



Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership

Cotswold Calm Corner -
Feasibility Study

Design that connects us



Introduction

Project Overview

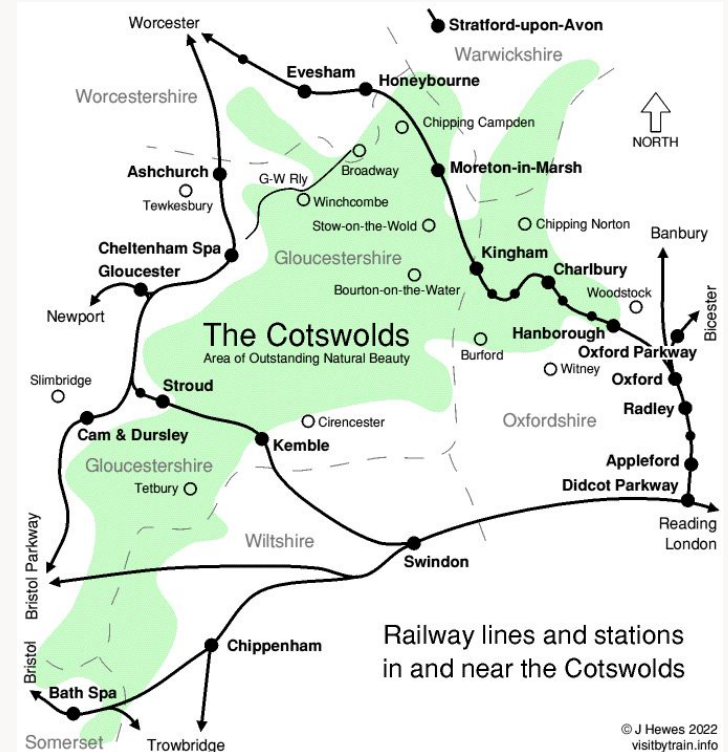
Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership (GCRP) takes a strategic and proactive role in improving access to public transport through projects that empower and engage the communities served by Gloucestershire's 9 railway stations.

GCRP aims to better connect local communities with the rail network, ensuring it is an integrated, sustainable and accessible experience for all.

GCRP's vision is for 'a society where transport is inclusive, sustainable and better connects people'. Their mission is 'to make it easier for people to use sustainable transport'.

Understanding that an experience that is both safe and enjoyable requires more than just a focus on station and train environments themselves, GCRP takes a holistic approach to improving wider health and wellbeing within and through sustainable transport.

For this Cotswold National Landscape funded project, Mima has been asked to provide access consultancy services to Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership, and conduct a feasibility study of where a 'Cotswold Calm Corner' may be installed. This would be an accessible environment for disabled people, decompression space for neurodivergent users and multi-faith area for those wishing to pray or reflect.



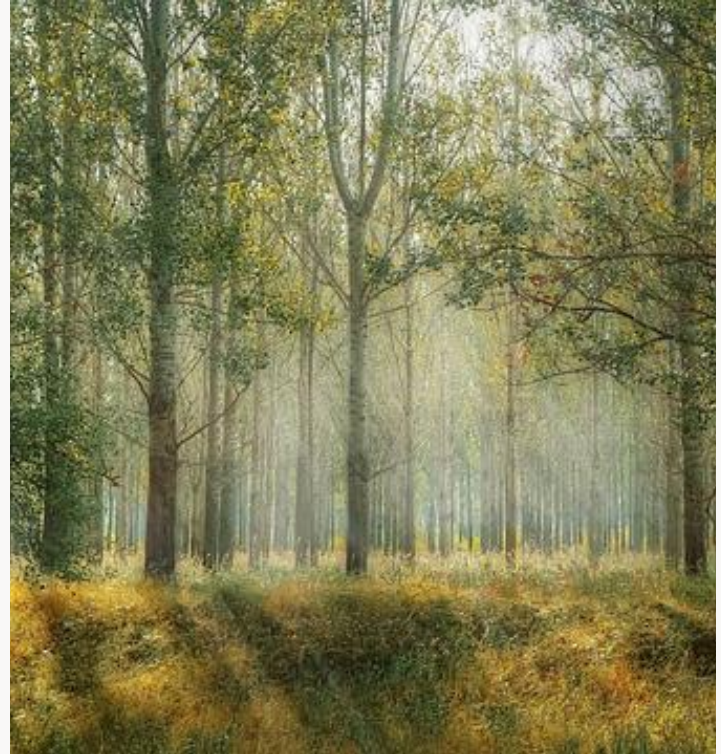
Project Overview

Access to nature can provide an abundance of physical and mental health benefits. 70% of UK adults surveyed by the [Mental Health Foundation](#) (2021) agreed that being close to nature improves their mood. Within the same study, however, women (26%), disabled people (28%) and those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds (23%) reported that they had been hindered from accessing nature due to not feeling physically safe from harm and/or discrimination.

Public transport has not historically supported access to the outdoors; due to the 'transport accessibility gap', disabled people take 38% fewer trips than their non-disabled counterparts, a statistic that has not improved in the last 15 years ([Motability, 2022](#)).

It is therefore vital that, in addition to supporting decarbonisation and car-free agendas of Cotswolds National Landscape and other stakeholders, the 'Cotswold Calm Corner' supports access to the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and provides safe and inclusive health and wellbeing benefits to users who may not otherwise feel comfortable in this particular environment.

A 'Cotswold Calm Corner' would make it easier for people to confidently plan their journey with the reassurance of knowing this space exists. In turn the facility has the potential to empower those with protected characteristics to make more visits to the Cotswold AONB via rail, improving mental wellbeing and access to nature for all.



