



House of Commons
Transport Committee

Overcrowding on Public Transport

Seventh Report of Session 2002–03

Volume I



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Report, together with formal minutes

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The Transport Committee

The Transport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Transport and its associated public bodies.

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1 Introduction

1. We began our inquiry into overcrowding on public transport as a way to concentrate minds upon the problem. We were convinced that overcrowding was an issue that simply was not taken seriously enough - the Department for Transport's targets recognised that overcrowding in London and the South East needed to be reduced, but were silent about potential problems elsewhere.

2. We recognise that a successful public transport system will be busy, and that overcrowding is not solely caused by a lack of physical infrastructure. It can be triggered by disruptions to otherwise adequate services, or even by passenger behaviour. When we began our inquiry we expected to find that overcrowding was an inevitable part of public transport, and the aim should be to manage it as an incidental to the core task of running services as efficiently as possible. In fact, the inquiry has convinced us that focussing on the traveller's experience is an effective way of identifying underlying problems and could itself increase efficiency. **Overcrowding on public transport is bad, and is likely to get worse. It must be taken far more seriously than at present. Managements which accept overcrowding as inevitable are not only short changing the travelling public; they are failing to run the system properly. Occasional crowding may be a sign of success; the current chronic overcrowding in all the major conurbations which gave evidence is unacceptable, and must be addressed.**

3. In the course of this inquiry, we received memoranda from members of the public, transport professionals and providers, local authorities, the SRA, the Department for Transport and others. We took oral evidence from Passenger Transport Executives, passenger representatives, train and bus operating companies, the Health and Safety Executive, Rolling Stock Operating Companies and the Chairman of the Strategic Rail Authority. We are very grateful to all those who helped us in this inquiry.

2 Why Overcrowding Matters

4. The Government wishes to encourage people to use public transport wherever it is appropriate.¹ The recent introduction of London's congestion charge only highlights this matter further. The system of paying to drive within the very centre of London has led to many more people leaving their cars behind them and opting for public transport. The initial reaction is that the system is a success, and many more areas of the country are thinking of adopting similar schemes in an attempt to decongest their busy city centres. However, this modal shift will only occur if public transport offers advantages over the car. These may not be comfort; if public transport is quicker, or solves car parking problems at the traveller's destination, or even is seen to be "greener", people will use it. As several respondents pointed

¹ Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report, DfT December 2002, p117

out, travellers appear willing to stand for periods of up to twenty minutes as long as they are offered speed, or convenience or reliability.² But gross overcrowding may outweigh all these advantages. It was clear from our evidence that travellers routinely find themselves subjected to levels of overcrowding that are not simply uncomfortable, but positively frightening.³ We were told that when the Government's panel had rated the service quality of a range of retail services, energy and communications utilities received ratings of over 80 out of 100, and high street banks and building societies were rated at 78. The equivalent figures in the transport sector were 44 for London Underground, 37 for local buses and 28 for train companies.⁴ Ratings like this suggest that people *expect* their journeys to be difficult and unpleasant: this is simply unacceptable. The Spring 2003 national rail passenger survey showed that nearly a quarter of passengers were dissatisfied by the amount of seated or standing space available.⁵ The hardened traveller may accept overcrowding as a fact of life, but it is one of the factors which leads consumers to rate public transport so low. There need to be huge improvements if public transport use is going to increase.

Impact on Business

5. Travelling conditions can directly affect business. The Corporation of London told us

“The City’s function as the world’s leading international financial and business centre is heavily dependent on an efficient and attractive integrated transport system to move large numbers of people daily and to enable the efficient servicing of its main activities. Public transport access is vitally important for the City of London. Up to a third of a million commuters come to work in the City each day and around 91% of them travel by rail, Underground or bus. This compares with 80% for central London, 42% for inner London and 18% for outer London. Notably the figure for the rest of the country is 14%, which shows how much more London relies on its public transport services.”⁶

6. Demand for rail and bus travel in inner London has increased by 14% since 1992, while private car use has been significantly reduced. The Corporation is so concerned about the effects of inefficiencies in the public transport system on the economy it has sponsored a research project to quantify this.⁷ The survey was focused on the effects of delays in public transport, but the three key improvements identified after an increase in transport reliability were increased frequency, more comfort and less overcrowding - all of which would have an impact on passenger loading per train or bus.⁸

2 OPT 1; OPT17; Qq103-4

3 OPT 06; OPT 10; OPT 13; OPT 19

4 OPT 11

5 On Track, p7

6 OPT 20

7 Ibid

8 Oxford Economic Forecasting, The Economic Effects of Transport Delays on the City of London, July 2003, published by the Corporation of the City of London, p.40

7. Failure to provide an efficient public transport system means that employers are faced with staff who are tired, stressed and uncomfortable on arrival at the workplace. Lateness at work, loss of productivity, sickness absence, missed and rescheduled meetings and lost business due to public transport overcrowding and delays all impose real and significant costs. The report from Oxford Economic Forecasting found that cost of public transport delays to the City of London "is conservatively estimated to be about £230 million a year".⁹ There is also concern that transport difficulties have an impact on the recruitment and retention of staff. Overcrowding on public transport reduces the attractiveness of the City as a place in which to make investments.¹⁰

Impact on Tourism

8. Overcrowding is not simply an urban problem. It is clear that tourist routes can suffer from acute overcrowding at times of peak demand. In 2001 tourists from the UK and overseas were worth over £75bn to the UK economy.¹¹ A healthy tourism sector is supported by an efficient transport infrastructure; if the journey is too unpleasant, the visitor is unlikely to repeat the experience, or to recommend it to others.

9. Despite this, tourist overcrowding does not seem to be taken as seriously as regular congestion on commuter routes. The Department for Transport commented that "There is overcrowding at times on the Blackpool Tramway, but it is very seasonal due to the nature of the tourist trade".¹² This does not make it any less significant. The problems of seasonal crowding were also noted on the Settle-Carlisle line¹³, and East Lindsey District Council wrote to point out the importance of the Skegness-Grantham line to the local economy.¹⁴ The South East Lincolnshire Travellers' Association presented figures showing that overcrowding on that line was, as might be expected, a seasonal phenomenon.¹⁵

10. Seasonal congestion matters. Local economies which depend on tourism will be severely damaged if visitors find the transport so bad that they are discouraged from returning, or from recommending a visit to others. Capacity must be provided to deal with seasonal peaks in demand as well as daily commuting patterns.

