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STPR

Appendix I: Recommendation Appraisal Summary Tables

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1. Detailed Appraisal Summary

An 'Appendix I: Recommendation Appraisal Summary Tables (ASTs) Explanatory Note' accompanies this AST.

1.1. Recommendation 19 – Infrastructure to provide access for all at railway stations

Recommendation Description

This recommendation involves a review of station accessibility across Scotland to identify and remove barriers to travel and improve access for all to Scotland's rail network, prioritising those stations that have particular problems.

It should be noted that while rail accessibility is a matter reserved to the UK government, with the Scottish Government bidding into the Department for Transport's (DfT) 'Access for All' programme for funding for accessibility improvements, Transport Scotland can also implement schemes utilising its own funding to improve and enhance step-free access at stations across the country. Where possible, Transport Scotland will do this by looking to improve accessibility as part of wider rail investments.

The DfT is undertaking a national stations audit as part of the National Disability Strategy. This would provide a record of the level of accessibility of all stations in Scotland, help people with accessibility needs better plan their journeys and help shape future investment in accessible rail travel. When considering the audit data, Transport Scotland would also take account of the current connectivity issues and options available, and in doing so engage with the wider rail industry and stakeholders to identify how best improvements can be made to improve accessibility across the network.

Work would also be progressed on investigating the opportunities for trialling new technological solutions (for example, enhanced audio announcements and help points) to improve the safety and accessibility of people with reduced mobility at stations.

1.2. Relevance

Relevant across Scotland

Inaccessible infrastructure can exclude people from opportunities afforded by access to the rail network. Persons with reduced mobility who may be affected by inaccessible infrastructure can include disabled people, including those with reduced mobility, wheelchair users and those with sensory impairments; elderly people; parents with prams/young children; and pregnant women.

There is a strong national and local policy context for improving access to the rail network to encourage modal shift, increase access to employment and other opportunities and reduce inequalities.

Despite the Equality Act being in place since 2010, a considerable part of Scotland's rail network remains inaccessible for users with reduced mobility. Recently, disability charity Leonard Cheshire reported that Britain's railway network will not be fully accessible until 2070 unless progress increases[i].

1.3. Estimated Cost

£101 million - £500 million Capital

Based on a high level analysis of current levels of station accessibility across Scotland and assumptions around the average cost of accessibility improvements based on previous schemes, including analysis of the median cost per station of Access for All funding trances over recent years[ii], it is estimated that overall costs for the implementation of a fully accessible rail network in Scotland would be substantial and in the order of £100 million-£500 million. There would, however, be significant scope for prioritisation and phasing of work.

1.4. Position in Sustainable Investment Hierarchy

Targeted Infrastructure Improvements

This recommendation would also contribute to eight of the 12 NTS2 outcomes, as follows:

- Provide fair access to services we need;
- Be easy to use for all;
- Help deliver our net zero target;
- Promote greener, cleaner choices;
- Get people and goods to where they need to get to;
- Be reliable, efficient and high quality;
- Use beneficial innovation; and
- Be safe and secure for all.

1.5. Summary Rationale

Summary of Appraisal

	TPO					STAG					SIA				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Low Scenario	+	++	+	+	++	0	+	++	+	++	0	++	0	0	+
High Scenario	+	++	+	+	++	0	+	++	+	++	0	++	0	0	+

This recommendation makes an overall positive contribution to the majority of STPR2 Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) and STAG criteria. It particularly contributes to objectives for inclusion, wellbeing and equality by increasing access to the rail network for a wide range of groups currently excluded due to mobility issues. Its effect with respect to the wider environmental factors has been assessed as neutral, on the basis that environmental impacts would vary dependent on the specific station environment; while improving accessibility could encourage more people to use the rail network delivering positive environmental impacts through modal shift, installing lifts or footbridges with ramps can have adverse environmental impacts on factors such as visual amenity and cultural heritage depending on the station setting.

Infrastructure to provide access for all at railway stations is implementable from a feasibility and public acceptability perspective, however a detailed assessment would require to be undertaken to fully establish the best solution at each station.

This recommendation is expected to have a positive impact on the EqIA and FSDA with

neutral or negligible impacts on the other statutory impact assessments.

Details behind this summary are discussed in Section 3, below.