Project Overview

To conduct the feasibility study, Mima visited five train stations within or with close links to the Cotswolds area to conduct a SWOT analysis for Cotswold Calm Corner placement. The rationale for these stations, chosen by GCRP staff, included their GWR accessibility rating, passenger numbers and interchange offerings. Whilst not all stations are situated within the AONB, the direct access and interconnectivity they are able to provide to passengers accessing the area were also a significant factor in decision making:

- Gloucester Station (1,213,642 passengers in April 2021 - March 2022 with 34,343 interchanges)
- Cheltenham Spa Station (1,793,710 passengers in April 2021 - March 2022 with 169,069 interchanges)
- Moreton-in-Marsh Station (200,094 passengers in April 2021 - March 2022)
- Oxford Station (5,013,078 passengers in April 2021 - March 2022 with 389,346 interchanges)
- Charlbury Station (199,856 passengers in April 2021 - March 2022)

All numbers above have been provided by [the ORR](#).

We also engaged with lived experience stakeholders at a Cotswold Calm Corner feasibility workshop on Tuesday 21st March, and utilised this, our site visit findings and relevant accessibility standards and documentation to create technical design requirements for the Cotswold Calm Corner itself.

This report includes:

- The results of our site visit and SWOT analysis;
- Feedback from our lived experience and stakeholder communications;
- Physical (built environment), social (operational and experiential) and digital (pre, during and post-use information) recommendations for the space that has a pan-disability focus but also considers those with other protected characteristics;
- Information relating to the business case for accessibility features and facilities within transport;
- Information related to budget and funding opportunities;
- Our conclusion and recommendations regarding prioritised stations for Cotswold Calm Corner installation.

The Business Case for Accessibility

The Business Case

Good access and inclusion does not just enable those with certain requirements to enter and navigate the built environment. As first impressions of businesses are increasingly made online, digital accessibility of websites and social media channels is just as valuable. Whether over the phone, email or in-person, 'social access' - a positive perception of disability and other protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010) - is also essential. For an end-to-end experience to be inclusive, physical, social and digital access must be well considered and connected for passengers in the area in which the community rail partnership operates, whether they have physical, sensory or cognitive impairments and access requirements, are older, identify with differing genders and/or sexual orientations, races, cultures and faiths, or are from other under-represented backgrounds.

Ethically and morally, providing an accessible and inclusive experience is the right thing to do for any business. But it can also be a financially savvy move, support legal compliance and encourage positivity, ensuring organisations reach and engage with a diverse, interesting audience.

Travel, transport and tourism often does not provide an easy ride for disabled people, heightening the need for GCRP's accessibility focus even further. For example, [figures published by the UK government](#) in 2022 showed that only 20% of train stations in the UK have step-free access between the street and the platform, only 2% have level access with the train, meaning a ramp is required, and only 35% have accessible toilets. Similarly, according to a 2022 [MMGY Global report on the travel industry](#), 96% of all respondents have faced a problem with accessible accommodations while travelling; 86% have faced difficulties with air travel, and 79% have also experienced transportation problems while in their destination. Furthermore, according to VisitEngland, 430,000 British people with an impairment did not take a trip in 2018 due to an accessibility concern. This results in an opportunity worth £116.7 million for accessible transport and tourism businesses in the UK.

The Business Case

Furthermore, a lack of access to national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty is a socio-economic issue that is not supported by the current absence of public transport options. A 2019 study by the [Campaign to Protect Rural England](#) (CPRE) found that 36% of England's population lives too far from national parks for them to be classed as 'easily' accessible destinations, and that 93% of visitors to national parks go by private car - an option often not readily available to those living in areas with higher rates of poverty.

The need for those from under-represented groups to feel able to, and safe to, access nature is also a strong factor in the business case for this project as a whole, with current studies and statistics showing that this is not always the case. [Natural England](#) estimates that people from BAME backgrounds account for 1% of visitors to national parks despite making-up about 14% of the population. Furthermore, a [University of Surrey study](#) found that safety and racial discrimination concerns is the fundamental constraint on BAME travel choices.