9 Oxford Economic Forecasting, The Economic Effects of Transport Delays on the City of London, July 2003, p 3

10 OPT 20

11 www.staruk.org.uk

12 OPT 16

13 Q42

14 OPT 24

15 OPT 08

3 Capacity

11. It was clear from our evidence that it is commonplace for vehicles to be so full that passengers cannot enter them, or even alight from them. This is not a South-Eastern phenomenon; the Rail Passenger Users Committee of North-Western England conducted a survey which noted overcrowding on many routes, with loading as high as 213% on the Huddersfield-Manchester route.¹⁶ The Passenger Transport Executive Group told us that “overcrowding is often of such a scale that passengers... cannot board trains”.¹⁷ Similarly, Mr. Peter Thomson noted that it was frequently impossible for passengers to board the Manchester MetroLink at peak periods.¹⁸ Our witnesses were also critical of the overcrowding experienced on buses.¹⁹

12. Although passengers can be encouraged to travel outside the peak periods, most people have working patterns which require them to work between particular hours. It is unrealistic to expect that the phenomenon of peaks of demand can be significantly reduced, at least in the short to medium term. It is notable that, on trains at least, overcrowding is less acute in the evening peak, where there may be more discretion about the timing of travel.

13. Our witnesses agreed that a key contributory factor in overcrowding had been a failure to plan for increased demand for public transport. The Passenger Transport Executive Group told us:

“Fundamentally the original franchises did not make adequate provision for passenger growth and the consequential need to provide additional capacity. In short, growth of the levels achieved in some PTE areas was either not envisaged or simply not properly planned for in the original franchises. Where growth has occurred, the franchise mechanisms have been unable to fully respond to it. For example, in West Yorkshire, peak patronage increased by over 40% in the first three years of the franchise and there was no corresponding increase in rolling stock capacity.”²⁰

14. Demand for Metrolink is also suppressed by overcrowding. We were told that the shortage of capacity on the tram system was caused by the funding of light rail in the UK:

“The Government funds the majority of the capital costs, which obviously include the rolling stock, and in the early 1990s they backed the private sector bidders rather than the Passenger Transport Executive which said what were the number of vehicles that were required in Manchester.”²¹

16 Standing Room Only: Overcrowding in Railways: A Report by the Rail Passenger Users Committee North Western England, Dec. 2000.

17 OPT 14

18 OPT 06

19 OPT 03; OPT 04

20 OPT 14

21 Q 37

15. The London Underground system is similarly capacity constrained. Mr. Paul Godier, the Chief Executive told us that “all of us in the public transport business have been to some extent taken by surprise by the growth in demand over the last 10 years”.²² Mr Godier considered that extra investment from the the London Underground Public Private Partnership would increase peak capacity by about 28% by 2020, while demand would only rise by 20%.²³ It is not yet clear that this will be achievable.

16. It is right to encourage more flexible work and travel patterns, but these will have only a marginal effect on journey patterns in the short to medium term. Public transport will only be attractive if it meets people’s real needs. That means that there must be adequate capacity at peak periods. It is clear that there simply is not the capacity in the current system to cope with peak flows into most, if not all, major urban areas.

17. The fact that the current lack of capacity in the system largely predates the new policies of the Integrated Transport White Paper and the Ten Year Plan should not make the Government complacent. The long planning period for public transport projects, and the high cost of vehicles, mean that it is all too likely that the same mistakes will be made again. It is self defeating to provide increased capacity only when demand has already increased. Unless the Government (and local authorities) believe that they will ultimately achieve their targets to increase the use of transport and make the improvements needed before those targets are achieved, passengers will be forced back onto the road. The price of motoring is declining in real terms while the price of public transport is increasing. As Mr Hoggarth, Assistant Director, Development, of Metro, the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive noted, demand for public transport is elastic.²⁴ **It would be extremely easy to reverse the increases in public transport use in past years. Above all, the Department for Transport must ensure that the public transport system has the capacity it needs to handle the increases in passengers that its policies promote.**

4 Bus

18. The Select Committee on Transport, Local Government and the Regions reported on the Bus Industry in September 2002.²⁵ Many of the issues discussed in that Report are related to overcrowding, and rather than repeat our precursor Committee’s work we deal with them briefly here.

19. First Group was radical in its analysis of the causes of overcrowding

22 Q 394

23 Q 418

24 Q 32, see also OPT 03; OPT 14.

25 Seventeenth Report of Session 2001-02, The Bus Industry, HC 828-I

“In some parts of the UK, public sector pricing decisions are having a major impact on overcrowding on buses. For example, free pm peak time travel for pensioners overlaps with children coming out of school and adults trying to get home from work.”

It also cited parental choice of schools, schools’ common opening hours which did not reflect transport needs, and local authority planning decisions which produced journey patterns which could not easily be met by bus.²⁶

20. We drew attention to the transport difficulties that planning can bring in our report on the multi modal studies.²⁷ However, there are policy reasons for parental choice in schooling, and making transport accessible to the elderly. It is not necessarily convenient to stagger school opening hours. There is scope for thinking hard about whether changes could be made which would both reduce peak demand and benefit users, but ultimately transport systems should serve their communities, not dictate the way in which they operate.

21. The bus industry considered that urban congestion significantly reduced the efficiency and capacity of their services and that greater use of priority measures was key to increasing the capacity of the bus network.²⁸ Bus operators also stressed that bus priority measures would only work if they were properly enforced.²⁹ Ultimately, reductions in congestion could lead to a virtuous circle in which “As demand expands, it is in operators’ interests to invest in more buses to meet it. The business case for doing so is overwhelming and so is the benefit to passengers – since more buses on a service not only mean more capacity but more frequent services.”³⁰

22. Road congestion, however, is not the only cause of dissatisfaction with bus services. We heard strong criticism of bus design. Dr Disney and Dr Sexton both noted that many bus designs encourage standing near the front of vehicles so that “the bus is perceived as overcrowded even if its load is less than its seating capacity.”³¹ Getting on and off buses could be difficult, and they were not designed to cope with luggage. There are some changes here; we were told

“In London, the introduction of the articulated buses on Red Arrow routes is also helping to alleviate overcrowding on buses. The new ‘bendy and cashless’ bus services are able to carry up to 140 people, at least 60 more than a double deck bus. As passengers have tickets before boarding and can board or alight from all three doors (as in many cities on the continent) these buses are helping to make journeys quicker and more reliable.”³²

26 OPT 5

27 Transport Committee, Third Report of Session 2002-3, *Jam Tomorrow?: The Multimodal Study Investment Plans*, paras 60 to 61, 93 to 94

28 OPT 05; OPT 09; see also OPT 11

29 OPT 5

30 OPT 05

31 OPT01, OPT 04

32 OPT 09

We note that Transport for London has now introduced “pay before your board” on all central London buses.

23. Bus overcrowding was perceived as less of a problem than overcrowding on trams or rail, since, in urban areas at least, an overcrowded bus was likely to be quickly followed by another service. Nevertheless, it should be tackled. **Bus overcrowding could be much reduced by greater use and proper enforcement of bus priority measures. The bus fleet will be gradually replaced; operators should ensure that they introduce designs which are easy to board, and allow free movement around the bus.**

5 Rail

24. Overcrowding on the railway is the manifestation of many underlying problems; lack of track capacity, a flawed franchising structure, a substandard and unreliable network, a lack of vehicles, or the choice of inappropriate train formations. In many ways, the heavy rail system is the area where overcrowding is most acute, and the problem is not being treated with anything like sufficient urgency. A recent Parliamentary Answer shows that overcrowding levels in London in the peak periods fell in 2002; however even with this fall, overcrowding remained higher than in 1998 and 1999.³³

Measuring overcrowding

25. One of the first problems is that there is no simple way to measure overcrowding on trains. Buses, boats and planes all have maximum loading; seats are booked in advance. In contrast, trains are designed to run at full capacity; that is, when it becomes physically impossible to squeeze in another customer. This level of crowding may or may not be safe (we deal with safety later) but it is clearly unacceptable to subject passengers to loading levels described in evidence to us as “sardines” or “crush loading”.³⁴ But it is equally clear that while the proper capacity of an intercity train may simply be the number of seats, commuter trains can and do accommodate standing passengers without necessarily being overcrowded.

