

STRATHCLYDE PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORT

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

ABOUT STRATHCLYDE PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORT

SPT is the Regional Transport Partnership for the west of Scotland, established by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. SPT is a partnership of 12 councils and has a range of planning, operational and project delivery responsibilities. For planning, SPT prepares the statutory Regional Transport Strategy, which guides transport development and investment in our area. Operationally, SPT runs the Subway and various bus stations across the region, including Scotland's biggest, Buchanan Bus Station. SPT also manages and provides support for socially necessary and demand responsive bus services. Regarding project delivery, SPT's key current initiatives are: Subway Modernisation, a circa £290m programme of improvements across the Subway network, Fastlink, a high quality bus system between the centre of Glasgow and the New South Glasgow Hospitals campus; and the Bramble Smartcard, already delivered on the Subway, and we are looking to roll this out across other modes over coming years. Each of these will have significant interface with both Queen Street and Central Stations and will bring significant benefits for access to, through and from the stations and wider transport network.

More information on SPT is available at www.spt.co.uk

BACKGROUND

Access to the public transport network is critical to ensuring people can go about their daily lives. Safe and convenient access is particularly important for people who face mobility challenges and it is important we consider this when significant changes are being made to the stations as is the case with impending Queen Street Station redevelopment but also given the pressures which the increasing demand for rail travel brings. In turn, this demand drives increasing pressure on access to the stations for those arriving by car (including for those people with blue badge eligibility), bus, taxi, cycle and on foot.

In addition, while Central and Queen Street railway stations are critical transport hubs in their own right, providing access to the UK and Scottish intercity services but also important local rail services across the west of Scotland, there is also considerable interchange between the two and this also needs to be borne in mind when considering future access to these stations. The importance of effective interchange arrangements is therefore all the more important as is the need to ensure that pedestrians, cyclists and traffic, including public transport, can find their way easily between the stations and through Glasgow city centre. Consideration also needs to be given to the proposed changes arising from Glasgow City Council's City Centre Strategy

SPT is working closely with Network Rail, Transport Scotland, Abellio and Glasgow City Council to help ensure improved access to, from and through the redeveloped Queen Street station and continuing and improved access at Central station.

In particular, the modernisation of Queen Street Station will have significant impacts for access to the station and its important link to the Subway at Buchanan Street. SPT has strenuously argued for maximised interchange between Queen Street and the Subway to effect as seamless a transition for passengers as possible. We have also argued strongly for improved access to the refurbished station for those arriving on foot, by cycle, bus, car and taxi.

This has not been helped by the fact that, in addition to Queen Street Station being refurbished there is the separate but related expansion of the Buchanan Galleries Shopping Centre. This has made the process of responding to the respective planning processes highly complex. .

QUEEN STREET STATION

Glasgow Queen Street is Scotland's third busiest station with 15.76m passengers using the station per year (Office of Rail Regulation 2013/14). The station currently comprises 7 terminating platforms at the high level and 2 through platforms at the low level, serving locations as diverse as Mallaig and Inverness in the north and Dalmuir and Maryhill in the Glasgow conurbation. Glasgow Queen Street is also the terminal point for Scotland's busiest rail route between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Glasgow Queen Street Station will undergo substantial redevelopment over the coming years with significant improvements to the concourse and platform areas being taken forward through EGIP and the redevelopment of the North Hanover Street Car Park being taken forward as part of the redevelopment of the Buchanan Galleries Shopping Centre.

SPT has been actively engaged with the range of stakeholders in relation to both aspects of the redevelopment of Queen Street Station and was instrumental in the creation of the Queen Street Area Passenger Forum. This forum was established to manage the impact on public/business through the delivery phase of the schemes in and around the Queen Street area. While this Forum has provided an opportunity to address issues related to Queen Street Station, there remains a disconnect between the different aspects of the redevelopment of Queen Street (station redevelopment and Shopping Centre expansion) which are being promoted and developed separately but have significant overlaps. This approach has created a challenging environment in which to work with stakeholders, including the public, to promote access to the station by a variety of different transport modes both during the redevelopment and in the final scheme proposals.

The tight constraints of the site and surrounding streets limits the opportunities for the provision of temporary access arrangements for blue badge parking, the inter station bus service and taxi ranking. However, temporary arrangements have now been identified and while these are not necessarily ideal, they do represent a significant improvement on the original proposals.

In terms of the final proposals for the redevelopment of the station and the North Hanover Street Car Park, dialogue is continuing to create as favourable an environment as possible for passenger access within the concourse level of the

North Hanover Street development. Indeed, SPT took the unprecedented step of corresponding with the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) directly in relation to the disposal of the North Hanover Street Car Park by Network Rail to ensure that this area was accessible passengers, in terms of blue badge parking, passenger drop-off and taxi rank provision.

