & Display car park at Alexandra Gardens, approximately 0.3 miles from the station and another at Alma Road, a similar distance from the station. Our survey suggests that most people access the station on foot suggesting that a car park may not be necessary at this station.



Figure 3 Map of Bus Stops in Central Windsor

Figure 3 shows the bus stops currently located within central Windsor. RBWM have aspirations to install additional stops with some aimed at providing effective interchange between rail and bus services.

Of those surveyed in RBWM and the University of Surrey's surveys, very few currently access the town centre by bus compared with other modes. Whilst many will be unable to use local bus services, there remains a significant number of people accessing the railway and town centre by private vehicle who may be tempted away by suitable bus services.

There is already a relatively high frequency of bus services through Windsor with table 3 below highlighting daily services at Windsor Parish Church bus stop. What may prove important in the future, however, is ensuring that there is a sufficient number of services connecting satellite parking sites proposed by RBWM in their vision document.

Active Travel is being increasingly promoted by local authorities and government due not only to its environmental benefits, but also its benefits for physical and mental health. A large proportion of those who access Windsor town centre and the railway at Windsor do so by active travel. This is predominantly shown as walking, though some are shown to cycle.

At WNC, the majority of passengers are tourists and so are much more likely to access the station by foot. Enhanced wayfinding should prove beneficial for these users.

Recent investment in a 'Quietway' walking and cycling route along the river front has seen 44% increase in active travel journeys into the town centre. This 'Quietway' passes very close to the rear entrance to WNC station and so provision of enhanced facilities at the station may prove very

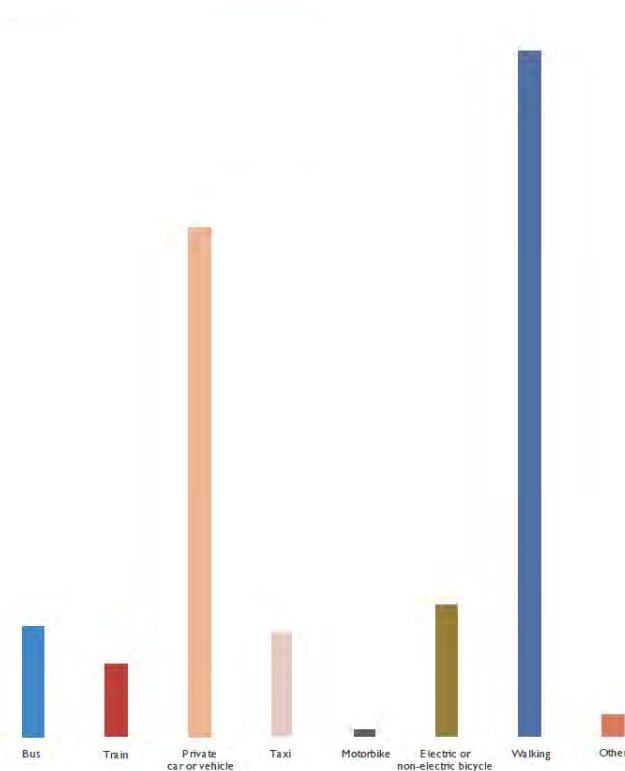


Figure 4 Windsor Access Modes. Source: RBWM Vision for Windsor

popular. Further improvement of cycle facilities and traffic-calming should therefore provide opportunity for enhanced active travel access to both stations.

Key recommendations for enhancing integration and interchange include:

- Improve Signage/Access to Local Bus Routes
- Ensure Sufficient Cycle Storage
- Explore Opportunities for Promoting the Railway as Alternative Access to Windsor

1.3 Station Facilities

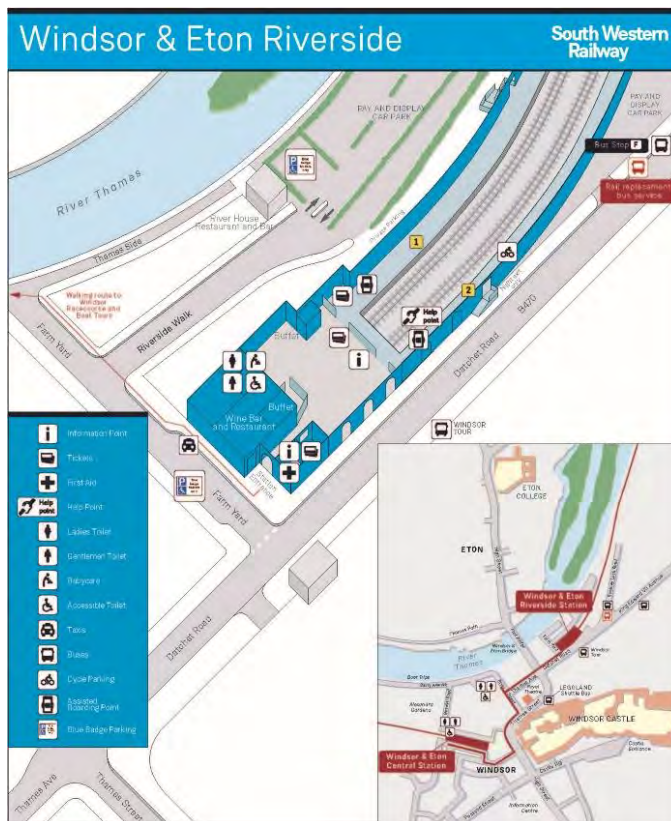


Figure 5 Station Map for WNR

Windsor & Eton Riverside station offers passengers toilets (including accessible and changing facilities), automated ticket vending machines, staffed ticket office, Help and information points, bicycle storage, and tourist and onward travel information boards.

WNR is a heritage building and celebrates its historical position. The facility operator has sought to enhance this through the installation of bunting and information boards, however passengers surveyed believe that more could be done to enhance the appearance of both WNR and WNC stations.

When leaving the station during normal operating hours, the only level exit is via the ticket hall. This corridor can be narrow and constrained when busy. Ensuring step-free access via the stations other entrances could vastly improve the passenger experience for passengers with reduced mobility.

Facilities at Windsor & Eton Central are more limited than at WNR. The station offers passengers Bicycle storage, ticket vending machines, a staffed ticket office, passenger help point, and validators for contactless bank card ticketing. Additional facilities such as toilets and refreshments are available to passengers within the wider shopping centre footprint but do not form part of the managed station. Additional seating for passengers awaiting trains to Slough may prove beneficial. Whilst WNC receives a regular 3tph service to Slough passengers may face a 20-minute wait and

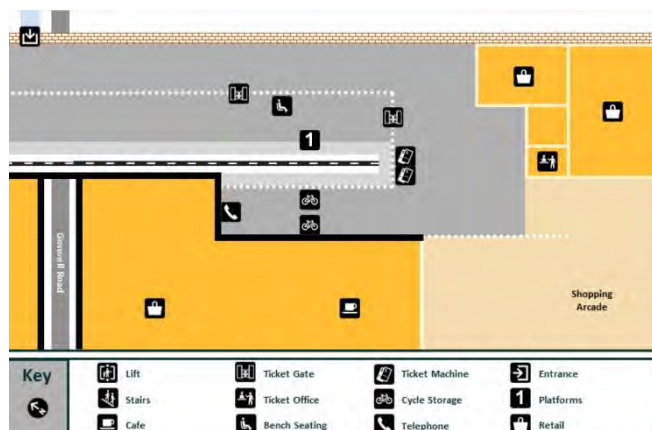


Figure 6 Station Map for WNC

such additional facilities may vastly improve their experience. Separately, enhanced signage pointing passengers towards the shopping centre's facilities may also prove beneficial.

Additionally, survey respondents noted favourability to provision of accessible toilet facilities at the station. Whilst there are accessible toilet facilities available, the survey response suggests that many station users are unaware of these facilities. Better signage may remedy this.

Other potential facility improvements noted within the passenger survey include improved lighting for safety and security, and Wi-Fi for allowing working when waiting at the station.