26. The method for calculating the capacity of a train was explained by the Rail Passenger Council as follows:

“For journeys of more than 20 minutes, capacity equals the number of Standard Class seats.

For journeys of less than 20 minutes, capacity is the number of seats available on the train plus 10% standing in slam door trains.

33 Official Report , 26 Jun 2003, c 929 W; detailed figures deposited in the library .

34 Q 184

Currently, for sliding-door trains, the capacity threshold is one passenger per 0.45m² of the floor area of the carriage, whether occupied by a seat or not. To calculate capacity, the number of seats are counted (each taken to occupy 0.45m²) and the total seat area is subtracted from the total floor area to give the area available for standing passengers – e.g. for a sliding-door carriage of 45m² with 50 seats, allowance is made for 50 standing passengers.”³⁵

27. The SRA described the method of estimating capacity for journeys under 20 minutes slightly differently, but it was clear that for modern rolling stock floor area was the usual determinant of capacity. The SRA's measures are:

“for slam door stock 110% of the number of standard class seats; and

for most sliding door stock the number of standard class seats plus the number of people who can stand at a density of 0.55 m² per passenger.

If an operator proposes to use rolling stock whose internal layout is radically different from that of existing vehicles, the figure of 0.55 m² may not be appropriate. In such cases, we will consider what alternative criterion to apply.”³⁶

28. On commuter routes, it may be more important to ensure that vehicles are designed to allow passengers to stand in safety and comfort rather than to provide as many seats as possible. We were told that some companies are designing carriages specifically to cope with standing passengers, and the Chair of the London Transport Users Committee supported this.³⁷ Even doing something as simple as ensuring official capacity levels reflected the vehicle's design would act as a further incentive for Train Operating Companies to ensure their vehicles were properly designed to cope with standing passengers.

29. It is absurd that the normal way of calculating capacity does not take into account the detail of carriage design. It is reasonable to expect some standing in commuter trains, but capacity should not be set by a purely arbitrary measure of the amount of floor space per passenger. It should be set carriage type by carriage type, taking account of the seats provided, and the provision made for passengers to stand in comfort with adequate hand holds.

Performance monitoring

30. Train operators in the South East, in Edinburgh and in PTE areas have their performance monitored according to Passengers in Excess of Capacity (PIXC). Broadly speaking they are penalised for running services above the PIXC limit; in south east commuter services that is 4.5% above capacity for either morning or evening peak alone or 3% for both peaks combined. The SRA described the way in which PIXC was measured as follows:

35 OPT 19

36 OPT 17

37 Q 103

“24. PIXC is a measure of the degree to which load factor standards are exceeded in practice. The definition is best illustrated by an example:

Train 1 capacity 800	actual load 750	passengers in excess 0 (not 50)
Train 2 capacity 800	actual load 850	passengers in excess 50
both trains capacity 1,600	actual load 1,600	passengers in excess 50 (not 0)

25. The measure is always used in connection with groups of trains (eg. routes, TOCs, etc) and is normally taken at defined count points. It is then expressed as a percentage (the total number of passengers in excess of capacity on the trains being considered, divided by the total number of passengers on the trains). Thus in the example above, PIXC is 50 divided by 1,600 or 3.1%. Because the morning peak is more concentrated than the evening peak, and because of peaking within the peak, PIXC is not uniform.

26. It is conventional to measure PIXC for services operating as planned (ie. no cancellations, minimal delays and all trains formed of the correct stock). This separates issues about the adequacy of the plan from issues about its delivery”.³⁸

However, as the RPC pointed out, the PIXC measure has many disadvantages:

- Capacity measures are themselves unsatisfactory;
- Manual counts may be inaccurate;
- PIXC only applies to London and Scottish commuter routes at peak times, not across the system;
- PIXC is calculated across the whole of a Train Operating Company’s area, rather than on particular routes;
- Cancelled or short formation trains are counted as part of the capacity provided;
- Overcrowding is only monitored once a year.³⁹

31. The SRA’s evidence indicates that PIXC is not quite so crudely calculated, but it is clear that it is an aggregated measure. This is not unreasonable; as the SRA says

“In practice it is not always possible to keep loadings within ... capacities:

- because loadings vary considerably from day to day and TOCs currently operate a walk-on service with no boarding restrictions; and
- because demand within the peak periods peaks strongly at certain times.”⁴⁰

38 OPT 17

39 OPT 19

32. **We agree with the Rail Passengers Council that the current monitoring regime is fundamentally flawed. It is absurd to count only yearly: regular monitoring is required. The measure should be of real overcrowding on real routes. The practice of calculating overcrowding in relation to the programmed service rather than the frequently inadequate service actually provided should stop.**

33. The fact that rail companies combine different routes when overcrowding is measured significantly reduces the scale of the problem reported. For example, in 2002, Connex South Eastern had an aggregated PIXC level of 2.3%, well within the SRA's threshold. This hides the fact that the Kent Coast (Outer) Route had a PIXC level of 5.2%, and was severely overcrowded, even on the SRA's own inadequate measure. Similar disparities between the different routes controlled by a single Train Operating Company occurred in the Great Eastern, Silverlink and (in the morning peak) Thameslink areas.⁴¹ **Overcrowding should be measured on particular routes, not at the level of the franchise as a whole. The current system both significantly understates the true level of crowding, and fails to ensure that management attention is concentrated on the particular routes where problems are worst.**

34. We understand that commuter rail offers a walk-on service. Train operators may be unable to prevent gross overcrowding on particular services. But PIXC is calculated on all services across the relevant network. It should even out disparities between trains. **A train's capacity is already calculated to include both standing and seated passengers. It is intolerable that the performance regime currently in place does not begin to bite until this capacity is significantly exceeded, not at the level of the individual train, but across a franchise as a whole.**

35. For all their inadequacies, even the current systems of calculating overcrowding reveal unacceptable levels of service. When we took evidence, we were told that the total level of passengers above capacity in London and the South East at the morning peak was 5%.⁴² This has since got better, as more spaces have been introduced, but three operators are still above the SRA's threshold. In Yorkshire PIXC was 9.0% in the morning peak, and 5.3% in the evening peak.⁴³ These figures of course relate to the service which ought to run, rather the one actually provided. Real crowding is worse. Capacity counts conducted by the Rail Passengers Committee for the Northwest also showed gross overcrowding across many routes.