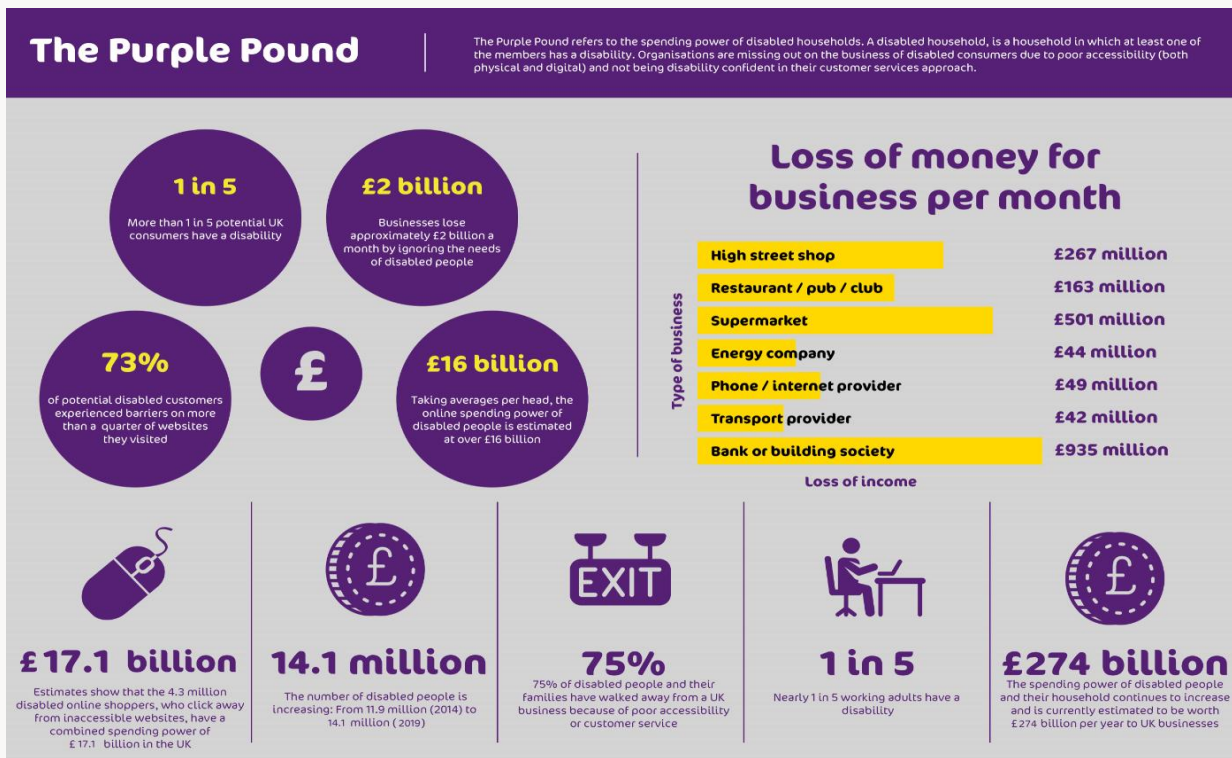
The Purple Pound

There is a common misconception that disabled people are not valuable customers as they do not have money to spend. Not only is this false, but it often prevents businesses within the transport industry from reaching their full potential by engaging with - and catering for - loyal disabled passengers and staff members.

[The Purple Pound](#) represents the spending power of disabled people. The total expenditure generated by people with an impairment – travelling independently or within a group - is estimated to be £15.3 billion (VisitEngland, 2019).

The Purple Pound, as a whole, is worth £274 billion every single year to UK businesses alone.

This furthers the case for accessibility features and facilities within and outside of UK train stations, as transport providers that are not currently accessible are estimated to be missing out on approximately £42 million every month.



Site Visit and SWOT Analysis

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis

To kick off the Cotswold Calm Corner feasibility study on Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th February 2023, Emily Yates, Head of Accessibility and Inclusive Design at Mima, visited five stations chosen by GCRP staff as having potential in terms of Cotswold Calm Corner installation.

- Emily was joined by Alayne McDonald and Faatimah Bham from GCRP.
- Sarah Bennett - GWR Customer Ambassador - joined the group on 6th February.
- Amanda Davies - Board of Directors at Cotswold National Landscapes - joined the group on 7th February.

The following section gives a detailed overview of each station and documents the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of each station relating to general accessibility, station use, available retail estate and privacy and safety elements, all of which contribute to the feasibility of installing a Cotswold Calm Corner within these stations that provides access to the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Whilst it is important that the Cotswold Calm Corner is utilised to its greatest potential, the amount of passenger assist requests received from Train Operating Companies at the stations - which are regularly mobility related - do not necessarily correlate with the level of need for the Cotswold Calm Corner, particularly for those who may be neurodivergent or have a non-visible impairment. These figures do not therefore form part of this study.



GWR Network Map

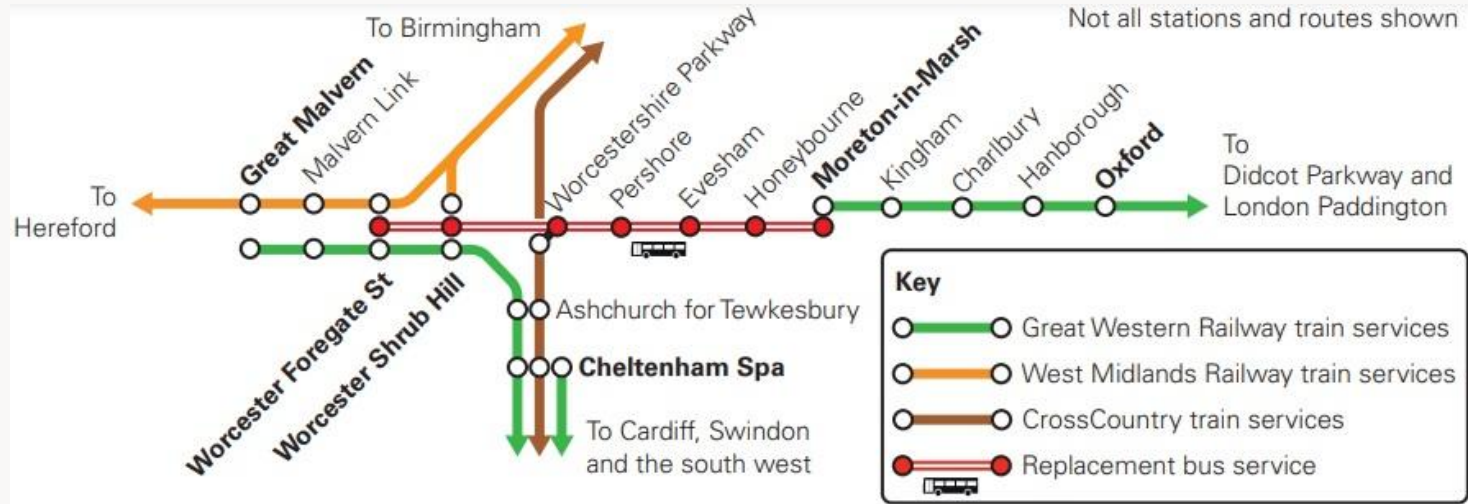
- █ GWR Main line routes
 - █ GWR Branch line routes
 - █ GWR Seasonal routes
 - Step-free access (Category A)
 - Partial step-free access (Category B)
 - No step-free access (Category C)
 - Other operators station
- For details, visit nationalrail.co.uk

Swindon Major or interchange station



mima

North Cotswold Line



Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Gloucester

Overview:

Gloucester Station has good general accessibility and is rated as a step-free category A station by GWR, with accessible parking, step-free access and lifts available between platforms. It was noted by Mima that the station does get busy, but experiences much fewer customer assistance requests than Cheltenham Spa Station. This could be due to the simpler - and more accessible - station set-up at Gloucester, or steep inclines and limited space at Cheltenham Spa Station.