2. Context

2.1. Problems and Opportunities

This recommendation could help to tackle the following problems and opportunities:

Relevant Problem & Opportunity Themes Identified in National Case for Change
Social Isolation: there is increasing recognition of social isolation and loneliness as major public health issues that can have significant impacts on physical and mental wellbeing. Disabled people in particular can feel trapped due to a lack of accessible transport, particularly on islands and in remote and rural areas.   **Meeting the Needs of an Ageing Population:** older people are healthier, fitter, wealthier and more mobile compared with previous generations: they are likely to want to travel more and the transport system needs to ensure older people, wherever they live, are not socially isolated.   **The Transport Needs of Disabled People:** the proportion of adults with a long-term limiting mental or physical health condition or disability is increasing as the population ages. Key challenges they face on the transport system include being able to access accurate travel information both before and during the journey; the accessibility of public transport interchanges and vehicles; interchange between modes; and concerns regarding safety and comfort on the public transport network.

2.2. Interdependencies

This recommendation has potential overlap with other STPR2 recommendations and would also complement other areas of Scottish Government activity.

Other STPR2 Recommendations
- Improved public transport passenger interchange facilities (21); and   - Framework for the delivery of mobility hubs (22)
Other areas of Scottish Government activity:
- Access for All[iii] (a UK Government scheme, with details also provided by Network Rail[iv]);   - Accessible Travel Framework – Annual Delivery Plan 2021-22[v];   - Climate Change Plan 2018-32 Update[vi];   - City Region Deals[vii];   - Regional Growth Deals[viii];   - Local Rail Development Fund (LRDF)[ix]; and   - Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund[x].

Appendix I: Appraisal Summary Table – Recommendation 19
Infrastructure to provide access for all at railway stations

3. Appraisal

This section provides an assessment of the recommendation against:

- STPR2 Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs);

- STAG criteria;

- Deliverability criteria; and

- Statutory Impact Assessment criteria.

The seven-point assessment scale has been used to indicate the impact of the recommendation when considered under the 'Low' and 'High' Transport Behaviour Scenarios (which are described in Appendix F of the Technical Report).

3.1. Transport Planning Objectives

1. A sustainable strategic transport system that contributes significantly to the Scottish Government's net-zero emissions target	
Low Scenario	**High Scenario**
+	+

Improving accessibility to the rail network could have a beneficial impact in terms of reducing reliance on car and taxi travel and enabling individuals to choose more sustainable modes, although overall environmental impacts associated with a modal shift to rail are likely to be minor.

This recommendation is therefore expected to have a minor positive impact on this objective in both Low and High scenarios.

2. An inclusive strategic transport system that improves the affordability and accessibility of public transport.	
Low Scenario	**High Scenario**
++	++

Provision of step-free access and other improvements at stations would improve the accessibility of Scotland's railways, and the onward opportunities provided to access services and employment for a wide range of users. This includes people with mobility issues including disabled people, parents with young children/prams, and those with luggage. It also benefits people with hidden disabilities and medical conditions, as well as the ageing population.

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No direct impact on affordability is expected, except where improved accessibility reduces the need for car ownership.

Overall, this recommendation is expected to have a moderate positive impact on this objective in both Low and High scenarios.

3. A cohesive strategic transport system that enhances communities as places, supporting health and wellbeing.

Low Scenario	High Scenario
+	+

The development of more accessible stations would support health and wellbeing outcomes through increasing access to travel opportunities and participation in society for people that currently face barriers to using the rail network. The general renewal of station facilities and improved quality of signage, information, lighting and removal of clutter are also linked to improved urban realm and placemaking.

This recommendation is therefore expected to have a minor positive impact on this objective in both Low and High scenarios.

4. An integrated strategic transport system that contributes towards sustainable inclusive growth in Scotland.

Low Scenario	High Scenario
+	+

Improved accessibility for all to the rail network would increase opportunities to connect people to employment and other services. While the overall scale of economic impact is likely to be minor, at an individual level access to the rail network for those currently excluded due to mobility issues has the potential to be transformative in terms of opening access to opportunities, including access to jobs, education and training.

Overall, this recommendation is expected to have a minor positive impact on this objective in both Low and High scenarios.

5. A reliable and resilient strategic transport system that is safe and secure for users.	
Low Scenario	**High Scenario**
++	++

A more accessible rail network would enable users with reduced mobility to have greater confidence in the ability to make round trips on the rail network safe in the knowledge they can better access stations due to step-free facilities. The provision of step-free facilities and higher quality station environs for those with mobility issues (for example, tactile paving, help-points, improved lighting and CCTV coverage) would also improve actual and perceived safety and security amongst all rail users, including those with reduced mobility or with impaired vision or hearing or those with autism.

Improved access at railway stations is unlikely to impact directly on any particular issues relate to service reliability or resilience, albeit – as set out above – improving access for all at stations across the country would increase the reliability of journeys for those with reduced mobility by ensuring that they can make round trips reducing the need for assistance

Overall, this recommendation is expected to have a moderate positive impact on this objective in both Low and High scenarios.

