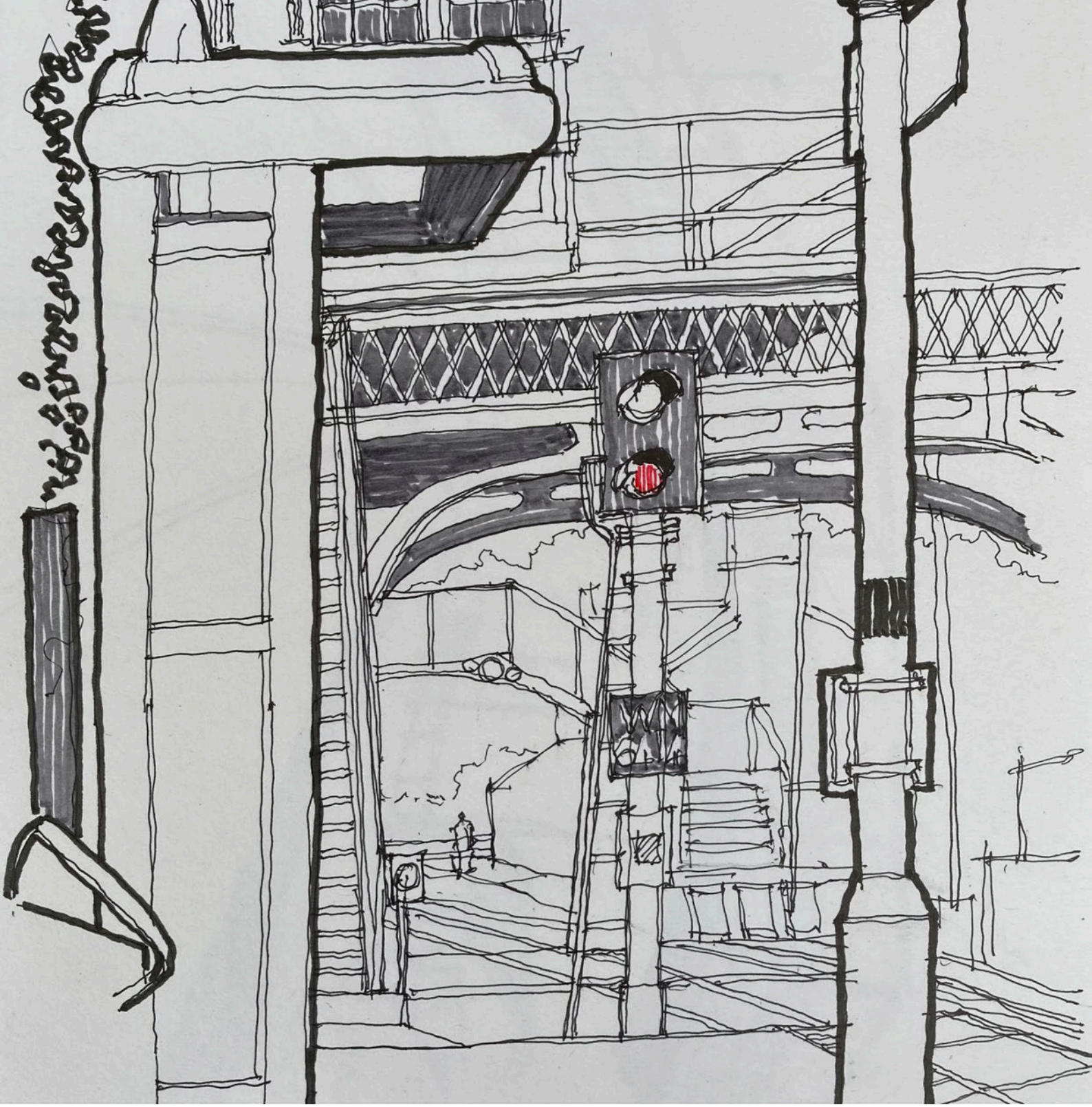


The Stations of the Tyne Valley Line

TYNE VALLEY COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

A review of the buildings, facilities and environment at the stations on the Tyne Valley Line, carried out on behalf of the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership (TVCRP)

October 2022

Contents

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Actions from the 2021 Station Review
3.0 Findings from the 2022 Station Review
- 3.1 Health and Safety Issues
- 3.2 Accessibility Issues
- 3.3 General Issues
- 3.4 Replacement bus services information
- 3.5 Availability of electric vehicle charging points
- 3.6 Highway signage
- 3.7 State of decoration

4.0 Access Surveys
5.0 Future Considerations

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to the members of the Station Working Group and to the Directors of TVCRP for their comments and advice throughout the study.

Cover illustration by Allan White
Graphics by Ian McNeil

Revision Notes

First Draft	8th September 2022
Presented to the Board	20th September 2022
Presented to the AGM	18th October 2022

1.0 Introduction

The Station Reviews were carried out in accordance with the Action Plans agreed with the Station Working Group (SWG). See Appendix 1 for details.