Access to Stroud and Kemble from Gloucester Station leads through the Cotswolds AONB. Gloucester Station also benefits from close connectivity to the Transport Hub, with regular bus services that connect visitors and residents to towns throughout and with close connections to the AONB. In terms of wider connectivity, Gloucester Station provides direct access to Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff and London Paddington.

Strengths:

- Free, all day blue badge parking available with ample spaces
- Open foyer area, with ample seating and ease of sightlines to two coffee shops, the ticket office and gatelines.
- Two accessible toilets (gendered) are available directly after the gateline, facing platform 2.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Gloucester

Weaknesses:

- There is a moderate gradient from parking bays into station
- There is a notable amount of building and development work happening in Gloucester Station. For example, certain potential space for the Cotswold Calm Corner is now being utilised by the British Transport Police.
- During the site visit, the lift leading from platform 2 to platform 4 was out of service, leading to a lack of accessibility across the station.

Opportunities:

- There is a potential opportunity to move the customer assistance office that looks onto platform 2 at Gloucester Station, and repurpose this space for a Cotswold Calm Corner.
- Currently, the seating within the Pumpkin Cafe in the station foyer provides a warm but public opportunity for rest and decompression. Customers do not have to buy coffee to utilise the area. However, the entrance doors into the space are heavy and the seating area shuts when the cafe shuts, therefore providing a limited public space rather than a quiet area.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Gloucester

Threats:

- Whilst other potential areas are available - such as the cleaners' room on platform 2 and storage/chemical areas that face onto platform 3 - there are issues with a lack of size and step-free access (cleaners' room), and a potential lack of sightlines and safety outside of peak times (storage areas)

Conclusion:

- Following the visit to Gloucester Station, Mima conclude that there is potential to utilise half the internal waiting area on platform 1 as a Cotswold Calm Corner. It was noted by Mima that this large waiting area is rarely fully utilised, and that it already offers step-free access, automatic doorways via push pad, and important sightlines to the platform. However, the area is rarely staffed and operational adjustments - such as hourly checks - would need to be made.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Cheltenham Spa

Overview:

Cheltenham Spa Station is an interchange station, with lots of passenger groups utilising differing rail lines. No lift access is currently available within the station, leading to the station being noted as 'really bad for accessibility' due to the presence of two steep gradient ramps between platforms. In terms of GWR rating, it is a B category station, providing partial step-free access. The station is currently very difficult to navigate for passengers and staff members with mobility impairments, in particular. Staff injuries relating to manual assistance provision are common, particularly when considering assistance provided to ascend and descend ramps.

Although Cheltenham Spa Station is not situated within Cotswolds AONB, it does benefit from close connections to the Cotswold landscape and is a popular destination for those visiting the area. Passengers can also benefit from direct access to places such as Edinburgh, Plymouth, Nottingham and London Paddington from Cheltenham Spa Station.

Strengths:

- Ample, (and free) accessible parking is provided outside of the station entrance - with a step-free and low gradient access route from the bays into the station itself.
- Automatic doors and step-free access lead into the ticket office, with ample seating and good sightlines.
- A good amount of seating is provided throughout the station.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Cheltenham Spa

Weaknesses:

- The two current waiting areas in the station are continuously busy, providing step-free access but very limited space for passengers with mobility equipment, luggage and similar within their existing structures.
- There is no lift access currently available within the station, with only steep - and legally non-compliant - ramps providing step-free access between station platforms. Additionally, several staff injuries have been noted through manual assistance provision.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Cheltenham Spa

Opportunities:

- In terms of station use and busyness, as well as the number of passenger assistance requests received, Cheltenham Spa Station could really benefit from Cotswold Calm Corner installation. This need is heightened on Cheltenham Race days, where increased footfall could negatively impact on passengers with protected characteristics ([134,600 people](#) were estimated to have used the station for the 2023 Cheltenham Festival). However, there is no obvious space for such a facility that would promote ease of access for all.

Threats:

- In addition to the steep ramps which do not promote independent use and movement, there is only one accessible toilet (with a non-automatic door and RADAR key use required) at Cheltenham Spa Station, which is on bridge level between the two platforms. The navigation of the ramps between any installed Cotswold Calm Corner and the toilet would therefore be required.

Conclusion:

- Following the visit to Cheltenham Spa Station, Mima conclude that - due to the current accessibility situation station-wide - there is no one area that could be confidently prioritised as a potential Cotswold Calm Corner.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Moreton-in-Marsh

Overview:

Much redevelopment is happening within the area of Moreton in Marsh station, with a [new transport hub](#) proposing further car parking spaces, cycle storage and a local bus service. Mima acknowledges this as a positive potential opportunity for Cotswold Calm Corner installation.

Moreton in Marsh is classed as a 'gateway' station to the north Cotswolds and offers direct access to places such as Charlbury, Kingham and Combe in the Cotswolds AONB. Wider connectivity includes direct access to Oxford and London Paddington, and visitors from the West Midlands are likely to pass through the station. It is rated by GWR as providing category B 'partial step-free access' to users.