Key recommendations for enhancing integration and interchange include:

- Improved Passenger Waiting Facilities
- Enhanced Level Access to Stations

1.4 Recommendations

Theme	Detail	Next Steps
Gateways & Arrival	Support creation of satellite parking sites which encourage rail and bus access to Windsor Town Centre. Aligned with commitment to a high-quality station environment and offering, accessibility enhancements, and links to active travel, celebrate arrival into Windsor.	Examine opportunities for WNR car park site as the need for town-centre car parking reduces. Work to ensure that facilities and onward connections provided at stations are well signposted, well maintained, and easily accessible by all.
Town Centre Management	Support the reduction of unnecessary private vehicles through Windsor town centre through promoting rail and active travel alternatives.	Promote ease of travel by rail following c-pay zone expansion and clearly signpost first/last mile options for passengers whose final destination is not the town centre. Work with bus operators to deliver simpler integration between rail and onward travel modes. Ensure through car park schemes that sufficient priority and accessible parking remains for those without alternatives options.
Character & Uses	Celebrate the history and heritage of rail in Windsor through providing an attractive and accessible gateway to the town. Improve tourist and onward travel information available at stations, maintain facilities to a high standard, and provide enhanced passenger waiting facilities at stations through improved seating, planting, artwork, and facilities.	Work with relevant CRPs, Local Authority, and facility managers to provide high-class and welcoming environments at stations.



2 Background

2.1 Context

The town of Windsor is located in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in the county of Berkshire. Famous for its royal connections with Windsor Castle being one of the official residences of the royal family, Windsor also boasts a bustling high street, several tourist attractions, and is less than an hour's train ride from London. Given this, it is little surprise that Windsor proves a popular draw for tourists, shoppers, and commuters alike.

The town has two stations; Windsor and Eton Central (operated by Great Western Railway); and Windsor and Eton Riverside (operated by South Western Railway). Both stations serve as terminus stations with Riverside station (WNR) providing a 2 trains per hour (tph) service direct to London via Staines, and Central station (WNC) providing a 3tph shuttle service to nearby Slough. At Slough, passengers can interchange with Elizabeth Line and GWR services towards London, or GWR services towards the west.

Whilst walkable, the two stations occupy separate parts of Windsor. WNR is located on the bank of the river Thames, an area dominated by pubs, restaurants, and hotels. WNC on the other hand forms part of the Windsor Royal Shopping Centre, a central retail and restaurant development occupying the former site of the previously much larger Windsor and Eton Central station.

With the high number of people accessing Windsor, rail undoubtedly plays a large part in the town's operation. The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) Council developed a Vision for Windsor strategic document in 2022 looking to identify opportunities for improvements to the town centre and identified railway stations as gateways to the town. Covered in more detail in section 2.3, this document sets the strategic context for the development of this Strategic Station Plan. This strategy, combined with planned changes to rolling stock serving both Windsor stations through SWR's Class 701 rollout and GWR's future rolling stock strategy, there is an opportunity to deliver meaningful and positive change to passenger experiences in Windsor. It was therefore agreed between Network Rail, train operators, and RBWM that a Strategic Station Plan should be produced examining these opportunity areas.

2.2 Strategic Station Plans

Strategic Station Plan (SSP) is a new strategic document established to study a station identified as recommended for significant change through separate strategy or policy within either Network Rail or a third party. The concept and its focus have emerged from the Dorset Connectivity study which recommended documents be produced, focussing on key stations, particularly looking at the following areas:

- Integration of public and active transport modes
- Station accessibility
- Environmental issues and opportunities
- Community involvement and usage of the station
- Mobility hub options
- Station development opportunities
- Station facility improvements
- Connectivity to tourist and leisure destinations
- Third party funding opportunities

- Railway operations, renewals, and enhancement synergies

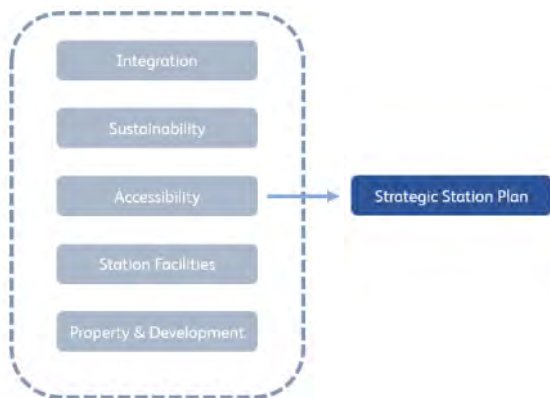


Figure 7 Strategic Station Plan Themes

Strategic Station Plans seek to provide an opportunity for Network Rail to work alongside local partners and stakeholders to encourage conversations, collaboration, and development of strategic station and station area improvements. By focusing on upgrading facilities and optimising layouts within a strategic context, stations can successfully adapt and become more than just transportation “hubs”, they might evolve into vibrant urban centres with a range of amenities and services. This transformation can attract business, generate employment opportunities,

and increases property value, driving economic growth in the surrounding area. The recommendations are therefore not exclusively for rail industry colleagues to take on board and many may be better adopted by third parties or local authorities with rail industry endorsement.

The plans provide a number of recommendations for strategic and tactical improvements. These are not costed, nor do they have timescales applied at this stage and it is recommended that, should any proposed recommendations be taken forward, sufficient development work is undertaken in order to fully understand operability, cost, and deliverability of any intervention highlighted.

2.2.1 Methodology



Figure 8 Strategic Station Plan Development Methodology

Unlike previous Strategic Station Plans, Windsor Stations SSP is based on passenger surveys developed by the University of Surrey² rather than delivering outputs through targeted workshops. Despite this, stakeholder engagement and feedback will remain vital to ensuring all recommendations are robust and aligned. To this end, a steering group has been established consisting of representatives from Network Rail, Train Operators, the Local Authority, and the local Sub National

Transport Body. Further elements of engagement will take place on an ad hoc basis in order to inform the study.

Given the nature of the recommendations contained within this Strategic Station Plan, it is the intention of Network Rail’s Strategic Planning team, that these documents remain live with reviews carried out as and when material change happens on the ground. Ongoing engagement with stakeholders is, and will continue to be, crucial for this purpose.

² Thomopoulos, N., Guragain, A., Hagen-Zanker, A. (2024) Windsor Strategic Station Plan: Rail Passenger Survey, Report, Guildford: University of Surrey: www.surrey.ac.uk/news/windsor-station-surveys-inform-strategic-plan-future-train-travel

2.3 Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead: Vision for Windsor



Figure 9 RBWM's Vision for Windsor Report

In 2022, RBWM developed their Vision for Windsor, a strategic document seeking to set out the future of Windsor town centre in the wider context of post-Covid tourist and travel habits, future challenges around climate change, and the needs of local communities. Upon completion of this strategy and having become aware of Network Rail's Strategic Station Plan process, RBWM contacted the Wessex Strategic Planning Team to see where Network Rail could complement the strategy's outputs.

Produced through stakeholder engagement, the strategy highlighted a number of themes and issues, including:

- **Movement & Access**
- **Heritage, Character & Identity**
- **Richness of Natural Resources**
- **Uses, Commercial Diversity & Local Amenities**
- **Global Windsor**
- **Local Governance**

From these highlighted areas, the document sets out five Vision Statements to achieve a "Vibrant Future for Windsor":

- **Transport & Movement**
 - Develop sustainable, convenient & affordable options to travel into Windsor Town Centre.
- **The Built Environment**
 - Protect and enhance the heritage, character, and identity of Windsor.

- **The Natural Environment**
 - o Promote, activate, and improve access to the natural assets and resources.
- **The Local Community**
 - o Create a thriving local economy of business and community partnerships that benefit from Windsor's global brand.
- **The Global Community**
 - o Deliver a world-class visitor experience supported by a strong, diverse, and resilient hospitality industry.

Around these statements, RBWM were then able to develop a series of action and strategies for shaping the future of Windsor:

- **Gateways & Arrival**
 - o Develop Satellite Parking Sites
 - o Celebrate Arrival into Windsor
 - o Invest in Improving Public Transport Connections
 - o Encourage Shift to Active Travel
- **Town Centre Management**
 - o Discourage Unnecessary Vehicle Movement and Through-Traffic in the Town Centre
 - o Improve Cycling and Walking Connections
 - o Take Advantage of the River Thames for Access and Movement
 - o Consolidate Town Centre Parking
 - o Maintain Priority Parking and Access
- **Character & Uses**
 - o Invest in the Riverside to Create an Attractive Entrance into Windsor
 - o Employ Guidelines and Regulations to Maintain the Character of the Heritage Core
 - o Diversify Town Centre Uses
 - o Nurture the Local Culture, Arts and Retail
- **Public Realm**
 - o Apply and Maintain a High-Quality Materiality of the Public Realm
 - o Improve Engagement with the River and Riverfront
 - o Develop a Framework for Regeneration of Riverside Parking Sites
- **Local Governance & Community Partnerships**
 - o Build a Directory of Community Groups and Partnerships
 - o Establish a Collective Voice of Stakeholder Representation Across Windsor
 - o Create a Register of Ownerships and Landlords
 - o Engage with Windsor Castle and The Crown Estate
 - o Capitalise of Royal Warrants and the Windsor Brand

Of these five sets of actions, this Strategic Station Plan is assumed to interface with three; Gateways & Arrival; Town Centre Management; and Character & Uses.