The SWG comprises of Malcolm Chainey, Colin Moore, Allan White, David Williams and Patrick Rice from the TVCRP Board, Marie Addison and Sarah Kennedy of Northern Trains and Fiona Forsythe, Officer of TVCRP.

In June 2022, copies of the 2021 reviews for individual stations were sent to the station adopters, asking for their comments and advice on any changes which had occurred. It also allowed them to prepare for the forthcoming 2022 Reviews.

In early July the adopters were again contacted to advise them of the timing of the station visits and inviting them to take part in the process. Of the 14 stations, 9 station adopters were able to attend and contribute directly to the review process. Others e-mailed their comments and thoughts - this feedback from the community is included in Appendix 2.

The station visits took place on a weekly basis between Monday 25th July and Monday 22nd August with the review sheets being updated after the visits and issued to the SWG for comments and feedback. The review sheets for 2022 are to be found in Appendix 3 to this report.

2.0 Actions from the 2021 Station Review

It has been gratifying to note that quite a few of the issues raised in the 2021 Review have been addressed over the last year. They include the following items:

1. The trees between the platforms and adjacent housing at Dunston have been trimmed back which improves the visibility of the platforms and may provide a degree of passive supervision of the station.
2. Redundant cycle lockers have been removed generally.
3. New seats have been provided at several stations including Riding Mill, Stocksfield and Haltwhistle.
4. The car parking at Haydon Bridge has been re-lined.
5. New planters have been provided at several stations.
6. The shelter on platform 1 at Bardon Mill has seen improvements by the addition of windows, removal of the area of ponding, new road surfacing and fencing on the approach to the station and the replacement of the lifting floor surface on platform 2.
7. Stonework to the station entrance at Hexham has been repaired.
8. New fencing to the entrance to platform 2 at Brampton.
9. Fencing has been repainted at Wetheral and Wylam etc.

3.0 Findings from the 2022 Station Review

There are many issues to be addressed which are listed in the Station Review sheets to be found in Appendix 3, but we have highlighted some of the key issues below:

3.1 Health and Safety Issues

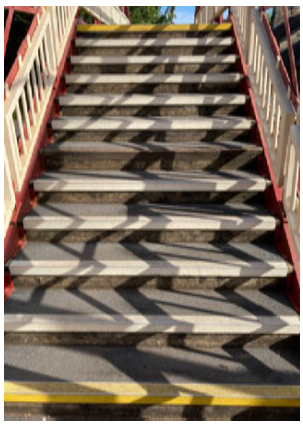
It should be noted that urgent repairs etc can be reported directly to Northern Trains via the following e-mail planning1.northern@uk.issworld.com

Potential trip hazards on Platform 1 at the Metrocentre and on the footbridge at Blaydon were reported on 27th July2022. It is disappointing to note that the Blaydon fault was reported in the 2021 review and no action has been taken.

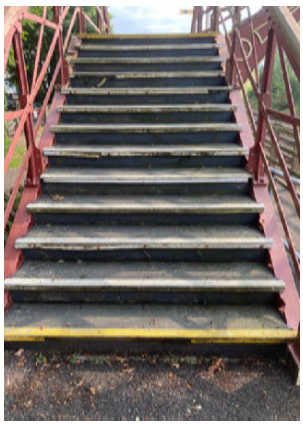
A missing anti-slip stair nosing on the footbridge at Wetheral was reported following the visit on the 8th August 2021 - ref 92099.

Broken timber stair nosings on the footbridge at Brampton were reported following the visit on the 15th August 2021 - ref 92521.

There is a lip between the tactile paving and the edge units on platform 1 at Wylam which may be considered to be a trip hazard and should be inspected as soon as possible.



Wetheral



Brampton

Metrocentre

Wylam

Blaydon

3.2 Accessibility Issues

In terms of the use of the stations by blind or partially sighted people, there are several areas which need to be addressed:-

There are no tactile pavings on platform 1 at Bardon Mill and on both platforms at Brampton. It is disappointing to note that these were included in the 2021 Station Reviews.

The white lines to the platform edges have faded badly over time and could be usefully repainted at all stations.

The yellow lines on the inner edges of tactile pavings, which are there to warn the partially sighted that they ar approaching the platform edge are only in place at the mainline stations and at Wetheral.

With regard to accessibility for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled, ramps the platform 1 shelters at Wetheral and Brampton should be installed.

Lack of tactile paving

Yellow line

White line

3.3 General Issues

It is good to report that there is very little evidence of vandalism to the stations with virtually no graffiti. The damage to the ceiling of the platform 1 shelter at Wylam was the only notable item.

It was stated over a year ago that all of the grit bins at the stations were to be removed as grit was no longer to be used to prevent slips on the platforms in freezing conditions. Most of these bins, many in very poor condition, are still in location on the platforms. Timely removal of these redundant bins would improve the general appearance of the stations and provide more space on the platforms.