A key concern for the Forum remains maintaining access to the station during the redevelopment and minimising the disruption to passengers during this period.

Access by other public transport modes

The central location of the station provides generally good interchange opportunities between transport modes. It is bounded on 3 sides by busy bus routes and is in close proximity to Buchanan Street Subway Station, as well as within walking distance, or a 5 minute bus journey by the interstation bus service of Central station and Buchanan Bus Station. While interchange opportunities will improve as a consequence of the redevelopment, the quality of interchange remains a concern particularly in terms of interchange with bus services. .

That being said, we remain of the view there is further scope to improve integration between transport modes and we are continuing to work with key stakeholders on this.

Passenger pick-up and drop-off

The proposals currently identify 2 passenger drop-off bays. However, no facilities are identified for passenger pick-up. It is acknowledged that there will be the opportunity for the Buchanan Galleries Car Park to be used to facilitate passenger pick-up, with access being provided via the new Cathedral Street Entrance to the station.

Cycle Parking

We remain concerned over the level and location of cycle parking and facilities for passengers who wish to cycle to /from the station.

Information provision and Signage

Directional signage and provision for onward travel information within the station would improve passenger interchange.

CENTRAL STATION

Glasgow Central is Scotland's busiest rail station with 27.1m passengers using the station per year (Office of Rail Regulation 2013/14). The station comprises 15 terminating platforms at the high level and 2 through platforms at low level, serving locations as diverse as Penzance and London in the south to local services to/from Cathcart and East Kilbride in the immediate Glasgow conurbation – the access needs are therefore many and complex.

In 2010, additional platform construction necessitated the closure of the internal road network within the station as well as the short-stay car park which was effectively replaced by the 2 new platforms. The internal road network was primarily used for taxi drop-off, drop-off and short stay car parking primarily for pick-up, it also

facilitated disabled access. In order to address the issue of disabled parking and access the adjacent NCP Car Park on Oswald Street – adjacent to the station with an access to/from the new Platform 15 can be utilised for disabled parking for the station with step-free access to all platforms from the car park via lifts where appropriate. Similarly drop-off areas for disabled passengers are available at Gordon Street and on Union Street with pick-up and internal station transport within the station being available from a pick-up area at Gordon Street and a waiting area in the centre of the station concourse.

The station has accesses/egresses to/from Gordon Street (step-free), Union Street (steps), Hope Street (step-free) and at Argyle Street (step-free with stairs/lift to Low Level and stairs/lift/escalator to High Level).

Within the station the natural flow of passengers is step-free with the concourse relatively obstacle free – seating and a waiting area for passengers with a disability are located in the centre of the concourse in front of the destination screen and there are commercial outlets to the side of the main area.

Busy events (football matches, Commonwealth Games, concerts etc.) necessitate a barrier system being erected to enable queuing for specific station locations and there is an established system in place to deal with these instances.

Ticket office facilities are barriered for queuing purposes at the High and Low Levels with a dedicated facility for longer distance travel within the Travel Centre area off Gordon Street. There are also several automatic ticket machines available.

Specifically regarding access/egress to/from the station from adjacent streets, Glasgow Central is bounded by two of the busiest roads in Glasgow City Centre (Hope Street and Union Street) immediately adjacent to the east and west of the station building as well as busy streets immediately to the north and south (Gordon Street and Argyle Street). This, combined with the large flow of passengers, can lead to considerable congestion at key locations adjacent to the station. In particular, at signalised junctions at Union St/Renfield St/Gordon Street, Gordon St/Hope Street, Union Street/Argyle Street/Jamaica Street and Argyle St/Hope St./Oswald Street. Similarly crossing signals on Hope Street and at the bus-gate junction of Waterloo St/Hope Street are pinch points for passengers.

Pedestrian phases for the “green man” at these junctions in the vicinity of the station is necessarily limited given the flow of traffic (not least of which are major buses arteries) on these roads. This can lead to pedestrian congestion. Adjacent pavements can become busy and can be obstructed by forms of “street furniture”

GENERAL POINTS ON THE ACCESSIBILITY OF MAJOR RAILWAY STATIONS

Regular station users will have established access patterns for their usual journey. The less frequent traveller will require to be guided through the station. As such the use of signage, information screens and the availability of staff is of importance. Of perhaps greater importance in Glasgow City Centre is the linkage between Glasgow Central and Glasgow Queen Street stations which again presents little difficulty for everyday or local users but presents a considerable dislocation for other passengers.

A dedicated bus service is provided but given that the distance is relatively short there is an opportunity for a signed route to be established between the 2 stations along Gordon Street (partially pedestrianised) and up Buchanan Street (again pedestrianised for the majority of the route). We would also suggest that better signage be available for linkages to/from the Subway at St. Enoch and at Buchanan Street stations).

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
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