36. The Parliamentary Answer of 26th June considered that "overcrowding is primarily a problem in London in the peak periods". This does not accord with the evidence we were given, which suggested overcrowding was a problem in many of our urban areas. The SRA defended its decision not to require capacity counts across the system on the grounds that counting imposed costs on operators, and was best used only when necessary.⁴⁴ We would

40 OPT 17

41 Official Report 26 June 2003, c929W; accompanying table

42 OPT 11

43 OPT 14

44 OPT 17A

have more sympathy with this view if it had not clearly led to a perception in government that overcrowding on the rail network is a South Eastern problem.

37. We are pleased that the SRA is encouraging more use of automatic passenger counting systems, which will provide accurate and continuous monitoring once they have been installed, but it is clear that it will be some time before this is universal.⁴⁵

38. The SRA's past reluctance to demand capacity counts may be connected with the difficulties it would face in dealing with any crowding they revealed. Specifying a higher quality of service would almost inevitably have involved a higher level of subsidy.⁴⁶ Some witnesses were concerned that the penalty structure in current franchises might make it cheaper for an operating company to cancel a train than to run a short formation.⁴⁷ We recognise that existing franchise agreements cannot be unilaterally rewritten. Although new franchises are being let, some franchises still have many years to run, and it will take time to reform the system completely. However, **there are encouraging signs that the new franchise agreements will contain measures to reduce overcrowding.** The draft agreements contain provisions which contain a requirement on the franchisee to implement an automatic system for counting passengers, which in itself will give far more information about the true levels of crowding. Companies will also be required to provide the SRA with a train plan, which takes account of current and projected demand, and the SRA will be able to assess the adequacy of that plan before timetables are finalised. There are provisions to deal with failure to provide the service specified. The franchise provisions have not yet been fully negotiated; it is important that these provisions are not diluted. **We expect the new franchises to have real penalties for both cancellations and short formations, and to ensure that those penalties are set appropriately.**

Rolling Stock

39. It is far from clear that the levels of service currently specified can be delivered. In our inquiry into *Railways in the North of England*, it became clear that there were simply no carriages available to allow Arriva Trains Northern the numbers it required.⁴⁸ This is the outward manifestation of several more complex underlying problems. The first is the under specification of the original franchises already discussed. Not only was the West Yorkshire stock cap reached on the first year the franchise operated, but the West Midlands rolling stock cap has also been reached.⁴⁹ There is no-one with responsibility for ensuring that adequate stock is provided in these circumstances; instead, the Passenger Transport Executives have to try and scrape together funding from sources such as the Rail Passenger Partnership.

45 OPT 17; OPT 17A

46 OPT 19

47 OPT 19

48 Transport Committee, Fourth Report Of Session 2002-03, *Railways in the North of England*, HC 782-I, para 59; see also OPT 14, para 22.

49 OPT 14 para 17

40. The result of this underspecification and underfunding is that too much of the rolling stock on our railways is unsuitable and elderly. Moreover, there is no suitable back-up available when a carriage breaks down, so problems quickly escalate. **Overcrowding cannot be tackled unless there is enough rolling stock readily available to replace defective vehicles promptly.**

41. The fact that new vehicles are being delivered on some franchises should, in principle, release older stock to others. However, there are considerable problems in this. New stock will only solve the problems of peak hour crowding if it can be used flexibly. Recent orders of fixed car sets which cannot be combined with other manufacturers' existing or new trains suggest that the need for flexibility to cope with fluctuations in demand has not been given sufficient attention. In addition, it is unclear who should manage the cascade of vehicles through a network which contains profit-making franchises, subsidized franchises and franchises run on a tight management contract. Secondly, there are too many types of train in the system. Some operators are already operating a considerable mix of vehicles; more vehicles of the "wrong" kind will not help them. We were told that it is not always easy to redeploy trains round the network.⁵⁰ In addition, the costs of obtaining the extra vehicles needed to deal with peak demand are far greater than the revenue those trains will generate.⁵¹

How trains are purchased

42. In general, Train Operating Companies lease the carriages they require from one of the Rolling Stock Operating Companies (ROSCOs) which emerged from the privatisation of the railways. The three ROSCOs are Angel Trains, owned by the Royal Bank of Scotland; Porterbrook Leasing, owned by Abbey National Treasury Services; and HSBC trains, owned by the HSBC group. It is notable that there has been no real new entrant to the market since our predecessor Committee last took evidence from the ROSCOs in 1997; the only non-ROSCO order has been placed for the Heathrow Express.

43. At the outset, companies wished to identify themselves through distinctive, customized trains. Although the ROSCOs have made some speculative train orders, the bulk of their investment has been to fulfil the requirements of particular companies. It is notable that where ROSCOs have made speculative purchases, they have readily found companies to lease the rolling stock.⁵² It appears likely that shorter franchise periods will lead to greater standardisation of rolling stock in the future. Mr Francis of Porterbrook told us "I do not actually want 20-year leases to require me to invest in trains, unless it is something of a very specialist nature; and it comes back to the point about investing in products that are evolved and are fairly versatile".⁵³

44. The SRA supported these developments, but was reluctant to interfere too much in the market since "we are in the business of specifying outputs, not the inputs required to deliver

50 Q 467

51 OPT 14

52 Qq 430-439

53 Q 441

them”.⁵⁴ The Train Operating Companies “are the organisations which have the facing against the customer, the passengers, they know what the market requirement is, in terms of the kind of rolling stock and the facilities on those trains, it is absolutely appropriate that they are the ones that manage the process, carry out the procurement, arrange the contracts, and that is what is happening.”⁵⁵

45. This might have been tenable when the policy was to award long franchises, and, within broad parameters, leave TOCs to manage services as they saw fit. But in November last year, the SRA issued a new franchising policy statement. Franchises would be far shorter, and performance standards would be extremely tightly specified and monitored. In those circumstances, TOCs are unlikely to take much risk on rolling stock, particularly as it was confirmed that leasing costs for short franchises are proportionately higher than for long ones.⁵⁶

46. Mr Haydn Abbott, Managing Director of Angel Trains, was entirely clear both that the SRA was, in reality, the guarantor of contracts with TOCs, and that it was closely involved in the leasing process. He told the Committee:

“the Strategic Rail Authority is actively involved in each and every contract that we sign with each and every TOC, because (a) we have a Direct Agreement which is in parallel with the lease agreement, we have a Direct Agreement with the Strategic Rail Authority, and the Strategic Rail Authority sees and agrees, and indeed very often changes, every single lease that we sign with a Train Operating Company”.⁵⁷

47. **It is entirely right that the SRA should take a close interest in the arrangements its franchisees make to lease trains. We believe it should go much further, and ensure that franchisees order train types which can be widely used across the network.** This is already happening to some extent, as the SRA has played a leading role in specifying the replacement for the High Speed Train, even though it has left design details to the final customers. As the Chairman said “it does not make sense to buy three or four lots of replacement trains, it does make sense to have a strategic review, and I do not think anybody doubts that.”⁵⁸

48. In the longer term, there must be a question as to whether the SRA could or should take a greater role in train procurement. The SRA explained that it devolved operational decisions to the franchise holders because they were responsible for providing the service and best placed to decide what they required.⁵⁹ However, the new franchises are to be shorter and far more tightly defined than the old ones. Our witnesses were positive that it was possible to obtain leased rolling stock even on short franchises⁶⁰. They were guarded about the effect of short

54 Q517

55 Q 531

56 OPT 17A

57 Q 453

58 Q584

59 Q 531

60 Q 441

franchises on the cost of leasing rolling stock, but the SRA eventually told us that “generally lease rentals have fallen with increased lease length.”⁶¹ We take this to mean that short leases are likely to be proportionately more expensive than longer ones. It may be easier to take a view after some operational experience of the new franchises, but the SRA should examine the extent to which it would be possible to drive down costs by taking a more active role in train procurement.