In terms of location, the Station was noted as being slightly 'out of the way' for many passengers.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Moreton-in-Marsh

Strengths:

- Three accessible bays are available in the station car park, and parking is free. Parking leads straight onto platform 1.
- Directly next to, and in the same building as, the ticket office is commercial space that is currently available. As far as was visible on site visit, this space would provide step-free access.
- On the station information board, an accessible toilet was noted as being available, although we were unable to find the accessible toilet when on site and this was not signed on platform level.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Moreton-in-Marsh

Weaknesses:

- The station car park is currently of a linear structure which causes congestion, and is in the process of being redeveloped.
- Hourly trains may result in non-optimum amount of use for the Cotswold Calm Corner.
- The station was not staffed at the time of visiting (and stakeholder information suggests that the ticket office may no longer be available in future, with passengers having to buy tickets online or at automated machines). This is likely to result in heightened issues relating to safety and privacy.
- No lift access is available at Moreton in Marsh station. It is a category B1 station with steep gradient ramps access only. The installation of a Cotswold Calm Corner at this station would not be highly recommended due to accessibility issues potentially halting equitable experiences for some users.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Moreton-in-Marsh

Opportunities:

- The station waiting room, on platform 2, has many positive features such as darkened glass (promoting privacy from public view whilst maintaining safety), platform sightlines and step-free access via power assisted doorways. However, it regularly gets busy and could not be minimised to support the installation of a Cotswold Calm Corner.

Threats:

- The lack of staffing at Moreton in Marsh station could become a potential access hazard or safety issue for Cotswold Calm Corner users.
- In addition to a lack of staff availability for assistance provision, the lack of lift availability at the station could heighten potential access hazards for Cotswold Calm Corner users.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Moreton-in-Marsh

Conclusion:

- Following the visit to Moreton in Marsh Station, Mima conclude that - due to the current accessibility situation station-wide - this station should not be prioritised for Cotswold Calm Corner installation but, with the caveat of increased staff availability and the installation of lifts, the vacant commercial space next to the ticket office may become suitable.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Oxford

Overview:

Oxford is a busy interchange station and therefore provides increased potential for Cotswold Calm Corner usage. Charlbury, Kingham and Moreton-in-Marsh in the Cotswolds AONB can all be directly accessed, and wider connectivity provides direct access to numerous London Stations, Manchester and the West Midlands. The station is undergoing lots of redevelopment currently, with works on Platform 4 having already started. Oxford station is rated as a step-free category A station by GWR.

Strengths:

- There is passenger lift availability between platforms 3 and 4
- Oxford station houses a 'central 'hub' with ticket offices (including counter 1 which provides lowered access and a knee recess), an accessible toilet, ample seating, a help desk (which is not lowered for seated users or those of shorter stature), coffee and food shops.
- Some seating around Marks and Spencer is of table format, with removed chairs to promote accessibility and equitable seating with companions for wheelchair users.
- Ample accessible parking spaces are available in both long and short stay areas, and are free to use.
- There is good staff and British Transport Police presence, with staff members sharing with Mima that they have received training surrounding mental health issues and have grown in confidence in this area.
- The station is open and staffed 24/7, aside from 2am-7am on Sundays, when the station is closed and locked.
- An accessible toilet also available on platform 4

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Oxford

Weaknesses:

- There is a lack of signage to the accessible toilets in both the 'central hub' and on platform 4.

Opportunities:

- The ticket office facility may reduce in the future, leading to an opportunity for Cotswold Calm Corner installation within the 'central hub' space.
- Whilst there is no particular area available for Cotswold Calm Corner installation on platform 3, platform 4 is to be redeveloped with a new entrance and parking. There may therefore be an opportunity for Cotswold Calm Corner installation here. The waiting room space - with accessible toilet facilities currently available - is being redeveloped on platform 4.
- With parking also being available by the platform 4 entrance, this will increase accessibility at the station should the lifts between platforms 3 and 4 be out of service.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Oxford

Threats:

- There is a lack of available space for Cotswold Calm Corner installation on platform 2, and the station building on platform 1 is currently designed as mess rooms for staff and retail space, reducing likelihood for public access availability in the future.

Conclusion:

- Following the visit to Oxford Station, Mima conclude that - on platform 4, in particular, there is great opportunity for an accessible Cotswold Calm Corner installation to form part of 'Phase 2 Improvement' works at the station.

Site Visit and SWOT Analysis - Charlbury

Overview:

- Situated directly within the Cotswolds AONB, Charlbury Station provides direct access to the Cotswolds National Landscape. Wider connectivity includes access to Oxford, London Paddington and West Midlands stations.
- Due to passenger assistance failing during the site visit, Mima did not officially visit Charlbury station. Furthermore, at the time of the site visit, there was a leak in the station building, resulting in its closure.
- As the station is unstaffed, this causes concern in terms of Cotswold Calm Corner installation potential. The space must be designed for independent, safe and autonomous use.
- Mima were also informed that Charlbury station faces similar challenges to Moreton in Marsh station: access to certain platforms only being available via ramp bridge, a lack of accessible toilet facilities and a lack of staffing. The station is also 'out of the way' from Charlbury village.
- In conclusion, Mima would therefore not recommend Charlbury station as a potential site for Cotswold Calm Corner installation.

Lived Experience Engagement

Lived Experience Workshop and Technical Design Requirements

Many of us do not have personal or professional experience or understanding of disability and other protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010). It is therefore of vital importance to engage with, and listen to, those who do.