2.4 University of Surrey Passenger Surveys

The primary source of information for this Strategic Station Plan is the findings of a passenger survey developed, distributed, and analysed by academics at Surrey Hospitality and Tourism Management, Surrey Business School at the University of Surrey (UoS). This survey provided an opportunity to understand the perspective of passengers in the process of using the rail service at Windsor's two stations. Given the high number of passengers at the stations being tourists and irregular travellers, this provides an opportunity to hear the views of those who may not be picked

up by other stakeholder organisations and regular travellers as well as those who use the railway every day to access work and education.

In 2023, Network Rail Strategic Planning were introduced to Surrey Hospitality and Tourism Management, Surrey Business School at the University of Surrey through the North Down's Line Community Rail Partnership (CRP). Through discussion, it was agreed between the two parties that a mutually beneficial project could be developed, exploring how passengers access and use the railway at a certain location. It was finally agreed that this location should be Windsor given the high proportion of tourists accessing the town through its two railway stations.

Network Rail and the University of Surrey worked together to develop a series of questions which could be asked by UoS of passengers as they board, alight, and travel through the object stations. The survey took place in late February and early March of 2024 over five days.

A detailed breakdown of the survey responses and the survey report can be found through the University of Surrey's website: [Windsor Station Surveys Inform Strategic Plan for Future Train Travel](#). The following sections of this report take some headline findings from each of the themes associated with Strategic Station Plans and presents them alongside industry recommendations and local strategic vision.

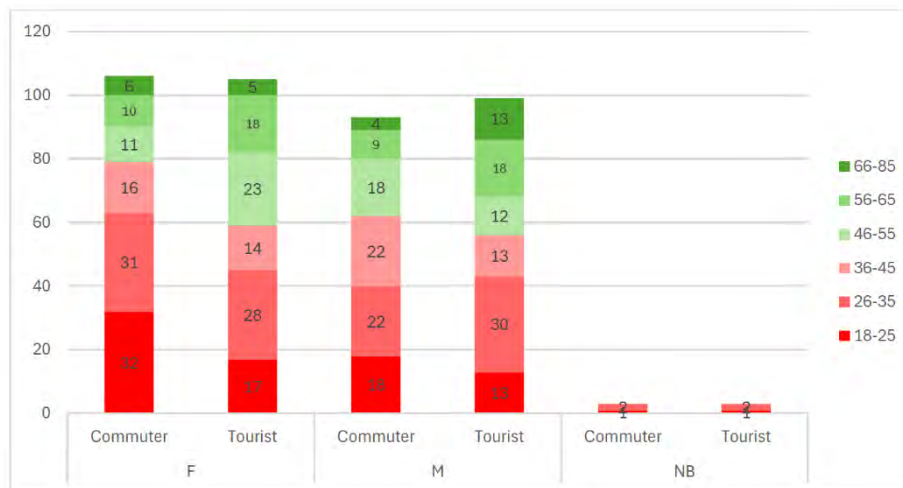


Figure 10 Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Gender, Age, Traveller Type. Source: Thomopoulos, Guragain, Hagen-Zanker, 2024.

More than 500 responses were initially received to the mixture of paper and online surveys, with 420 being complete and provided by respondents aged 18 and older. Distributed across the two Windsor stations, 65 % survey respondents were at WNR, with 35 % at WNC.

The majority of those surveyed at both Windsor stations were not regular users of the railway at Windsor. Of these irregular users, most use the stations multiple times a week or month, however a significant proportion of respondents were accessing Windsor by rail as a one-off journey. This suggests, as has been previously assumed, that both Windsor stations see a large proportion of tourist and leisure travel, with commuter and residential travel being a minority of rail users.

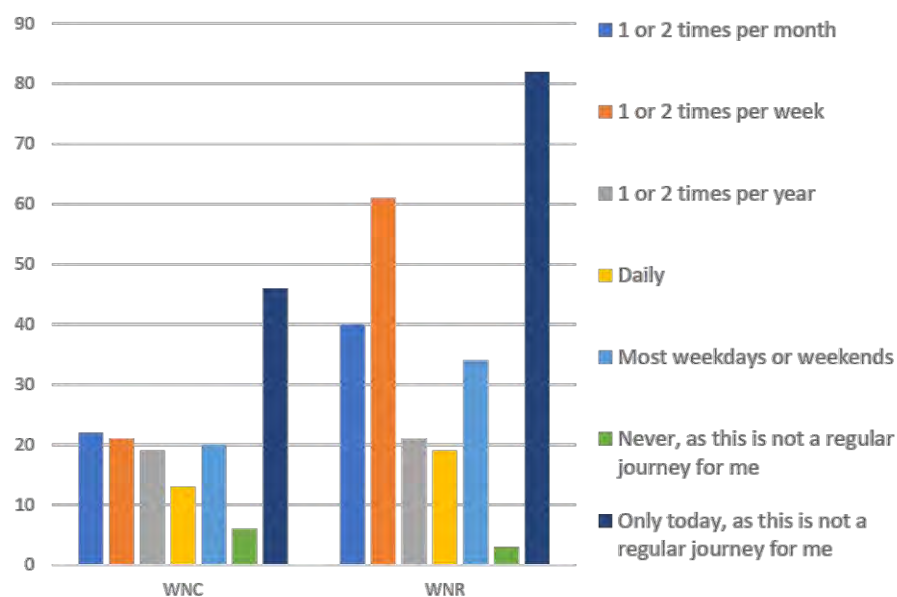


Figure 11 Survey Respondents' Travel Frequency. Source: Thomopoulos, Guragain, Hagen-Zanker, 2024.

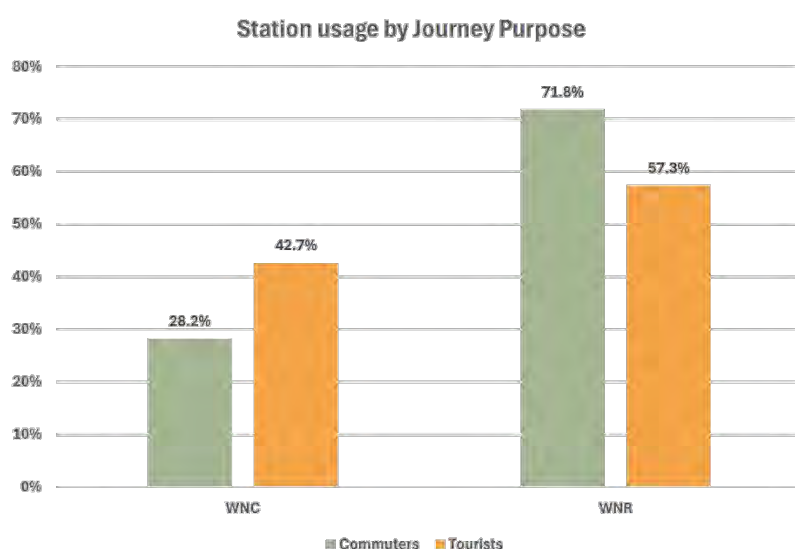


Figure 12 Breakdown of Station Usage by Purpose. Source: Thomopoulos, Guragain, Hagen-Zanker, 2024.

When split between tourists and commuters across the two stations, a distinction becomes clear – that Windsor & Eton Central is more popular with tourist and leisure travellers, whilst Windsor & Eton Riverside is more popular with regular commuters and residential travellers. The sample size of the survey, whilst substantial should be remembered as a fraction of those who do access the railway at both stations each day. Therefore,

conclusions drawn from the surveys should be seen as indicative rather than prescriptive and should undergo further stakeholder consultation before final decisions are reached or business cases produced.