49. The current fragmented procurement structure leaves Train Operating Companies to take their own decisions, but there has been no certainty that those decisions will produce working trains. South West Trains and South Central each ordered new rolling stock to replace their Mark 1 rolling stock. Modern trains with air conditioning, heavier engines and more “redundancy” require more power than the Mark 1s which they replace.⁶² It is now apparent that the full complement of trains will not be able to run until the power supply is upgraded. The problem is being temporarily contained by delaying the delivery of trains,⁶³ but **in the long term, it is entirely possible that the rolling stock companies will be obliged to accept trains which cannot run because the electricity supply has not been upgraded. At that point, someone will have to pay.⁶⁴ The failure to identify the need for improvements involved all parties; private companies failed to specify their needs correctly, or to ensure that new trains could run on the track available; it would be wholly unacceptable if the taxpayer had to pick up the bill.**

50. The ROSCOs told us that although it was not their responsibility to ensure the rolling stock they provided could run on the network, they had discussed the need to strengthen the network with the Train Operating Companies.⁶⁵ But, as Mr Francis, Managing Director of Porterbrook Leasing Company, made clear, these discussions were taking place at the time when Railtrack was still ‘scoping’ the size of the problem.⁶⁶ Mr Aldridge, Mr Francis and Mr Abbott eventually agreed that Railtrack was ultimately responsible – “it was their duty to provide the infrastructure on which these trains would run, knowing full well that the older trains, which consume less power, would have to come out of service by December 31, 2004.”⁶⁷ Mr Abbott made the point that this inability to see that new trains would require infrastructure changes was not unprecedented.⁶⁸ However, the Train Operating Companies were also responsible for the procurement; they cannot escape responsibility.

51. The SRA ultimately intervened over the power supply for the Mark 1 rolling stock. Mr Bowker told us:

61 OPT 17A

62 Q 480

63 Q 494, Q 262

64 Q 493

65 Q 470

66 Q 482

67 Q 488

68 Q 488

“when I did arrive I was appalled at the state of this particular programme. We have set up a project team, there is now cross-industry buy into it, there is a single plan, which is managed very aggressively, and we are getting on with it, to the point where I can tell the Committee that some 230 new vehicles are in service, I think the first power sub-station has already been built and will be installed shortly”.⁶⁹

It is notable that the SRA had to step in to resolve this problem, rather than Network Rail itself.

52. The SRA has a duty to draw up a Rolling Stock Strategy: it should do so as a matter of urgency. The United Kingdom needs a modern railway fleet, which contains vehicles which can be cascaded when necessary, and is large enough to provide the service required. It is clear that the rail “market” as currently structured cannot provide it without intervention. The SRA must intervene to ensure the necessary stock is provided where it is needed.

Network Capacity

Congestion

53. We were also told that the lack of network capacity was making overcrowding worse, since it led to delays and service disruption. Faced with a choice of an overcrowded train which is standing on the platform and another train which cannot be guaranteed to appear, passengers choose the overcrowded train, which will at least get them home, if not in comfort.

54. As we have described in our report on *Railways in the North of England*, the wish of some franchisees to increase the services they offer has increased the load on capacity.⁷⁰ Virgin Cross Country’s decision to introduce a new timetable which offered an increased number of trains, shorter than those which previously operated on the route is the most notable example. Not only did the new trains lack the capacity needed for peak travel, they attracted new customers who could not be accommodated. The increased frequencies also meant a greater risk of service disruption. The Chairman of the SRA explained that “adding in services in the inter-peak period ... was providing quite a lot of disruption to the start of the evening peak. So by not having these off-peak services we can ensure that the evening peak, where overcrowding would be an issue, is served as well as we possibly can.”⁷¹ The SRA’s attempts to increase the system’s capacity are welcome. However, our support for rationalizing the timetable in ways which ensure that journeys can be made more reliably, at the cost of some service frequency, should not be confused with support for major cuts in service.

55. The SRA failed by allowing timetable enhancements which could not be delivered in practice. It is reasonable for it to consider judicious pruning on congested lines to ensure services can run reliably. When it does this it should ensure that if new service frequencies are

69 Q 589

70 HC(2002-03)782-I, paras 69-74

71 Q560

introduced the trains provided are long enough to accommodate the passengers from discontinued services.

Platform Length

56. We were told that physical infrastructure could also impact on overcrowding. Even if rolling stock is available, train length may be constrained by the length of the platforms on the particular route; some might be as little as two carriages long. Mr Cameron of Arriva Trains claimed that while there could be “grandfather rights” to run slam door trains longer than the platforms at particular stations, the HSE was reluctant to give permission for modern trains to use short platforms “if you had a train which was longer than the platform and that was the timetable you had many years ago, then you are allowed to continue with that one. If you are trying to resolve a problem and you produce a plan that would allow a longer train and a shorter platform, that is not acceptable.”⁷² We were surprised at these difficulties, since it is possible to lock the doors of individual carriages, and to tell passengers for particular destinations to use the appropriate carriages.

57. In fact, it appeared that the HSE’s entirely proper concerns to ensure that trains longer than the platform at which they have halted were operated safely was being used as an excuse for inaction. The HSE made it clear that their position was more complex; they did not absolutely prohibit the operation of trains longer than platforms; they simply wished to be sure that trains were run safely.⁷³

58. Arriva’s unwillingness to explore ways of running longer formations and eagerness to blame this on the HSE displays shocking indifference to customers’ experience. Mr Keith Ludeman of The Go Ahead Group made it clear his company was experimenting with GPS-based systems which would automatically lock doors which were not opposite a platform.⁷⁴ **Franchise holders should not use the Health and Safety Executive’s requirements that trains be operated safely as an excuse for not making service improvements.**

59. The most reliable way to increase capacity, particularly in the South East, is to authorise new rail schemes, such as Thameslink and Crossrail. We welcome the recent signs of progress on Crossrail, and the East London Line. Our witnesses were convinced that these would, if implemented, produce real improvements.⁷⁵ However, it is also clear that new capacity does not offer a quick solution. While new rail infrastructure would reduce overcrowding in the long term, much could be done by running the timetabled services reliably and by lengthening peak hour services where possible.

