

STANDARD SLEEPER FOR REGIONAL RAILWAYS

A study has been carried out to identify a standard design of sleeper for use by Regional Railways (RR) in the future. Results from the recent studies/tests on steel and concrete twin-block sleepers have been taken into consideration.

Hardwood sleepers would meet all of RRs operational requirements but they are the most expensive option in the long term. Steel sleepers are not suitable for RR because of the difficulties of patching them into timber sleepers tracks. Shallow depth concrete twin block sleepers are potentially suitable but there could be problems if they are installed adjacent to bolted rail joints. Softwood sleepers are a cost-effective option for patching in bull head rail tracks.

A reduced weight shallow depth concrete mono-block sleeper has been identified as the most promising option but again it is unlikely to be suitable for installation adjacent to bolted rail joints, where timber sleepers should be used. Further testing of the proposed design is recommended. The suitability of a plastic material should also be assessed.