THAMES PATH
Public Footpath

THAMES PATH
Riverbank 20m

Public
Footpath

THEY ROWN FINE VUE
PRIVATE
ROAD
NO PARKING

3 Station Profiles

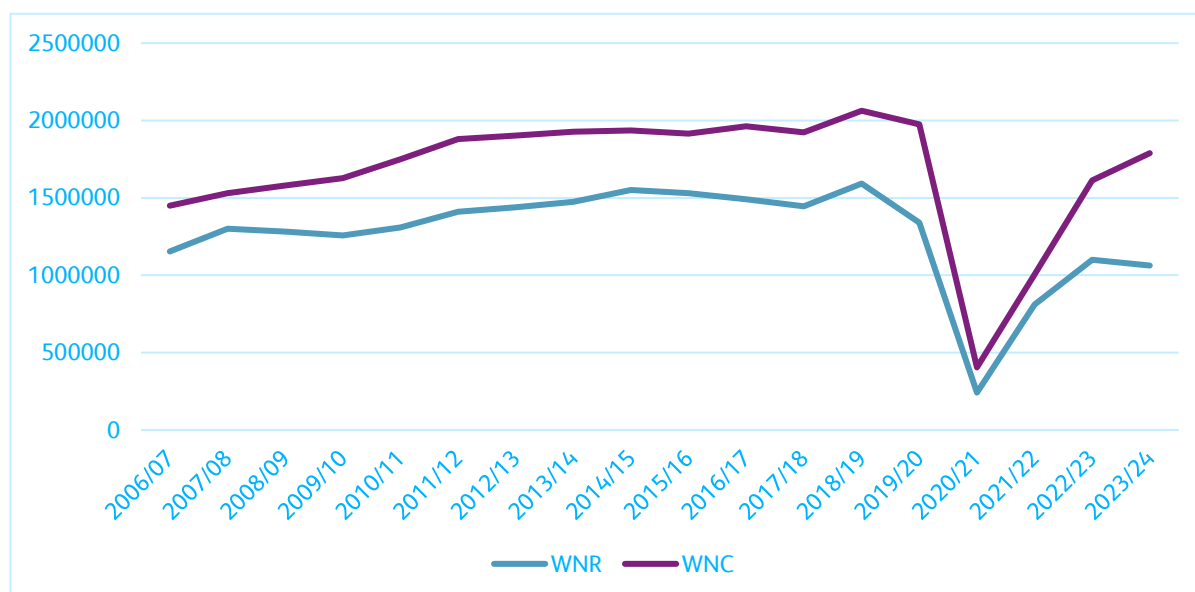


Figure 13 Graph Showing Passenger Footfall at Windsor Stations from 2006/7 to 2023/24

The insights from the passenger survey suggest that the two stations at Windsor provide different services for slightly different markets. Whilst WNR's user base appears to be mostly commuter travel with a significant proportion of tourism, WNC appears to be the opposite.

WNC has historically seen higher passenger numbers than its counterpart at Riverside, peaking at just over 2 million entries and exits in 2018/19 compared to WNR's peak of just over 1.5 million in the same year. Both stations suffered similarly during the Covid-19 pandemic, however WNC appears to have experienced a stronger recovery post-pandemic with continued growth into 2023/24. Meanwhile, WNR's bounce back from Covid-19 appears much slower, with passenger numbers actually appearing to fall between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

3.1 Windsor & Eton Riverside

Destination	Journeys
London Waterloo	199,498
Staines	44,331
Datchet	30,197
Clapham Junction	28,865
Richmond	26,537
Feltham	23,986
Twickenham	20,308
Putney	17,860
Ashford	17,083
Vauxhall	10,149

With two services per hour towards London and a typical journey time of around 56 minutes between Riverside and London Waterloo, WNR's offer is slower into London than the comparable journey from Central despite the journey being direct. The most popular destination from Windsor & Eton Riverside is London Waterloo at around 42% of journeys with Staines achieving 10%, Datchet 7%, and Clapham Junction 6%.

The University of Surrey's passenger survey found that most users of WNR are regular commuters, potentially tempted by the line's connection with interchange locations at Staines (towards Reading) and Clapham Junction, as well as potential convenience of London Waterloo's location over London Paddington. These passengers may also prefer the lack of interchange in order to

access London, even if at the detriment of overall journey time. A significant proportion of passengers through WNR are still tourists however, potentially tempted by the lack of interchange requirement from central London, or the interchange opportunities at Staines, Clapham Junction, Richmond, and Vauxhall.

3.2 Windsor & Eton Central

Windsor & Eton Central offers more services than its counterpart at Riverside with 3tph throughout the day. These services are shuttles calling only at Slough where passengers can then interchange with longer-distance Great Western Railway services and the Elizabeth Line both calling at the station. For travellers heading towards London, journey times can be significantly shorter than from Riverside despite the required interchange at Slough. These journeys are typically 30 or 40 minutes from WNC to London Paddington depending on the service joined at Slough. By interchanging with Elizabeth Line services at Slough, passengers can be in central London in less than an hour.

Destination	Journeys
London Paddington	276,231
Slough	253,991
Reading	37,924
M Maidenhead	35,996
Burnham	32,936
Ealing Broadway	17,779
West Drayton	13,717
Langley (Berks)	10,385
Hayes & Harlington	9,266
Oxford	7,672
Tottenham Court Road	5,978

The most popular destination for services starting at Windsor & Eton Central is London Paddington with around 37% of all trips, followed by Slough with 34%.

University of Surrey's passenger survey found that most travellers through WNC are tourists, potentially tempted by the quicker journey times to London, connections at Slough with Elizabeth Line services, and (at the time of survey) greater flexibility in ticketing options (ability to travel using contactless payment).

There is still a significant proportion of passengers at WNC travelling to access work, however, also taking advantage of connectivity with central London via the Elizabeth Line, but also local connections to other employment hubs like Slough, Reading, and Maidenhead.



wagamama

1897

SHOPPING

BLACK SHEEP
COFFEES

1997

5

4 Tourism

The survey produced by the University of Surrey³ shows that a significant proportion of passengers using Windsor's railway stations are tourists. This provides a unique challenge for the stations, catering to a base of passengers unfamiliar with the area and potentially the UK rail system more widely. Windsor is a draw for people for multiple reasons, be that retail and leisure options or more specific tourist attractions such as Windsor Castle or Legoland Windsor. The following explores the experience of survey respondents with regards tourism.

4.1 Infrequent Travel

As shown in figure 11, the majority of passengers accessing Windsor's stations through the duration of the survey were accessing the stations as infrequent travellers. At both stations, the most common answer when passengers were asked how frequently they use the railway station was "Only today, this is not a regular journey for me". Whilst many passengers do use the stations on a regular – if infrequent – basis, there is undeniably a significant proportion of passengers for whom the stations will be unfamiliar. This is particularly the case at WNC where a higher proportion of survey respondents indicated very infrequent travel than compared with WNR. Of the tourist responses captured within the survey, respondents hailed from 16 countries outside of the UK including Australia, Brazil, Chile, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and the USA.

This proportion of infrequent travel considered, the manner in which passengers purchase their tickets for travel may be skewed at Windsor stations. The below charts suggest that half of all passengers asked at WNC, and almost half of all asked at WNR purchase their tickets in person at a ticket vending machine, or at a station ticket office. These proportions of ticket office sales, 21 % at WNC and 24 % at WNR are themselves higher than the national average of around 12 %⁴.

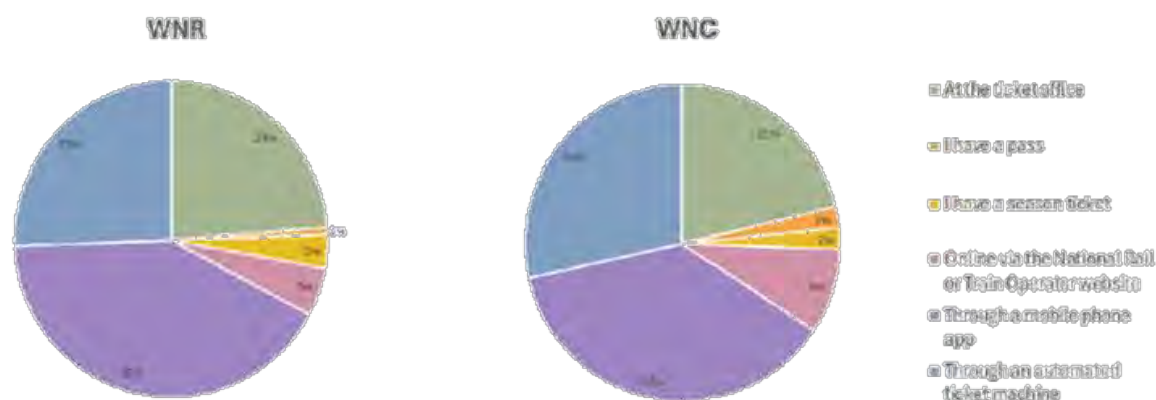


Figure 14 Survey Respondents' Ticket Purchase Choices. Source: Thomopoulos, Guragain, Hagen-Zanker, 2024.

