

*Councillor Lesley Hinds
Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee*

Jim Eadie
Convener
Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Date 15 January 2015

Your ref

Our ref

Dear Jim

**ACCESS ISSUES AT WAVERLEY STATION/SCOTTISH STATIONS FUND
APPLICATION**

Thank you for attending the meeting on 16 December in the City Art Centre, which discussed access to stations in Edinburgh. I agreed to write, on behalf of the meeting, to set out the issues raised; and to ask for the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee's support in these matters. I have enclosed a copy of the note of the meeting, for the Committee's ease of reference.

The redevelopment of Waverley and Haymarket stations is welcome. Nevertheless it has left a number of challenges in relation to access. Recent and future growth in patronage of both stations makes this a serious issue.

At Waverley, the station has been closed to general traffic. I have not seen a satisfactory explanation why pedestrian and cycle access to both Waverley Bridge ramps is



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restricted, given the substantially reduced traffic levels. In essence, most of the space on both ramps is allocated to the handful of delivery vehicles which are still allowed in and out of the station.

As taxis may no longer drive in or out of the station, station access by taxi has relocated onto the surrounding road network, which already has to accommodate many conflicting demands. We believe that the Calton Road entrance could be made much more attractive, and that internal and external signage could be improved.

At Haymarket, redevelopment was carried out within the station boundaries, under permitted development rights. Whilst welcome, this meant that the Council could not use its planning powers to ensure that measures to mitigate external impacts were carried out.

In summary, at both stations the rail industry has carried out redevelopment in a way that has placed additional stress on the public road network. The Council would be happy to work with the industry to address these impacts. But the industry has avoided any financial commitment to doing so.

In the absence of funding from the rail industry (which in other developments is available via the Section 75 mechanism), the Council submitted a bid from the Scottish Stations Fund, announced by the Scottish Government in 2012 for 'improved access and better facilities for some existing stations...improving the station facilities and accessibility...where appropriate taking advantage of existing or planned works...'

In practice applications for funding must be submitted to Network Rail, although it is ultimately Scottish Government money. On applying, it became clear that conditions applying to any Network Rail spending also apply to any SSF awards. In particular, we understand that funding cannot be awarded unless it is for the primary benefit of station users.

I appreciate the importance of ensuring that Network Rail funding cannot be diverted to non-rail related activities. However, our surveys indicate that most of those people using the public locations that would benefit from the Council's SSF proposals are also users of Waverley or Haymarket stations.

In November 2014 the Council was informed that the decision-making body for the SSF, which is known as the Route Investment Review Group, is supportive of a scheme to create a new deck at Haymarket. This would address a very congested route to the station, and mitigate significant safety risks. However, the RIRG would not support any other improvements at Haymarket or Waverley.

Because the SSF does not fund development work, the Council will have to develop further the Haymarket deck without guaranteed funding for implementation, at a possible cost of £200,000.

It also appears further 3rd party funding may have to be contributed to implementation. The City of Edinburgh Council is enhancing Waverley Bridge and Market Street around Waverley station, at a cost of some £1,000,000, to address the 'fall out' from the removal of vehicular access to the station. This significantly improves access, driven by actions of the railway industry. But this funding has been excluded from consideration.

Furthermore, Haymarket deck requires construction over a live railway, to specifications that will meet the railway's standards. This suggests that the rail industry is better placed to develop it further, albeit with support from the Council, rather than the other way round.

I would be happy to send you details of our various proposals if you wish, but at this stage am writing to set out the issues which have arisen. You will appreciate that this Council would be more than happy to work in partnership with the rail industry. However, our experience is that there needs to be a cultural change within parts of the industry if real partnerships are to be formed.

In conclusion, any support which your Committee is able to provide to improve access to Waverley Station and on the other matters raised would be greatly appreciated.