3.2. STAG Criteria

1. Environment	
Low Scenario	**High Scenario**
0	0

See Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) below.

This recommendation is expected to have a neutral effect on this criterion in both the Low and High scenarios.

2. Climate Change	
Low Scenario	**High Scenario**
+	+

Climate change benefits would be provided through a reduction in the number of private cars or trips using ScotRail's alternative transport service (typically taxis) owing to the provision of better accessibility on Scotland's railways. A modal shift to rail would therefore help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While the scale of modal shift is likely to be small, at an individual level this recommendation could enable people to make more sustainable transport choices.

There is not expected to be any impact on vulnerability to effects of climate change or potential to adapt to the effects of climate change.

This recommendation is expected to have a minor positive impact on this criterion in both Low and High scenarios.

3. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Low Scenario	High Scenario
++	++

Overall rail is considered a safe mode of travel. In 2019/20, the Department for Transport reported 0.2 fatalities per billion passenger miles[xi]. Enabling access for all at railway stations could unlock a safer travel option for people who are currently unable to use rail. If delivery of this recommendation can reduce car use, there may additionally be a minor positive impact on accidents.

The delivery of improvements would provide a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits associated with increased opportunities to participate in society through improved access to jobs, health and wellbeing services and other services for users with reduced mobility. The Department for Health acknowledges the link between social inclusion and wellbeing[xii].

Improved passenger facilities could increase perceived and actual safety and security, through improved lighting and CCTV coverage and better accessibility for those with reduced mobility or with impaired vision or hearing or those with autism.

Specific impacts on visual amenity would require to be assessed at individual station level, with the provision of accessible infrastructure (lifts or ramps) required to be assessed in the context of a station environs, mindful that many of Scotland's railway stations may be of historical significance.

Overall, this recommendation is expected to have a moderate positive impact on this criterion in both Low and High scenarios.

4. Economy

Low Scenario	High Scenario
+	+

Congestion is estimated to have cost the UK economy £6.9 billion in 2019, so action taken to increase the attractiveness of public transport and increase modal transfer from the car would be beneficial to the economy. Actions taken to improve access for all to rail stations could also improve access to employment and education for those without access to a car and for those with reduced mobility or with impaired vision or hearing or those with autism, thereby delivering economic benefits through improving access to jobs and services.

In addition to providing benefits for passengers with reduced mobility, research[xiii] has suggested improving station accessibility can benefit everyone, including other passengers and transport operators. Society can benefit in an economic sense whereby improved public transport access encourages switching from less sustainable transport

modes, and in a social sense by creating a more inclusive and caring society which everyone can be proud of.

Although there is the potential for positive wider economic impacts in terms of increased access to employment for those with reduced mobility, the impact on specific locations or specific markets is expected to be limited.

Overall, this recommendation is expected to have a minor positive impact on this criterion in both Low and High scenarios.

5. Equality and Accessibility

Low Scenario	High Scenario
++	++

Station accessibility analysis undertaken by Transport Scotland in 2020, in line with the ORR Station accessibility classification system[xiv], found that of the 360 stations in Scotland, 133 (37%) had step-free access to all platforms; 184 (51%) had a degree of step-free access; and 43 (12%) did not have step-free access to any platform.

While ScotRail provides 'reasonable' alternative transport provision at no extra cost to and from the nearest accessible station for users with reduced mobility that require this, the provision of more accessible infrastructure at rail stations across the country would reduce this requirement and contribute to a more inclusive, equitable transport system.

This was evidenced by an evaluation[xv] into the impacts of the Access for All Programme which found that 11% of all station users reported that they had increased the number of trips they made from that station following delivery of the accessibility improvements, with 6% having increased the number of trips significantly. This figure was higher amongst some disabled groups, with a third of wheelchair users, 19% of hearing impaired passengers, and 15% mobility impaired passengers having increased their station usage. Accordingly, the delivery of enhanced accessibility at stations would be anticipated to improve mobility and connectivity to services for those with reduced mobility, thereby delivering positive impacts against this criteria.

Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework notes that ScotRail's passenger assistance requests in Scotland were up by 16.7% between 2017 and 2018[xvi]. However, data from the Scottish Household Survey (using Limiting long term condition (LLTC) as a proxy for disability) reveals that adults with a LLTC are less likely to travel than those without a LLTC (64% compared to 76% made a trip on the previous day), which could reflect the range of barriers experienced by those with a LLTC. Scottish Household Survey data also suggests that people with a LLTC may be less likely to have access to a private car; 52% of respondents with a LLTC held a driver's licence compared to 73% who did not have an LLTC[xvii]. The recommendation would therefore have a positive impact on comparative access for affected people groups and affected geographic locations.