Working with nine participants with lived experience of disability and faith, in particular, Mima has provided the following workshop notes and created the following technical design requirements for the Cotswold Calm Corner. Please note, these requirements are in draft form until agreed by the client, and Mima would like to give the lived experience participants an opportunity for final review and acceptance.

The (anonymised) lived experience participants we engaged were:

- Participant 1, who has cerebral palsy and is a mobility scooter user.
- Participant 2, who is of shorter stature.
- Participant 3, who is visually impaired, has lived experience of mental health issues and relies on public transport.
- Participant 4, who is autistic, experiences chronic fatigue and is of Pagan faith.
- Participant 5, who is a powerchair user and has lived experience of mental health issues.
- Participant 6, who is autistic and has ADHD. Participant 6 also has neurodivergent children.
- Participant 7, who has schizoaffective disorder and is muslim.
- Participant 8, who is autistic and has ADHD.
- Participant 9, who is muslim and a faith leader.

Workshop Participant Thoughts

- “Gloucester and Oxford Stations could work well, due to multi-faith communities there. Both areas also have diverse and changing populations”
- “Travelling on rugby days is horrendous in Gloucester, so the station would really benefit from a Cotswold Calm Corner!”
- “I’ve never been to Charlbury, or Moreton in Marsh so can’t comment on those stations”
- “Drunk people will have to be kept out of the space!”
- “Cheltenham is very cramped as a station. A Cotswold Calm Corner would be amazing there - and much needed, but I don’t know where it would go”
- “The Cotswold Calm Corner should feel welcoming and not like an accessibility aid”
- “It shouldn’t look or feel clinical, but cleanliness of space is important”

Workshop Participant Thoughts

- “Natural materials and visuals are great!”
- “I prefer round shaped furniture, with comfortable material. Egg chairs that cocoon me are amazing”
- “‘Dead’ sound with no echo or unnecessary noise is preferred, but if there is noise, a nature soundtrack or lo fi beats would be brilliant”
- “The space should be enclosed and ‘cosy’ so I can hide away, but also safe”
- “I’m happy with different colours, but I don’t like lots of pattern or ‘visual information’”
- “There should be no human or animal representation on the walls if this is to be used as an area for prayer”
- “All information necessary for the journey in that one space would be particularly useful as I’m constantly checking departure screens!”

Workshop Participant Thoughts

- “I would hugely appreciate warmer lighting that isn’t too bright”
- “Having the area staffed to assist with any questions or uncertainty would be amazing”
- “Food smells and chewing sounds can be distressing - can the quiet area be food-free?”
- “The smell of cleaning products can make me sick - the Cotswold Calm Corner should smell neutral”
- “If I need to block out sound completely, will ear defenders be available?”
- “Is ‘Cotswold Calm Corner’ the right name for this facility - will it literally be in a corner? I wouldn’t immediately know I was able to pray there”.
- “How will men and women be separated to pray?”
- “As a multi-faith area, this would need a cleansing facility close by, as well as a shoe rack and storage any religious documentation or artefacts”.

Workshop Conclusion

Workshop discussions related to effective Cotswold Calm Corner placement to ensure accessibility, ease of use and safety and security for all. The need for user autonomy and flexibility was one of the main outcomes of the workshop; regardless of impairment or access requirement and whether utilising the space to decompress, relax or pray, the Cotswold Calm Corner should be designed with differing user need and flexibility of use in mind.

Following the workshop, the following technical design requirements have been created. It is also strongly recommended that guidance in the new [PAS 6463: Design for the Mind](#) (2022) is considered by Cotswold Calm Corner designers and contractors, alongside the [Network Rail Inclusive Design Manual](#) (2021) and GWR's Faith and Wellbeing Rooms Specification (2021). National and international quiet space and assistance lounge benchmarking examples are also provided later in this document.

Technical Design Requirements

Cotswold Calm Corner Recommendations

Pre-tooling and Familiarisation

- To allow Cotswold Calm Corner users to pre-tool themselves prior to a visit, Cotswold Calm Corner information (relating to opening times, expectations of use, and features and facilities) should be provided online. This information should be in easy to read, clear and concise format with accompanying photos and a virtual tour of the space. Any videos should be captioned, and audio description should also be provided. Where possible and practicable, BSL information should also be available within the Cotswold Calm Corner.
- The name of the space should help to define its purpose and promote ease of use by those it is intended for. 'Cotswold Calm Corner' does not immediately invite multi-faith users, for example.

Entrance and Access

- The Cotswold Calm Corner entrance and doorway threshold should ideally provide 1000mm clear width (with an absolute minimum of 850mm clear width) and allow safe, step-free access for the benefit of wheelchair users and those with mobility impairments, as well as passengers and staff carrying luggage or equipment.
- Where possible, the Cotswold Calm Corner entrance door should be automatic via sensor, removing the need for manual activation. If this is not possible, a large push pad should be positioned between 700-1000mm from floor level and operable with a fist at a force of no more than 15N. The door should stay open long enough for a wheelchair user or those with mobility equipment to pass through.

Cotswold Calm Corner Recommendations

- If Cotswold Calm Corner doors are glazed, manifestation marks should be provided at two heights of 850-1000mm from floor level and 1400-1600mm from floor level.
- The minimum size of the Cotswold Calm Corner should allow for two 1500x1500mm turning circles that are clear of obstruction throughout the space. Where possible and practicable, the access route into and throughout the space should be 1800mm, allowing for two wheelchair users to pass one another.
- Any entrance signage to the Cotswold Calm Corner should be tactile as well as visual. Tactile signage should be centred at 1400mm height, and signage text should contrast with its background by a minimum of 70 points in LRV.