The high proportion of infrequent travellers at Windsor stations also poses a challenge in making the stations as accessible as possible for those who are only making a one-off trip. 54 % surveyed responded favourably to seeing more information about local sites and events at Windsor stations and only 52 % responded favourably to the stations offering additional wayfinding options for local tourist attractions and amenities. The split of tourists and commuters amongst respondents was

³ Thomopoulos, N., Guragain, A., Hagen-Zanker, A. (2024) Windsor Strategic Station Plan: Rail Passenger Survey, Report, Guildford: University of Surrey: www.surrey.ac.uk/news/windsor-station-surveys-inform-strategic-plan-future-train-travel

⁴ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2023-0180/CDP-2023-0180.pdf>

roughly even, so these responses suggest that improvements in enhanced wayfinding and information would be advantageous to these infrequent travellers.

In order to account for these passengers, especially if more are encouraged to access Windsor by rail through RBWM's Vision proposals, some improvements may be considered for wayfinding in and around the stations. This enhanced wayfinding should take account of the potential for non-English speaking tourists and employ pictographs and icons to help guide passengers to relevant areas of Windsor. At WNC, this may only require pointing passengers toward the correct shopping centre exit, however at WNR, this may include additional street signage to guide passengers towards Thames Street and relevant safe crossing places. There are also tourist information points within the town centre which may provide invaluable insight for tourists visiting Windsor for the first time. Signposting towards these sites may prove particularly useful for these passengers where they can find more information about the area, including directions to bus links to further attractions such as the Savill Gardens within Windsor Great Park.

4.2 Tourist Attractions

There are multiple draws to Windsor for infrequent travel. The town hosts a popular high street and shopping centre with many high street and independent shops, cafés and restaurants attracting customers from far afield. As well as these draws, there are also specific tourist attractions which may pull infrequent travellers into Windsor.



Figure 15 Windsor Castle. Credit: Royal Collection Trust

The biggest draw for tourists to the area is Windsor Castle which sits only a short distance from each station. Whilst the castle is visible from Windsor and Eton Riverside, this is not the case at Central station. At Central, passengers instead find themselves within the Royal Shopping Centre complex. Whilst there is some wayfinding in place for passengers alighting at WNC, during busy periods, this could easily be missed. Given this, and there being multiple exits from the station, there is a risk of passengers getting lost at this point. Additional Wayfinding utilising visuals at a more obvious height may prove beneficial in ensuring tourists are able to find the castle easily.

Another large draw of tourists to Windsor is the Legoland Windsor Resort located approximately 3 miles from central Windsor. The resort is an amusement park themed around the Danish toy brand, Lego, and despite being located away from the town is accessible from Windsor by two regional bus services. The Green Line services 702 and 703 provide passengers with a half-hourly service between the centre of Windsor and the resort.



Figure 16 Lego Land Windsor. Credit: [Rob Young](#)

There is a centrally located bus stop in Windsor where these services call, 'Windsor Parish Church'. This is approximately an 8-minute walk from both stations, but not necessarily easy to locate unless one knows where to go. From WNR, passengers must cross Datchet Road before travelling along Thames Street, uphill. From WNC, passengers must navigate the Royal Shopping Centre complex before travelling south along Thames Street. Some services also stop at Theatre Royal Stop on their way to Legoland providing a closer interchange with Windsor & Eton Riverside station, but no such stop exists on the return journey. RBWM currently aspire to install an equivalent stop in the opposite direction.

There is currently no wayfinding at either station helping passengers to find this bus stop. Enhanced wayfinding or information for passengers hoping to continue onwards to Legoland resort would provide a significant improvement to the passenger experience for those arriving into Windsor by rail, particularly for those unfamiliar with the area.

4.3 Recommendations

Recommendation	Additional Information
Enhanced Wayfinding	Provide enhanced, accessible signage at stations to aid infrequent travellers in accessing tourist sites. Additional signage may be required outside of station boundaries – a consistent style across wayfinding should be sought where possible.
Improved passenger information	Employ pictographs and other accessible media to help direct infrequent travellers toward safe routes to tourist and leisure sites. Where necessary, information posters may provide additional beneficial information about local landmarks and onward travel. These should again be made as accessible as possible for all travellers.
Improved access to bus routes	Improve wayfinding and walking routes towards onward travel options such as buses and taxis.



5 Integration & Interchange

When asked whether they chose to travel by rail due to its available connections with other transport modes, 69 % passengers surveyed responded positively. Although focussed on passengers starting locally, figure 17 highlights the range of modes used to access the railway at Windsor stations. Clearly the most common mode of accessing WNC is by foot, whilst WNR has a much more varied access mode. Given the range of access modes shown below, the following will take each in turn, exploring opportunities around car parking, bus travel, and active travel.

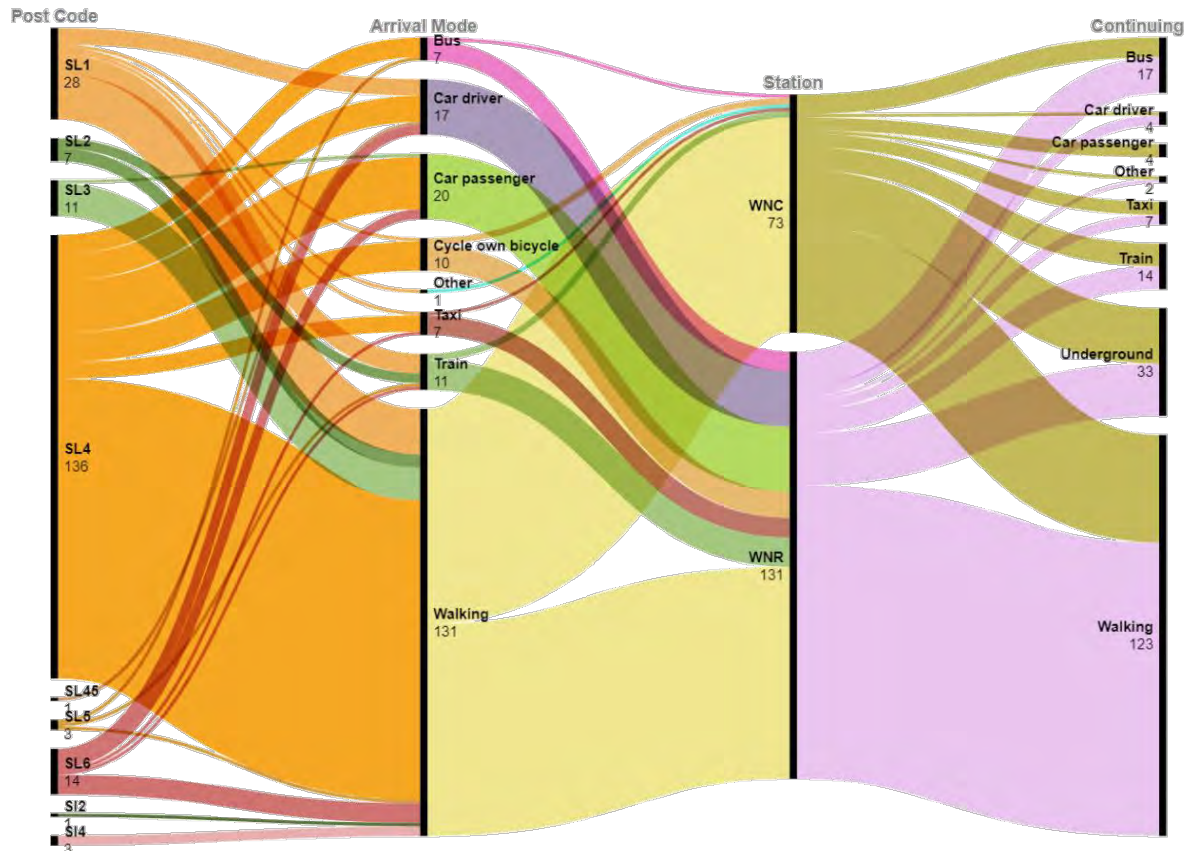


Figure 17 Trip-Changing Travel Overview of Survey Respondents. Source: Thomopoulos, Guragain, Hagen-Zanker, 2024; based on Saud and Thomopoulos, 2021.