Many of the footbridges along the line are showing signs of corrosion to the steel structures. Corbridge appears to be in the worst condition but it is followed closely by the bridges at Wylam, Brampton, Hexham and Blaydon. The ramp access structure at Dunston is equally in need of treatment.

Signage in and around stations could be vastly improved, particularly with regard to signage to local points of interest and tourist destinations. A case in point is Bardon Mill, which is the station closest to Hadrian's Wall and the various attractions which form part of the World Heritage Site - and there is no adequate signage for the visitor.

Wylam

Bardon Mill

Corbridge

3.4 Replacement bus services Information

There is virtually no information at the stations to tell the passenger whose train has been canceled where they can catch the replacement bus service. The location of these temporary bus stops must be known by the bus operators as they will dictate just how close a bus can get to the station. If this information could be collected, a simple sign at the station entrances could show the locations either by a map or a simple description.

3.5 Availability of electric vehicle charging points

There are 6 EV charging points in the appropriately named Green Car Park at the Metrocentre. Work has just started to provide more charging points but this will take 4 to 5 months to complete.

There is a single EV charging point for cars in the station car park at Haltwhistle but it does have 3 connectors for different types of vehicles.
A charging station for electric cycles is soon to be installed in the car park.

An EV charging point similar to that at Haltwhistle is installed in the public car park by the War Memorial in Wylam. This is on the other side of the river, but is relatively close to the station.

3.6 Highway Signage

Signage from the main highways to the stations is generally poor, particularly from the A69.
Blaydon station is signed from the A695.
Wylam station is signed from the B6317 in Crawcrook.
Prudhoe station is signposted as a transport interchange from the A695.
Riding Mill station is signposted form the A695.
Corbridge station is signposted from the A695.
Brampton station is signed from the A689 Alston road.

TVCRP should liase with Northumberland and Cumbria County Councils and the Highway Authority to try and improve the situation.

Haltwhistle

3.7 State of Decoration

The general decoration of the station and station buildings along the line is generally good. However, there are some issues which should be addressed:-

1. As mentioned in section 3.5 of this report, the steelwork to the footbridges is severely corroding. There should be a rolling programme of regular maintenance to these structures including the paintwork. It should be noted that the footbridge at Haltwhistle which has recently been re-painted is already showing signs of deterioration. Patches of paint are loosing their gloss and starting to exhibit a chalky appearance. The varnish on the hardwood handrail is also starting to flake off. This is also prevalent along the line e.g.Stocksfield.

2. There is severe corrosion an the steel structure to the access ramp at Dunston which should be cleaned and repainted along with the nearby road bridge structure.

3. The paint/stain to the timber fences is in reasonable condition, but again, a rolling programme of painting should be instigated. The support steelwork to the fences at the Metrocentre is corroding badly and is distorted in places. This should be cleaned down and repainted.

4. Handrails and guarding should be subject to a rolling programme of repainting. Particularly bad is the corroded state of handrails etc on the ramp from the car park and bus stop at Prudhoe up to platform 2.

5. The metalwork and timber at Hexham is looking very down at heel and should be repainted as befits this flagship station.

6. The rooflights at Hexham and Corbridge are in desperate need of cleaning. It would dramatically improve the appearance and ambience of both stations by raising the levels of natural lighting on the platforms.

Haltwhistle

Stocksfield

Prudhoe

Metrocentre

Hexham

4.0 Access Surveys

The Access Audit for Wetheral can be seen in Appendix 4 and that for Stocksfield in Appendix 5 to this report.

Looking at the 4 Access Routes at Wetheral, we can see that the typical distance from the furthest end of the route to the station is about 0.8km. At Stocksfield, the distances are much larger being, 1.1km for route 1, 2.5km for route 2 and 2.75km for route 3. This quite clearly demonstrates that Stocksfield station is remote from the main body of the village while Wetheral is closer to the heart. The travel distances involved for either a wheelchair user or a person with other disabilities are prohibitive in both cases without the use of a vehicle.

The position is reinforced by the topography of both villages where most routes involve negotiating steep slopes and some, flights of steps.

The more rural aspects of both villages mean that historically, the roads and streets are not very wide, may not have any footpath or a footpath on one side only or intermittent footpaths which swap sides of the road. Drop kerbs are by no means universal, which restricts the step-free nature of the routes. Some parts of the routes are unmade surfaces which produce slip and trip hazards, and some are unlit which restricts their use by pedestrians at night.

While it is beyond the remit of TVCRP to carry out improvement works - this is clearly the responsibility on the Local and County Authorities, Parish Councils and private landowners - having done these audits puts us in a good position to push for improvements (including the provision of good signage to direct people towards the most accessible routes) with these bodies when the opportunities arise.

Wetheral

Stocksfield

5.0 Future Considerations

TVCRP should consider the value of the access audits carried out this year and agree the extent to which the process should be rolled out across the other stations along the line.

TVCRP should consider the regularity of carrying out the station reviews I.e. should it be on a 1 or 2 yearly basis?

TYNE VALLEY
COMMUNITY
RAIL PARTNERSHIP