72 Q152

73 Q 349

74 Q 296

75 OPT 10, OPT 20, Q 97

6 London Underground

60. Everyone who lives in or visits London knows about the crowding on London Underground. The London Transport Users Committee (LTUC) presented us with figures for overcrowding which showed that “at peak times the majority of underground passengers are required to travel standing”.⁷⁶ Long intervals between trains can cause overcrowding even at off peak times. Crowding on the underground is not limited to trains. Some stations regularly have to be closed for short periods to handle peak flows.

61. Given the difficulty of expanding the infrastructure, overcrowding on the Tube can be reduced without increasing traffic congestion either by making services more reliable, or by diverting passengers to bus or rail. It is notable that several witnesses saw Crossrail or Thameslink as potential solutions to overcrowding on the Underground.⁷⁷

62. When we took evidence from London Underground Ltd (LUL), reliability was improving, and management forecast that it would improve still further. Shortly after, the Chancery Lane derailment occurred. The derailment and its aftermath demonstrated the fragility of the Underground system, and the need for those who work in it to be thoroughly trained to deal with problems. We are not convinced that the PPP will provide the improvements forecast. We note the concerns of the Transport Committee of the London Assembly:

- The relationship between LUL management and unions does not appear to be conducive to the highest standards of health and safety. Long-standing union concerns do not appear to be adequately investigated. There should be a review of how health and safety issues are raised and dealt with.
- Maintenance staff and budgets appear to have been reduced in the run up to shadow running and this seems to have contributed to problems with the poor standard of maintenance of safety equipment.
- There needs to be an urgent review of how safety issues are communicated from lessons learned and the relevant procedures and documents are updated.⁷⁸

63. It is clear that London Underground does at least have measures in place to deal with station overcrowding. Every station has an emergency and congestion plan, which sets out the point at which the station is congested, and emergency procedures to be followed. Once a station has become congested there are established crowd control procedures in which all staff are trained.

“A graded response applies. For example, if it is known by the station staff that a train is due on that platform within the next few seconds, the best response is to wait for that

76 OPT11

77 OPT 18, OPT 20, Q 410

78 London Assembly Transport Committee, *An Accident Waiting to Happen? A Transport Committee investigation into the Chancery Lane derailment*, June 2003

train to clear the platform congestion. Otherwise, staff may take an escalator out of use to slow the flow of people to the platform. Alternatively, some of the ticket gates may be reversed to favour exiting flows and slow the flow into the station until the level of crowding can be alleviated by the passage of trains. If necessary, staff will actually close parts of the station, or some or all of the entrances.”⁷⁹

64. However, training may not always work; in the Chancery Lane incident, there was a failure to reverse the down escalator to ease evacuation, and there were claims that staff were slow to prevent access to the station after the derailment. London Underground admitted:

“there have been a few occasions where customers, or other informed observers such as railway inspectors, have fed back to us that crowding has got beyond the point we would normally want it to. ... These incidents are treated seriously with investigation and appropriate action, such as refresher training.”⁸⁰

65. This reported readiness to learn from its mistakes is an example of good practice which should be applied throughout the transport industry. However, such a system will only work if it is properly implemented. The Transport Committee of the London Assembly found that a direction that reports of smell, noise and or smoke under a car should lead to a train being removed from passenger service was not reported to any London Underground staff involved in the day to day operation of the Central Line, even though it was known that bolts on Central Line trains were defective.⁸¹ It may be that the systems for dealing with overcrowding incidents are run more effectively; we can only hope this is the case.

7 Health and Safety

66. Overcrowding has the potential to impact on the health and safety of passengers and workers in at least two ways:

- stress and injury from overcrowding itself;
- the possibility of increased risks in the event of an accident.

67. We were astounded by the lack of emphasis given to the health and safety aspects of overcrowding itself. Such work as had been done concentrated on the possibility that overcrowding could make the consequences of an accident more severe. We were repeatedly told that both underground and overground trains were designed to operate when absolutely full – indeed, at loadings higher than on the most crowded train ever in service. It was also explained that at speeds over 15 mph both seated and standing passengers were thrown about uncontrollably so that while more passengers would be injured in an overcrowded train than

79 OPT 18, para 13

80 OPT 18, para 16

81 London Assembly Transport Committee, para 5.14

in a normally loaded one, the higher number would simply reflect the higher number of passengers.⁸²

68. Some of our witnesses were concerned about possible delays in evacuating overcrowded trains. However, Mr Chris Green of Virgin Trains told us that the new Voyager trains could be unloaded within 70 seconds.⁸³ The HSE told us “The procedures for effectively managing emergency evacuation are also recorded in each Train Operating Company’s safety case, which must be accepted by HSE before companies can operate.”⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the HSE also conceded while it has a role in approving the design of new rolling stock, its “approval process” does not consider subsequent patterns of use and admitted that “Some newer rolling stock has smaller luggage facilities than traditional rolling stock design. This can cause potential safety problems if the pattern of use is not that which was anticipated when the rolling stock was selected.”⁸⁵

69. It is clear that there is at least general concern about the possibility that overcrowding could increase the severity of an accident. In contrast, there is no consensus about the possible health effects of overcrowding itself. Although the rail passenger committees were concerned about the stress effects of routine overcrowding, little official notice appeared to be given to this. Overall, the HSE told us that in its judgment, the scale of risks associated with overcrowding was small and that “in most circumstances they amount to the unpleasant effects of too many people fitting into a confined space, and are a matter of passenger well-being”.⁸⁶

70. The HSE’s attitudes can be contrasted with the Rail Passengers’ Council which noted that research on the Implications of Overcrowding on Railways and the Clapham Junction inquiry had a narrow remit. It considered that many safety considerations had been dismissed or ignored by these studies.⁸⁷ The RMT also saw “overcrowding first and foremost as a health and safety issue”, which could prevent train crews going through trains or getting onto equipment in an emergency.⁸⁸ It also had adverse effects on customers:

“overcrowding is not just a discomfort issue. It has certainly on occasions led to health problems due to consequential high temperatures and lack of adequate ventilation, particularly on long journeys or if the train has been extensively delayed. It can also impede escape in the event of a fire for example. In addition, many trains are not equipped to cope with standing passengers. Many trains have nothing for the passengers

82 OPT 21

83 Qq 188-196

84 OPT 21

85 OPT 21

86 OPT 21

87 OPT 19

88 OPT 13

to hold on to, and it may only be the crush of other people that helps them stay on their feet”.⁸⁹

71. In our view, while the industry and the HSE have concentrated on narrowly defined "safety" implications of overcrowding, they have failed to consider or research its effects on health. **We were told that the Rail Passengers Council was considering how best to proceed with research into the health effects of crowding.**⁹⁰ **We support such a measure and are astonished that the RPC needed to take the initiative in this. We agree that “failing to take the issue seriously until “objective” evidence is presented is tantamount to waiting for a tragedy to occur.”**⁹¹