5.1 Car Parking

5.1.1 Windsor & Eton Riverside



Figure 18 WNR Car Park Signage

There is a large car park to the North of Windsor and Eton Riverside station and a smaller site to the south of the station. Whilst mostly in Network Rail's Freehold ownership, parts of it are on long-term leases to third parties. This leaves approximately 194 parking spaces (2 accessible) for railway passenger use. The car park being relatively central to Windsor town centre does mean that it is often used by visitors to the town, rather than exclusively by those using the railway. This may account for the relatively low number of passengers from the local area who access WNR by driving their own car.

There is currently no dedicated Kiss & Ride facility at the station with drivers currently having to utilise the taxi rank to the front of the station, stopping on the road, or the car park itself to set passengers down. This is not an ideal solution, however with local aspirations for reducing private vehicles through the town centre, appropriate alternatives may be difficult to achieve.

Of users of this station surveyed, 60 % responded favourably to improved pick up/drop off facilities at the station⁵. This suggests many of these commuters would seek a lift to/from the station potentially exacerbating the local traffic issues noted by RBWM. Instead, enhanced bus facilities may be promoted to aid this first/last mile journey. However, only 50 % of WNR users responded favourably to having sheltered bus stops at the station.

⁵ Thomopoulos, N., Guragain, A., Hagen-Zanker, A. (2024) Windsor Strategic Station Plan: Rail Passenger Survey, Report, Guildford: University of Surrey: www.surrey.ac.uk/news/windsor-station-surveys-inform-strategic-plan-future-train-travel

5.1.2 Windsor & Eton Central



Figure 19 Map of Potential Gateways for Windsor. Taken from RBWM Vision for Windsor

Windsor and Eton Central station does not have a dedicated car park itself. There is a council-owned Pay & Display car park at Alexandra Gardens, approximately 0.3 miles from the station and another at Alma Road, a similar distance from the station. The lack of car parking at WNC may provide cause for the limited number of passengers accessing the station by car compared the WNR with its own dedicated car park.

RBWM's Vision for Windsor proposes the addition of a potential 'Gateway Site' around Junction 6 of the M4, connecting with the line between

Windsor and Slough and providing a park & ride facility. Whilst this proposal does not have the explicit support of operators or Network Rail at present, the principle provides an alternative means of accessing rail and Windsor town by car without driving into the town centre. cursory examination suggests that the service between Slough and Windsor may not provide enough turnaround time to allow for an additional stop, however there may be other suitable locations for park & ride facilities at stations on the route from WNR. Sufficient information gathering should be carried out and analysis undertaken to aid development of recommended park & ride locations.

5.2 Bus Travel

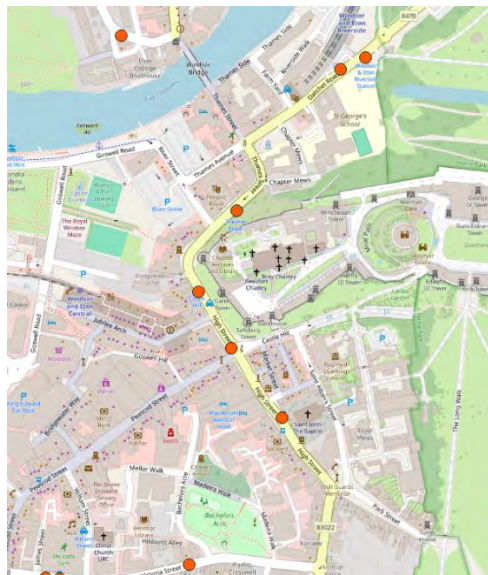


Figure 20 Map of Bus Stops in Central Windsor

One of RBWM's five Vision Statements is the development of "sustainable, convenient & affordable options to travel into Windsor Town Centre". This includes investment in "frequent bus and rail services". Whilst the frequency of rail services is outside the scope of this SSP, and may prove significantly difficult to deliver, the provision of bus services into the town centre is examined.

Figure 20 shows the bus stops currently located within central Windsor. RBWM have aspirations to install a new stop at Theatre Royal in the opposite direction to the current stop. The hope is that this stop could then become "Theatre Royal – Change for Riverside Station" to provide an interchange between rail and bus services. Similarly, the authority hopes to provide new stops on Goswell Road adjacent to the rear entrance to Royal Windsor Shopping Centre providing a convenient interchange for rail services at Central Station.

Of those surveyed in RBWM and the University of Surrey's surveys, very few currently access the town centre by bus compared with other modes. Whilst many will be unable to use local bus services,

there remains a significant number of people accessing the railway and town centre by private vehicle who may be tempted away by suitable bus services. As figure 20 shows, there are multiple bus stops in the centre of Windsor, several within easy reach of both Windsor stations.

There is already a relatively high frequency of bus services through Windsor with the below table highlighting daily services at Windsor Parish Church bus stop. What may prove important in the future, however, is ensuring that there is a sufficient number of services connecting satellite parking sites proposed by RBWM in their vision document. Having this frequent service between parking sites and the town centre may prove invaluable in encouraging people out of their cars and on to public transport alternatives as a means of accessing the town centre.

Bus	Operator	Route	Frequency
1	Thames Valley Buses	Ascot – Dedworth via Windsor Great Park	5 per day
1A	Thames Valley Buses	Ascot – Dedworth via Windsor Great Park, Old Windsor	1 per day
2	Thames Valley Buses	Slough – Dedworth via Windsor	Hourly
8	First Berkshire & The Thames Valley	Slough, Queensmere – Heathrow, Terminal 5	Half-Hourly
10	Carousel Buses	Windsor, Parish Church - Staines, Elmsleigh Bus Station	7 per day
10A	Carousel Buses	Windsor, Parish Church - Staines, Elmsleigh Bus Station	5 per day
37	Carousel Buses	High Wycombe, Bus Station - Windsor, Parish Church	Hourly
37B	Carousel Buses	High Wycombe, Bus Station - Windsor, Parish Church	Hourly
701	Reading Buses	Reading - Legoland	Hourly
702	Reading Buses	Legoland – London via Windsor, Slough	Hourly
703	Thames Valley Buses	Bracknell - Terminal 5 via Windsor, Slough	Half-Hourly

5.3 Active Travel

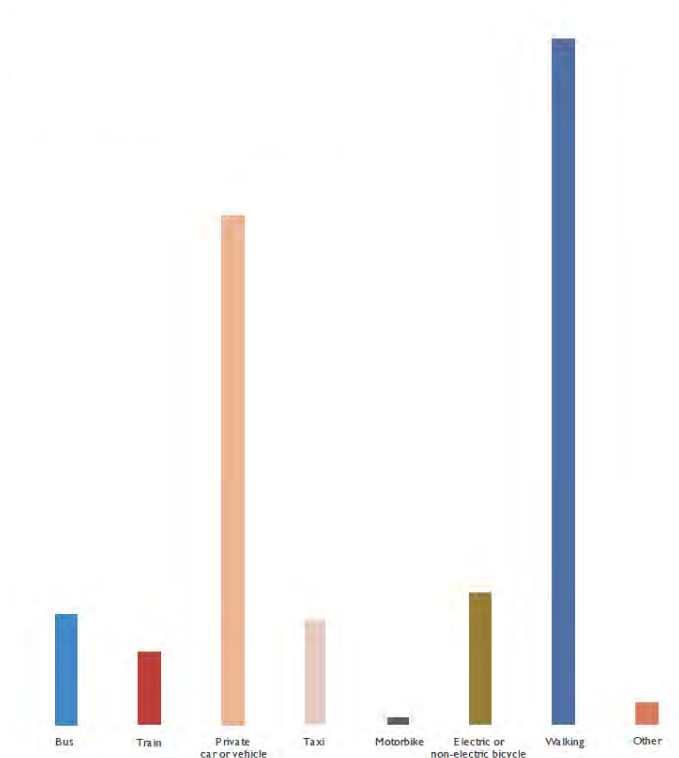


Figure 21 Windsor Access Modes. Source: RBWM Vision for Windsor

Walking, wheeling, and cycling, here dubbed Active Travel, is a mode of transport being increasingly promoted by local authorities and government due not only to its environmental benefits, but also its benefits for physical and mental health. As is seen from figures 17 and 21, a large proportion of those who access Windsor town centre and the railway at Windsor do so by active travel. This is predominantly shown as walking, though some are shown to cycle. Given the stations' proximity to local attractions and shopping, active travel modes also provide an easy way of accessing one's final destination once arrived at Windsor.