Location

- The Cotswold Calm Corner should be located in a way that promotes sightlines to nearby platform(s) and the rest of the station. This requirement is included with a caveat, however, that several seats within the Cotswold Calm Corner should face away from these sightlines, to promote flexible use.
- Internally, space within the Cotswold Calm Corner should be provided for both sensory seeking users, and sensory avoidant users. This may include portable partitions between areas, if necessary and easy for all users to adjust. A partitioned area should also be provided for those wanting to pray in private.
- An ablution facility and accessible toilet should be provided next to the Cotswold Calm Corner, to promote ease of facility use for all.

Cotswold Calm Corner Recommendations

Seating

- All isolated seats should be 450-480mm in height, with higher and lower seating available within seating clusters to benefit children, those of shorter stature and older users. Where clusters of seats are provided, a range of seating types, heights and features should be available.
- Backrests should be provided on all seats, wherever possible, and should be at least 300mm in height.
- Armrests should be provided on 50% of all Cotswold Calm Corner seating at 200mm from the seat surface.
- A transfer space of 1200mm for wheelchair users should also be provided to provide left and right transfer opportunities by at least two pieces of furniture. Space underneath seating should also be considered for assistance dogs to safely rest.
- Some people when distressed find it calming to be seated closer to the floor, therefore cushions, pillows or beanbags should be used to facilitate this in a comfortable way. Egg chairs and similar should be considered as they 'cocoon' users and provide elements of safety and privacy. A sofa, or floor cushions and pillows should also allow the option to lie down if required. Footstools should also be considered.
- Seating should be easy to clean without looking clinical.
- Height adjustable tables should be provided to benefit a variety of seating.

Cotswold Calm Corner Recommendations

Materiality and Finishes

- Materiality and finishes within the Cotswold Calm Corner should be chosen carefully to ensure an equitable, enjoyable experience for all. For example, patterned, striped flooring could be mistaken for steps, and shiny/reflective floors and walls could mislead and cause confusion. Both should be avoided.
- Advertising should be avoided within the Cotswold Calm Corner and any visual cues should promote natural colours and forms. Calming colours, such as sage green and pale blue, are often preferred.
- Biophilic design should be considered as part of the Cotswolds Calm Corner (whilst ensuring scents are not distressing and no physical obstructions are caused). Natural imagery should be utilised to promote a calming effect, and could include that of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- As the space is also to be utilised as a multi-faith area, there should be no human or animal representation on the walls, and at least one wall within the Cotswold Calm Corner should be blank.
- All floors should provide a slip-resistant surface.

Cotswold Calm Corner Recommendations

Lighting and LRV

- General lighting within the Cotswold Calm Corner should be designed to achieve an illuminance at floor level of at least 100 lux. It should be even, diffused and without reflection, glare or shadows. It should be possible for individuals to adjust the brightness and tone of lighting without disturbing others. Blinds to control daylight and views to the outside should also be provided, and natural light should be promoted, wherever possible.
- Light Reflectance Values, or LRVs, are vital for visitors with additional requirements to be able to visually identify a difference between one surface or element of an environment and another.
 - The LRV of a wall should be 30 points different from that of an adjoining door, the ceiling and of the floor. Skirtings should have the same LRV as the wall, except where coved skirtings are used. In the case of coved skirtings, they should have the same LRV as the floor and extend not more than 100mm above finished floor level.
 - Cotswold Calm Corner furniture and features should also differentiate from their wall and floor surroundings by 30 points in LRV, where possible and practicable.

Cotswold Calm Corner Recommendations

Acoustics

- The Cotswold Calm Corner should be designed with acoustic care. Noise-cancelling devices should be available for visitors wishing to block out sound. Providing individual pods with differing soundscape choices would be ideal, and natural soundscapes are often preferred. Train announcements should be kept to a minimum within the space, with a visual board (with large, contrasting text) and staff availability providing information to blind and partially sighted users.
- An induction loop should be available with the Cotswold Calm Corner, and appropriately signed with the official induction loop symbol. The loop should be tested every month at minimum by a trained professional.

Equipment

- Pillows, blankets and comfortable items to aid decompression should be available.
- Items to assist with sensory stimulation such as books, fidget toys or sensory activity blocks should also be available, along with the appropriate storage.
- Water should be provided for Cotswold Calm Corner users and assistance dogs in an appropriate location, and inclusively signed.
- Charging points and WiFi should be provided in the Cotswold Calm Corner. This is particularly important as many neurodivergent people depend on their phones for directions, distractions and decompression.
- Storage should be provided for prayer mats, religious documentation and sensory equipment. It is vital that prayer mats are kept clean.
- A shoe rack should be available for those wishing to pray.

Cotswold Calm Corner Recommendations

Operations

- The Cotswold Calm Corner should be situated in a place where monitoring and support is readily available, both via CCTV and by staff members. Monitoring should also be utilised to see whether more spaces are required to meet demand.
- If the area is not continuously staffed, a call facility should be available, ideally with captions on-screen and/or video capabilities for D/deaf users.
- All staff working at the Cotswold Calm Corner should be trained in disability awareness, including neurodiversity.

Miscellaneous

- It is recommended that the Cotswold Calm Corner is maintained as a food-free facility.
- Further consultation is recommended on the presence of assistance dogs within a multi-faith area, and whether space separation with dual entrances would be a preferred solution.