72. **We appreciate the difficulties involved in managing the health and safety aspects of overcrowding on a turn-up-and-go service. We also stress that the alternatives to public transport are cars, motorcycles and pedal cycles, which pose far higher safety risks. However, this is no excuse for not trying to identify and reduce the ill effects of overcrowding. The need to avoid rare, but possibly serious, accidents must be balanced against the effects of regular overcrowding on the health and safety of large numbers of passengers, and railway staff. This can only be done if there is adequate information about all the risks involved.**

73. We are concerned that the HSE may not be gathering the information it needs to set one risk against another. Although the HSE will sanction the introduction of a service where there are more doors than platform, the HSE witnesses told us that people had fallen from trains in such circumstances. When we asked for more information, the HSE gave us the following figures:

Table 1: Incidents where passengers are injured alighting from a train not at a station*

2000/01	13
2001/02	10
2002/03	6*

** Information is only available up to the end of January 2003.*

Data Source: OPT 21A

but we were surprised that it was unable to say how many of these incidents had been caused by the fact the carriage was not at a platform, rather than that the train itself was not at a station. **Not only is more research on the health effects of overcrowding needed, the Health and Safety Executive also needs to establish the true extent of the risks caused by running trains longer than the platforms. Without such information, it is impossible to judge what safety measures are appropriate.**

⁸⁹ *ibid*, see also Q 107

⁹⁰ OPT 19A

⁹¹ OPT 19

74. Safety should also be a matter when considering platform design. For some of the newer underground lines, a good example would be the Jubilee Line at Westminster Station, the issue of boarding and departing the train has been carefully considered in the design of the platform. Although this is unlikely to be a feasible option for train and many underground stations, those stations that lie deep underground and are heavily congested, particularly in zone 1, may wish to explore all the safety options they have that are deemed successful in other parts of the underground.

75. It was clear that train operators expected train staff to take responsibility for deciding when a train was too full to operate safely, and to decide on the appropriate action. They saw this as the only way to deal with managing capacity on a turn up and go service. Similarly, “Station operators’ safety cases include strategic and day-to-day management procedures for dealing with crowded platforms. These usually involve station managers taking specific action to control access to the platform when necessary to regulate overcrowding.”⁹²

76. The RMT was concerned that these attitudes exposed their members to risk, leading to abuse and assaults on staff by disgruntled customers.⁹³ **Front line staff should not be put in a position where they routinely have to restrict access to trains or stations to prevent overcrowding. Where that happens, measures should be taken as a matter of urgency to prevent it. There are a range of possibilities, including lengthening trains, changing service frequencies and even simply communicating better with the public. Constant gross overcrowding should not be an acceptable fact of travelling life.**

8 Conclusion

77. Some crowding can be inevitable at peak times, but our inquiry has convinced us that the level of overcrowding is so great that many travellers face daily trauma on their journeys. Passengers are unable to board vehicles, or if they can, are forced into intolerable conditions. There should be immediate and urgent plans to improve the situation. Improving the reliability of services, whether bus, underground, tram or rail, is a key part of this, but will not be enough. Moreover, on the rail systems where overcrowding is most acute, bringing the infrastructure up to the necessary standard will need years of work. Transport providers will need to encourage new ideas and latest thinking to bring benefits more quickly. If it costs £1 million to lengthen a station platform, are there cheaper ways of getting people out of carriages safely, or preventing them alighting at the wrong place? Are there cheaper ways of lengthening the platform itself? Can demand for public transport be managed without forcing people back into their cars? The Government, quite rightly, wishes to limit congestion on the road network – it cannot do that if public transport is even more crowded.

92 OPT 21

93 OPT 13

Conclusions and recommendations

1. Overcrowding on public transport is bad, and is likely to get worse. It must be taken far more seriously than at present. Managements which accept overcrowding as inevitable are not only short changing the travelling public; they are failing to run the system properly. Occasional crowding may be a sign of success; the current chronic overcrowding in all the major conurbations which gave evidence is unacceptable, and must be addressed. (Paragraph 2)

Why Overcrowding Matters: Impact on Business

2. Failure to provide an efficient public transport system means that employers are faced with staff who are tired, stressed and uncomfortable on arrival at the workplace. Lateness at work, loss of productivity, sickness absence, missed and rescheduled meetings and lost business due to public transport overcrowding and delays all impose real and significant costs. (Paragraph 7)

Why Overcrowding Matters: Impact on Tourism

3. Seasonal congestion matters. Local economies which depend on tourism will be severely damaged if visitors find the transport so bad that they are discouraged from returning, or from recommending a visit to others. Capacity must be provided to deal with seasonal peaks in demand as well as daily commuting patterns. (Paragraph 10)

Capacity

4. It is right to encourage more flexible work and travel patterns, but these will have only a marginal effect on journey patterns in the short to medium term. Public transport will only be attractive if it meets people's real needs. That means that there must be adequate capacity at peak periods. It is clear that there simply is not the capacity in the current system to cope with peak flows into most, if not all, major urban areas. (Paragraph 16)
5. It would be extremely easy to reverse the increases in public transport use in past years. Above all, the Department for Transport must ensure that the public transport system has the capacity it needs to handle the increases in passengers that its policies promote. (Paragraph 17)

Bus

6. Bus overcrowding could be much reduced by greater use and proper enforcement of bus priority measures. The bus fleet will be gradually replaced; operators should ensure that they introduce designs which are easy to board, and allow free movement around the bus. (Paragraph 23)

Rail: Measuring Overcrowding

7. It is absurd that the normal way of calculating capacity does not take into account the detail of carriage design. It is reasonable to expect some standing in commuter trains, but capacity should not be set by a purely arbitrary measure of the amount of floor space per passenger. It should be set carriage type by carriage type, taking account of the seats provided, and the provision made for passengers to stand in comfort with adequate hand holds. (Paragraph 29)
8. We agree with the Rail Passengers Council that the current monitoring regime is fundamentally flawed. It is absurd to count only yearly: regular monitoring is required. The measure should be of real overcrowding on real routes. The practice of calculating overcrowding in relation to the programmed service rather than the frequently inadequate service actually provided should stop. (Paragraph 32)
9. Overcrowding should be measured on particular routes, not at the level of the franchise as a whole. The current system both significantly understates the true level of crowding, and fails to ensure that management attention is concentrated on the particular routes where problems are worst. (Paragraph 33)
10. A train's capacity is already calculated to include both standing and seated passengers. It is intolerable that the performance regime currently in place does not begin to bite until this capacity is significantly exceeded, not at the level of the individual train, but across a franchise as a whole. (Paragraph 34)
11. There are encouraging signs that the new franchise agreements will contain measures to reduce overcrowding. (Paragraph 38)
12. We expect the new franchises to have real penalties for both cancellations and short formations, and to ensure that those penalties are set appropriately. (Paragraph 38)

Rail: Rolling Stock

13. Overcrowding cannot be tackled unless there is enough rolling stock readily available to replace defective vehicles promptly. (Paragraph 40)