At WNC, as has previously been noted, the majority of passengers are tourists and so may not have a bicycle with them which requires storage. These passengers are much more likely to access the station by foot and so the

enhanced wayfinding noted above should suffice as an intervention here. However, RBWM has noted that a significant number of locals have a desire to cycle to WNC but are unable to because of the current cycle facility arrangement. Cycling is currently forbidden through the shopping centre, so cyclists must wheel their cycles through or enter via the rear entrance on to Goswell Road. This is only accessible by a stair case or often out of order lift. RBWM therefore have ambitions to provide enhanced cycle facilities at the 'ground floor' level of the rear entrance. RBWM already operate an app-based cycle-parking system so any new facilities should be integrated into this system to enhance user experience.

There is a large potential rail catchment to the west of the town centre in places like Clewer and Dedworth. These areas are easily cycle-able (and walk-able) and recent investment in a 'Quietway' walking and cycling route along the river front has seen 44 % increase in active travel journeys into the town centre. This 'Quietway' passes very close to the rear entrance to WNC station and so provision of enhanced facilities at the station may prove very popular.

At WNR, however, there is a noted higher proportion of commuters using the station, and those who arrive at their Windsor station by bicycle as captured in figure 17, do so at WNR. This suggests that the station should provide adequate cycle storage. Whilst there is currently cycle storage capacity of 88 cycles at WNR station, this facility is located on platforms, beyond the gateline. This means that people arriving at the station by cycle will need to pass through the gateline with their bikes, potentially increasing congestion on the station concourse at busy times.

Similarly, the location of WNR on Datchet Road, which can become busy, would also suggest enhanced traffic-calming measures and pedestrian crossing points would be beneficial. RBWM have recently completed works improving crossing facilities at the junction of Thames Street and Datchet

Road, a principle which should be supported, particularly given wider aspirations to increase bus services through the town centre.

5.4 Integrated Ticketing

The Department for Transport announced plans in 2023 to expand the tap-in, tap-out ticketing model employed by Transport for London to an additional 53 stations in the South East⁶. One of the stations included in the expansion is Windsor & Eton Riverside, meaning that as of February 2025, passengers could tap in or out at WNR using their contactless bank card, removing the need to purchase a ticket in advance of travel. This capability was already in place at Windsor & Eton Central, removing a point of potential confusion for irregular travellers. This expansion of the ‘c-pay’ zone has addressed a significant concern raised in the UoS survey⁷;

“The opportunity to use Apple Pay to tap for travel”

“Make getting tickets more accessible for tourists”

“Become part of the contactless payment area, it’s unclear where it ends!”

5.5 Recommendations

Recommendation	Additional Information
Improve signage/access to local bus routes from stations	Work with local bus operators and local authority to explore options for better bus connections at stations or alternative interchange opportunities. Alternatively seek effective and accessible wayfinding to nearest bus stops.
Ensure sufficient cycle storage at stations.	Ensure that cycle storage is well utilised, maintained and secure. Where possible, seek cycle storage on the ‘unpaid’ side of the station or outside of the station boundary.
Explore opportunities for promoting railway as an alternative access to Windsor	Promote new flexibility of ticketing options available (c-pay) to encourage use of rail to access Windsor instead of private vehicle.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/53-train-stations-to-benefit-from-tap-in-tap-out-rollout>

⁷ ⁷ Thomopoulos, N., Guragain, A., Hagen-Zanker, A. (2024) Windsor Strategic Station Plan: Rail Passenger Survey, Report, Guildford: University of Surrey: www.surrey.ac.uk/news/windsor-station-surveys-inform-strategic-plan-future-train-travel



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6 Property & Sustainability

6.1 Windsor & Eton Riverside

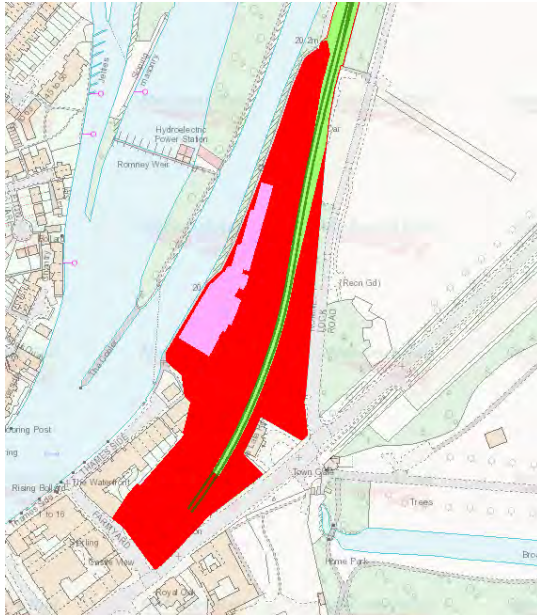


Figure 22 Property Ownership Boundaries at WNR

Network Rail's property team have previously identified an opportunity at Windsor & Eton Riverside for commercial sale and development of the part of the car park. This proposal is not currently being progressed given the length of third-party leases and the operational requirements for much of the land during state events.

These leases and operational requirements excluded, the site provides a significant opportunity for beneficial development. The operator has indicated that most of the car park is not needed for railway users, and the removal of a central car park certainly fits with RBWM's vision document seeking to reduce the use of private vehicles within the town centre and enhance the Waterfront. There has been previous interest in development of the site for residential use, properties which could attract a substantial boost for the railway.

Outside of the railway station, traffic calming measures may prove beneficial along Datchet Road. This is a very busy thoroughfare with private and public vehicles, but passengers must cross this road in order to reach Windsor's town centre and the associated tourism and retail draws.

There is 'zebra' pedestrian crossing immediately outside the station, but this is not immediately obvious to passengers who leave the station by the ticket office entrance. There is also a signalled pedestrian crossing at the junction with Tames Street. This requires crossing Farm Yard which can be difficult to cross, as well as waiting on a narrow pavement to cross towards the town centre which may become problematic during particularly busy periods.

As with most National Rail stations, there is an opportunity for sustainable energy generation by installing solar panels on the station roof. In the case of WNR, however, the station building is of significant historical and cultural interest which the installation of panels may adversely impact. Despite this, similar schemes have taken place nearby. Windsor Guildhall, a 17th Century Grade I listed landmark, has had solar panels and small wind turbines installed, successfully integrated into the historic property.

6.2 Windsor & Eton Central



Figure 253 Property Ownership Boundaries for WNC

Windsor & Eton Central's operational station footprint is significantly smaller than WNR's, consisting of just the platform and ticket office. The wider Network Rail owned site is, however, much larger. This comprises a large part of the former, much bigger station and train shed which is now leased and operated as the Windsor Royal Shopping Centre.

There is very little scope for further development of Network Rail property at WNC beyond exploring the opportunity for sustainable energy generation. As with WNR, concerns around retaining heritage and historical character will need to be considered.

6.3 Recommendations

Recommendation	Additional Information
Explore options for car park development	Work with the operator, leaseholders, and local authority to develop a long-term strategy for WNR station car park site. Should there be no future need for the site, opportunities should be explored for developments that are beneficial to all parties and the local community.
Explore opportunities for renewable energy generation	Discussions should be held with relevant organisations and local authority to identify opportunities for renewable energy generation at stations whilst maintaining the heritage features of the building which RBWM's vision document recognises.