PAS 6463:2022 - A Quiet Room Checklist

Table B.1 – Checklist of considerations for quiet and restorative spaces

Design feature	Implementing variety, flexibility and control in quiet/restorative spaces
Sound	Provide optional sounds on an individual basis Provide earplugs or noise cancelling devices Provide individual pods/capsules where people are able to select their desired soundscape
Lighting	Provide shades to control daylight and outside views Provide a variety of artificial lights for personal control (without the disturbance of others) Provide artificial lighting controls, including dimmers and colour tuning
Space layout	Provide individual pods/capsules for increased optional privacy
Colour	Create visual separation if introducing colours or textures that may be too bright, too distracting or too rough for the most sensitive
Furniture	Provide a variety of furniture options, including furniture with movement for self-regulation Provide furniture which is easy to move Provide access to items such as books and office supplies
Decoration	If providing decoration other than plants, make sure it is not visible from some areas of the quiet space
Thermal comfort	Provide cool and warm objects to touch (check they do not influence the room temperature) Provide means of warming such as blankets
Olfactory	Provide optional objects with natural fragrance (make sure it does not emit scent)
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National and International Benchmarking

Inclusive Seating: Presley's Place – Pittsburgh Airport



- Although Presley's Place is an award-winning sensory room with specialist equipment unsuited to the Cotswolds Calm Corner, a variety of well-considered seating is available, including ample space for wheelchair users to sit with their companions.
- Custom curved, cushioned benches are available with space underneath for luggage storage and assistance dogs to safely lie down.
- More private 'hooded' seating is available for those who may require this due to overstimulation, or similar.
- Charging outlets are also readily available for those who rely on their devices for safety and distraction, where needed.
- LED lighting is softened by the use of 'cloud' light covers, that help to bring the outside-in and connect the space to the wider travel experience.

Choice and Autonomy: Watford Football Club



- Watford FC provide an assistance lounge area for families who may otherwise not attend a game due to their access requirements not being catered for.
- Spatially, this is an aspirational example as it allows users to experience social inclusion and inclusive engagement with the match simply via a large window that combats overstimulation and fear that may arise from the rowdy environment expected within a football stadium. Equally, a separated sensory/quiet area is available at the opposite end of the lounge if user needs fluctuate and this is required.
- Quiet areas do not need to be tucked away from an environment in order to be effective; they should provide user autonomy and choice within their design.

Premium Feel: Gatwick Airport Assistance Lounge



- Gatwick's Assistance Lounge has been designed with a premium feel. It is strategically located next to the North Terminal's dedicated assistance security lane and just metres away from the departures concourse.
- There is inclusive seating for 90 guests with ample additional provision for wheelchair using passengers. Seats are of varying heights, designs and colours, and offer differences in armrest support etc. Some seats are fixed and some portable, allowing users to utilise the space as they please.
- There is a dedicated reception area as well as the option to explore the departures concourse, allowing guests to take a portable buzzer with them that will alert once gate assistance is ready. With this design, the airport is also showing an awareness of the Purple Pound – the spending power of disabled people and their households.
- The close proximity of the lounge to the staff reception area enables the area to be well-managed, whilst providing effective, personalised support ad hoc to those who require it.

Bringing the Outside In: Schiphol Airport Park



- Biophilic Design focuses on the health and wellbeing of its users.
- Whilst not particularly accessible (involving steps and 'log benches' and deck chairs without back or arm support), Schiphol Airport's 'Park' lounge provides guests with an experience beyond a medical/clinical waiting room. There are real trees and pre-recorded birdsong.
- Passengers are able to explore and feel 'at one' with nature. Curved, soft seating is also available with armrests.

Funding Opportunities

Funding Opportunities

Should funding for the Cotswold Calm Corner be required:

- The [National Lottery Community Fund](#) provides over £600 million to communities across the UK, and has previously funded sensory space and landscape projects.
- The [Gloucestershire Disability Fund](#) provides small grants to individuals and not-for-profit organisations.
- [Gloucestershire County Council](#) grants funding within the voluntary and community sector.
- The [Aviva Community Fund](#) offers up to £50,000 for community projects, and currently has a focus on connectivity to nature.
- [Motability](#) are offering community transport grants from £100,000 to £4 million to help promote accessibility for disabled people in this area.



Conclusion

Overview

Following on from Mima's background research, site visit, and lived experience workshop involving participants with varying protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010), we are confident that an inclusively designed and appropriately managed Cotswold Calm Corner would support increased accessibility to the Cotswold AONB by rail users, particularly those who are D/deaf, disabled, neurodivergent or benefit from the utilisation of multi-faith or quiet spaces.

The installation of a Cotswold Calm Corner would facilitate increased predictability around station and train use for some passengers, and provide moments of calm and decompression during an end-to-end train journey; what can otherwise be stressful and overwhelming for many.



Prioritised Stations

To conclude, Mima would strongly recommend that the two stations that are prioritised for Cotswold Calm Corner installation are:

1. **Oxford Station**
2. and **Gloucester Station**
3. with **Moreton in Marsh Station** recommended as a third, but less accessible option due to current lack of passenger lift and staffing elements.

Oxford and Gloucester train stations provide ample use opportunity due to their busyness, interchange nature and multi-cultural settings. Both have available retail estate, are well-staffed should assistance be required, and provide higher elements of safety due to higher footfall and staff engagement. Importantly, both stations also provide accessible toilets and passenger lifts between platforms.

Oxford Station in particular is well-placed to provide direct access into the Cotswolds AONB and National Landscape, therefore promoting accessible potential health and wellbeing improvements to those wishing to enter into nature. Manchester, Wales, London and the West Midlands are also areas that can be directly accessed from one, if not both, of these stations.





Mima

Second Home Spitalfields
68-80 Hanbury Street
London E1 5JL

+44 (0) 20 7593 2900
hello@mimagroup.com

www.mimagroup.com

GCRP

info@gcrp.org.uk