I look forward to receiving the Committee's views and hopefully an update indicating that you are able to assist in these issues.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Lesley Hinds
Convener of Transport and Environment

NOTE OF MEETING TO DISCUSS ACCESS ISSUES AT WAVERLEY STATION

HELD AT 1.00 PM ON TUESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2014

IN THE CITY ART CENTRE, EDINBURGH

Present: Cllr Lesley Hinds (CEC) Chair, Cllr Joanna Mowat (CEC), Cllr Robert Aldridge (CEC), Jim Eadie MSP, Cameron Buchanan MSP (plus Advisors), Ben Miller (representing Alison Johnstone MSP), Carol Gortmans, William Macrae, David Griffiths, Dennis Wilson, Keith Lynch (with support), Ronnie Wilkes, Betty Milton (ETAG), Ross Gilligan (Scottish Association for Mental Health), Mike Harrison (SATA), Kelvin Cochrane, John McBirnie (Network Rail), Tricia Henton, John Ballantyne, Joanne Hutchison and John White.

ITEM	
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Cllr Hinds advised that she had arranged this meeting to discuss access issues at the recently refurbished Waverley Railway Station, arising primarily as a result of the decision to restrict access by private cars and taxis to the Station. A series of meetings had been held with Network Rail and, while she welcomed the refurbishment, it was clear that, based on representations made to her in her capacity as the Convener of the Council's Transport & Environment Committee, that challenges still existed in relation to access for a range of people with accessibility issues including, but not exclusively, disabled people.</p> <p>It was hoped that, arising from this meeting, a number of key issues would be identified which could then be taken forward in future discussions with Network Rail.</p>
2	<p>Presentations</p> <p>Ian Buchanan (CEC) introduced presentations by Chris Day and Chris McGarvey (both CEC) on the Council's bid to the Scottish Stations Fund and the Waverley Bridge/Market Street Footway and Carriageway Improvement Project respectively. (Presentation material attached).</p>
3	<p>Discussion</p> <p>Thereafter questions/comments were taken from the floor on a wide range of issues related in general to Waverley Station and the access issues associated with the new arrangements at the station.</p> <p>These included the question why vehicles were prevented from accessing Waverley on security grounds but delivery vehicles were still accessing the station, the question of cyclist access, safety issues with the access for disabled people at the Calton Road entrance. In addition reference was also made to taxi/taxi rank provision at the station as well as signage in and around the station.</p> <p>Arising from the discussion around these and other points raised it was agreed to take the following Action Points forward with a view to these being raised with Network Rail, in an attempt to reach an agreed solution to the problems identified.</p>

	<p>1. Access to Waverly - As referred to above to request an explanation of the rational adopted in restricting access to the Waverley Bridge ramps and consider if one of the ramps could be opened up to pedestrians/cyclists.</p> <p>2. Taxis - To look at the number of taxis catered for, location of ranks, how the signage can be improved at Calton Road and other locations and whether there was any scope for Taxi Marshalls to be utilised at the station.</p> <p>3. Calton Road Entrance - To propose that a covered seated area be provided for drop off customers, with an accessible call button to summon assistance and also whether there was a possibility of this location being staffed as many disabled people and others felt particularly vulnerable at this entrance. As well as the general signage issue, specific concerns were raised regarding the signage directing the public to this entrance. In addition it was agreed to look at the parking issues at this location and whether more wheelchairs could be provided at this and other access points.</p> <p>4. General Signage Issues – To look at what is in place and how it might be improved both internally and externally. To also consider the production of paper and digital maps to ensure that users/visitors are provided in easily accessible formats with full information on all aspects of access to Waverley.</p> <p>5. Scottish Stations Fund Bid – To discuss with Network Rail/other authorities as appropriate the unsuccessful element of CEC's bid with a view to determining how this might be taken forward</p> <p>6. Additional CEC Actions - It was agreed that CEC would consider further action required in relation to external signage and report back to the Group on this. In addition CEC officers were requested to consider taxi arrangements in relation to Waverley including stances, drop – off arrangements and any other relevant issues.</p>
4	<p>Action/Timetable</p> <p>1. Cllr Hinds to write to the Chief Executive of Network Rail on the issues raised with a view to a meeting being arranged with representatives of CEC and others present at this meeting to take the above points forward.</p> <p>2. Cllr Hinds to write on behalf of this meeting to the Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Infrastructure & Capital Investment Committee in terms of the above and seeking that Committee's support in these matters.</p>