7 Station Facilities & Accessibility

7.1 Windsor & Eton Riverside

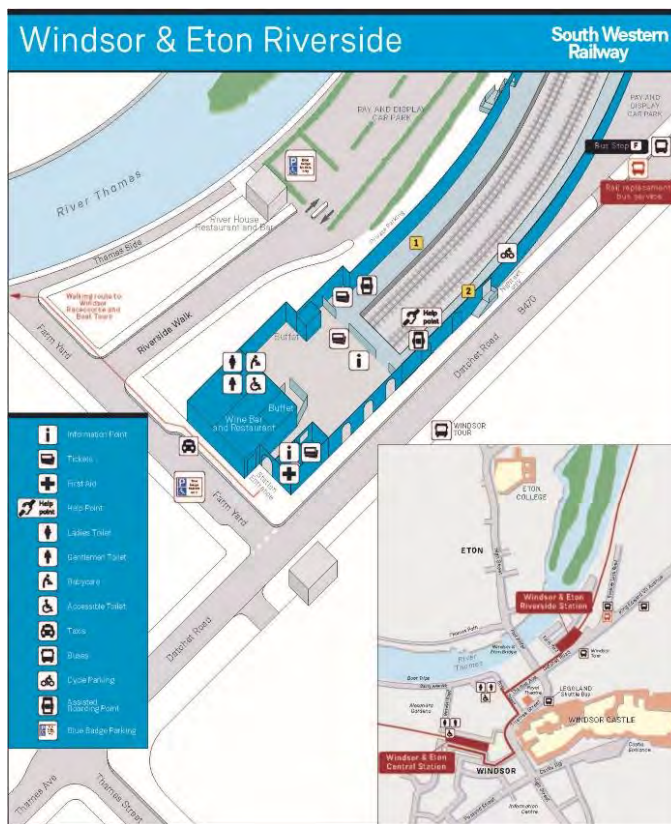


Figure 24 Station Map for WNR

Windsor & Eton Riverside station offers passengers toilets (including accessible and changing facilities), automated ticket vending machines, staffed ticket office, Help and information points, bicycle storage, and tourist and onward travel information boards.

Whilst there is bench seating on the platforms, there is less available in the booking hall side of the station. This is generally not required as trains are often waiting in platform for a while before their planned departure so passengers can board early and await departure. Some additional seating in the booking hall may, however, provide needed respite during perturbation or for passengers waiting with people who are themselves not travelling.

68% respondents at WNR responded favourably to provision of additional waiting spaces at the station. The passenger survey also highlighted the view of some passengers that toilet

facilities are not always kept in supply of hand soap and toilet roll. This should be monitored to ensure high quality facilities are provided for those in need at the station.

WNR is a heritage building and celebrates its historical position. The facility operator has sought to enhance this through the installation of bunting and information boards, however passengers surveyed believe that more could be done to enhance the appearance of both WNR and WNC stations. 69% of respondents noted that they would like more plants and flowers at the station, making it a nicer place to be. The local CRP has previously organised planting by volunteers to enhance the character of the station. Such programmes should be encouraged where possible and practical to develop pride and a sense of community attached to the station.

When leaving the station during normal operating hours, the only level exit is via the ticket hall. This corridor can be narrow and constrained when busy. Ensuring step-free access via the stations other entrances could vastly improve the passenger experience for passengers with reduced mobility. Similarly, ensuring the route to Thames Street is also step free and provides wide pavements and drop kerbs could have a large positive impact for passengers.

7.2 Windsor & Eton Central

Facilities at Windsor & Eton Central are more limited than at WNR. The station offers passengers Bicycle storage, ticket vending machines, a staffed ticket office, passenger help point, and validators for contactless bank card ticketing. Additional facilities such as toilets and refreshments are

available to passengers within the wider shopping centre footprint but do not form part of the managed station.

Given the range of facilities available within the shopping centre, not many additional facilities are required at WNC. The survey conducted by UoS did, however, suggest some areas where the

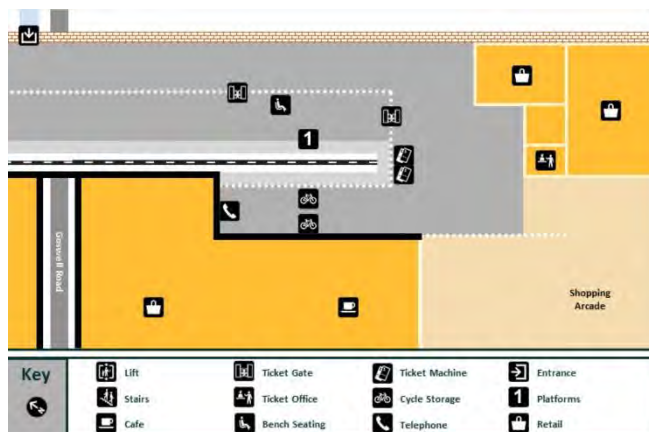


Figure 25 Station Map for WNC

passenger experience could be enhanced at the station. Additional seating for passengers awaiting trains to Slough for example - 75 % respondents at WNC responded favourably to additional waiting spaces at Windsor stations. Similarly, 54 % would like information offered about local sites and events, and 68 % would like device chargers using renewable energy. While WNC receives a regular 3tph service to Slough, should a passenger have just missed a service, they face a 20-minute wait, and such additional facilities may vastly improve their experience. Additionally, enhanced signage pointing passengers

towards the shopping centre's facilities may prove beneficial.

Whilst the walking route from WNC into the shopping centre and towards the castle is mostly level, access towards the riverside and car parks is currently provided through a staircase and public lift. This lift has proven temperamental and is often out of order. Similarly, the staircase can become very busy and slow to ascend/descend during busier periods. Investment in improving this access could significantly improve the experience of not just passengers who live in the West of Windsor, but other visitors to Windsor in their efforts to reach the riverside.

7.3 Additional

74 % respondents at WNC and 72 % respondents at WNR noted favourability to provision of accessible toilet facilities at the station. Whilst WNR already provides accessible toilet facilities within the station, and WNC provides these through the adjoining shopping centre, these numbers suggest that many station users are unaware of these facilities. Better signage may remedy this.

Other potential facility improvements noted within the passenger survey include improved lighting for safety and security, and Wi-Fi for allowing working when waiting at the station.

7.4 Recommendations

Recommendation	Additional Information
Improved passenger waiting facilities	Seating, heating, device charging, improved lighting, Wi-Fi, and enhanced facility maintenance could greatly improve the comfort and experience of passengers travelling through stations. This in turn may encourage further use of rail to access Windsor.
Enhanced level access to stations	Improved stairs/lifts, dropped kerbs, traffic calming, and improved road crossings could provide significant benefit to passengers with reduced mobility, opening up the railway to more people. Consultation with passenger groups, accessibility groups, and local authority should be sought to ensure maximum benefit of any improvements.



8 Recommendations & Next Steps

This document has explored a number of areas for potential strategic improvements across Windsor stations. Improvements, particularly around accessibility, have the potential to transform passengers' experience of the railway and open the mode to travellers previously unable to access the railway. In a time of suppressed rail demand and limited funding forthcoming for enhancement, improvements which have the potential to open up the market should be pursued wherever possible. This is not a task for the railway alone, and partners in local authority, government and the private sector have a valuable role to play in the development of strategic improvements. There is clearly potential for jointly beneficial enhancements to achieve significant improvements for rail passengers and others who access Windsor town centre. The following recommendations are not exhaustive but demonstrate the opportunity for developing the railways offering alongside RBWM's Vision for Windsor.

Theme	Detail	Next Steps
Gateways & Arrival	Support creation of satellite parking sites which encourage rail and bus access to Windsor Town Centre. Aligned with commitment to a high-quality station environment and offering, accessibility enhancements, and links to active travel, celebrate arrival into Windsor.	Examine opportunities for WNR car park site as the need for town-centre car parking reduces. Work to ensure that facilities and onward connections provided at stations are well signposted, well maintained, and easily accessible by all.
Town Centre Management	Support the reduction of unnecessary private vehicles through Windsor town centre through promoting rail and active travel alternatives.	Promote ease of travel by rail following c-pay zone expansion and clearly signpost first/last mile options for passengers whose final destination is not the town centre. Work with bus operators to deliver simpler integration between rail and onward travel modes. Ensure through car park schemes that sufficient priority and accessible parking remains for those without alternatives options.
Character & Uses	Celebrate the history and heritage of rail in Windsor through providing an attractive and accessible gateway to the town. Improve tourist and onward travel information available at stations, maintain facilities to a high standard, and provide enhanced passenger waiting facilities at stations through improved seating, planting, artwork, and facilities.	Work with relevant CRPs, Local Authority, and facility managers to provide high-class and welcoming environments at stations.

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Strategic Station Plan: Windsor Stations
2025
V1.0



Western
Route



SOUTHERN REGION
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