Rail: How trains are purchased

14. It is entirely right that the SRA should take a close interest in the arrangements its franchisees make to lease trains. We believe it should go much further, and ensure that franchisees order train types which can be widely used across the network. (Paragraph 47)
15. In the long term, it is entirely possible that the rolling stock companies will be obliged to accept trains which cannot run because the electricity supply has not been upgraded. At that point, someone will have to pay. The failure to identify the need for improvements involved all parties; private companies failed to specify their needs correctly, or to ensure

that new trains could run on the track available; it would be wholly unacceptable if the taxpayer had to pick up the bill. (Paragraph 49)

16. The SRA has a duty to draw up a Rolling Stock Strategy: it should do so as a matter of urgency. The United Kingdom needs a modern railway fleet, which contains vehicles which can be cascaded when necessary, and is large enough to provide the service required. It is clear that the rail “market” as currently structured cannot provide it without intervention. The SRA must intervene to ensure the necessary stock is provided where it is needed. (Paragraph 52)

Network Capacity

17. Franchise holders should not use the Health and Safety Executive’s requirements that trains be operated safely as an excuse for not making service improvements. (Paragraph 58)

Health and Safety

18. We were told that the Rail Passengers Council was considering how best to proceed with research into the health effects of crowding. We support such a measure and are astonished that the RPC needed to take the initiative in this. We agree that “failing to take the issue seriously until “objective” evidence is presented is tantamount to waiting for a tragedy to occur.” (Paragraph 71)
19. We appreciate the difficulties involved in managing the health and safety aspects of overcrowding on a turn-up-and-go service. We also stress that the alternatives to public transport are cars, motorcycles and pedal cycles, which pose far higher safety risks. However, this is no excuse for not trying to identify and reduce the ill effects of overcrowding. The need to avoid rare, but possibly serious, accidents must be balanced against the effects of regular overcrowding on the health and safety of large numbers of passengers, and railway staff. This can only be done if there is adequate information about all the risks involved. (Paragraph 72)
20. Not only is more research on the health effects of overcrowding needed, the Health and Safety Executive also needs to establish the true extent of the risks caused by running trains longer than the platforms. Without such information, it is impossible to judge what safety measures are appropriate. (Paragraph 73)
21. Front line staff should not be put in a position where they routinely have to restrict access to trains or stations to prevent overcrowding. Where that happens, measures should be taken as a matter of urgency to prevent it. There are a range of possibilities, including lengthening trains, changing service frequencies and even simply communicating better with the public. Constant gross overcrowding should not be an acceptable fact of travelling life. (Paragraph 76)

Formal Minutes

The following Declarations of Interest were made:

Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody, Member of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

Mr Brian H Donohoe, Clive Efford, Mrs Louise Ellman and Mr George Stevenson, Members of the Transport and General Workers' Union

Mr Ian Lucas and Mr Graham Stringer, Members of Amicus-MSF.

Wednesday 17 September 2003

Members present:

Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody, in the Chair

Mr Brian H Donohoe

Mr John Randall

Mr Clive Efford

Mr George Stevenson

Mrs Louise Ellman

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report (*Overcrowding on Public Transport*), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 77 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report, as amended, be the Seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.—(*The Chairman.*)

Ordered, That the provisions of Standing Order No. 134 (Select Committee (reports)) be applied to the Report.

Ordered, That the Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence be taken before the Committee be reported to the House.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 15 October at half past Two o'clock.

Witnesses

Wednesday 8 January 2003

Rob Donald, Managing Director, Centro, Passenger Transport Executive Group, **David Hoggarth**, Assistant Director, Development, West Yorkshire Branch, Passenger Transport Executive Group

Anthony Smith, National Director, **Brendan O’Friel**, Chairman, North West England Branch, Rail Passengers Council

Suzanne May, Chair, **John Cartledge**, Deputy Director, London Transport Users Committee

Wednesday 22 January 2003

Chris Green, Chief Executive, Virgin Cross Country, **Euan Cameron**, Managing Director, Arriva Trains

Keith Ludeman, Chief Executive, Go Ahead Group, Go Ahead: Thameslink and South Central Trains

Dr Bob Smallwood, HM Railway Inspectorate, **Anne Sharp**, Director of Railway Policy, Health and Safety Executive

Paul Godier, Managing Director, **Adam Goulcher**, Director of Marketing and Planning, **Mike Strzelecki**, Director of Safety, Quality and Environment, London Underground Ltd

Wednesday 26 February 2003

Haydn Abbott, Managing Director, Angel Trains, **Peter Aldridge**, Managing Director, HSBC Rail, **Paul Francis**, Managing Director, Porterbrook Leasing Company

Richard Bowker, Chairman, Strategic Rail Authority

List of written evidence

- 1 Dr Roger Sexton
- 2 Paul Denyer
- 3 Joint Committee for Strategic Planning and Transportation, Four Unitary Local Authorities in the Former Avon Area
- 4 Dr John Disney
- 5 First
- 6 Peter Thomson
- 7 David Starkie
- 8 South East Lincolnshire Travellers Association
- 9 Go-Ahead
- 9A Supplementary memorandum by Go-Ahead
- 10 Wandsworth Council
- 11 London Transport Users Committee (LTUC)
- 12 Railway Development Society (North East Branch) Railfuture
- 13 RMT
- 14 Passenger Transport Executive Group
- 15 GNER
- 16 Department for Transport
- 17 Strategic Rail Authority
- 17A Supplementary memorandum by the SRA
- 17B Supplementary memorandum by the Chairman of the SRA
- 18 London Underground
- 18A Supplementary memorandum by London Underground
- 19 Rail Passengers Council
- 19A Supplementary memorandum by the Rail Passengers Council
- 20 Corporation of London
- 21 HSE
- 21A Supplementary memorandum by the HSE
- 22 Envolve
- 23 Capital Transport Campaign
- 24 East Lindsey District Council
- 25 Transport for London
- 26 Peter Bassett Esq
- 27 Virgin Trains
- 28 Angel Trains
- 29 Supplementary memorandum by Arriva
- 30 Supplementary memorandum by Porterbrook

Reports from the Transport Committee since 2001

Session 2002–03

First Special Report	Government and Office of Fair Trading Responses to the Seventeenth Report of the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee, The Bus Industry	HC 97
First Report	Urban Charging Schemes	HC 390-I
Second Report	Transport Committee: Annual Report 2002	HC 410
Third Report	Jam Tomorrow?: The Multi Modal Study Investment Plans	HC 38-I
Fourth Report	Railways in the North of England	HC 782-I
Fifth Report	Local Roads and Pathways	HC 407-I
Sixth Report	Aviation	HC 454-I

Session 2001–02

First Special Report	Government Response to the First Special Report of the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee of Session 2001–02, The Attendance of a Minister from HM Treasury before the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee	HC 1241
Second Special Report	Government Response to the Fifth Report of the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee of Session 2001-02, European Transport White Paper	HC 1285
Third Special Report	Government Response to the Eighteenth Report of the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee of Session 2001-02, National Air Traffic Services' Finances	HC 1305