Whilst improved access for all would not change actual public transport network coverage, it could potentially increase levels of integration, thereby improving perceptions of the reach of the public transport network, delivering benefits in respect to perceived public transport network coverage. This recommendation is unlikely to affect active travel network coverage.

No direct impact on affordability is expected, except where improved accessibility reduces the need for car ownership.

Also refer to EqIA/ICIA/FSDA/CRWIA Assessment in the next section.

This recommendation is therefore expected to have a moderate positive impact on this criterion in both Low and High scenarios.

3.3. Deliverability

1. Feasibility

High quality, accessible station facilities are feasible across the rail network in Scotland, though more detailed work would be required to identify the most appropriate solutions on a station by station basis. Providing full accessibility at certain locations may, for example, prove challenging and further feasibility work would be required to understand the challenges at each station as part of the business case process.

As a first stage, consideration should be given to the national stations audit work that the DfT is undertaking as part of the National Disability Strategy. This work, which is designed to help to develop a record of the level of accessibility at stations across the UK, can then inform a review of Scottish stations and the identification of priority stations from a physical accessibility perspective.

2. Affordability

Overall costs for the implementation of a fully accessible rail network in Scotland would be substantial, however there is significant scope for prioritisation and phasing of work. Rail Accessibility is reserved to the UK government, rather than a devolved matter. The Scottish Government bids into the Access for All programme for funding which is determined by the Department for Transport, however Transport Scotland and Network Rail can also implement schemes utilising their own funding.

3. Public Acceptability

Responses to the online survey undertaken for STPR2 revealed that 34% of respondents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with "physical accessibility of trains for those with reduced mobility".

Research reported in Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework[xviii] highlighted that

approximately one in 10 disabled people in the UK had difficulties getting to a rail, bus or coach station or stop and a similar proportion had difficulties getting on or off these forms of transport. Meanwhile, a study into the impacts of rail accessibility improvements found that 33% of wheelchair users, 19% of hearing impaired passengers and 15% of mobility impaired passengers reported increased trip making following improvements[xix].

A recent evaluation of the Access for All programme[xx] has shown high levels of public support for station improvements post-implementation, both amongst users who would benefit the most (those with reduced mobility) and unencumbered users.

3.4. Statutory Impact Assessment Criteria

1. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	
Low Scenario	**High Scenario**
0	0

Improvements to station accessibility are likely to encourage modal shift from car to rail to some extent but the precise contribution of this intervention to modal shift is unknown. The improvements would thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions (SEA Objective 1) and help improve air quality (Objective 3). The recommendation is likely to complement other SEA objectives relating to quality of life, noise and vibration and safety (Objectives 4, 5 and 7) as it seeks to encourage modal shift to more sustainable travel, improve mobility of passengers and access for all to essential services, with a focus on improved safety and reducing barriers for passengers with reduced mobility and creating an attractive public realm.

It would also have a positive effect on promoting a more sustainable use, and management of, the existing transport network, which would progress Objective 8, as the recommendation plans for the future capacity of public transport and seeks to improve interchanges.

Specific impacts would require to be assessed at an individual station level, with the provision of accessible infrastructure (lifts or ramps) required to be assessed in the context of a station environs, mindful that many of Scotland's stations may be of historical significance. At stations which are listed and offer high cultural heritage value, station design improvements would need to be sympathetic to the setting of cultural heritage resources and consultation with Historic Environment Scotland may be required. Designs would also need to consider how to benefit walking, wheeling and cycling at and around stations.

Depending on the location and nature of facilities and station enhancements there is potential for negative environmental effects during construction and operation of the improvements, particularly on natural resource requirements, the water environment, biodiversity, soil, cultural heritage and landscape and visual amenity (Objectives 9 to 14). However, it should be possible to avoid or mitigate most if not all of these negative effects.

The recommendation is related to, but unlikely to have any effect on the achievement of Objective 5, which relates to noise and vibration, and is therefore considered neutral.

The recommendation also has no (or negligible) clear relationship to the achievement of climate change adaptation (Objective 2).

Overall, across all of the SEA objectives, this recommendation is expected to have a neutral effect on this criterion in both Low and High scenarios.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Low Scenario	High Scenario
++	++

Step-free access at stations would improve transport choices to people who are currently excluded, including people with reduced mobility due to physical or sensory impairments. It would also support the mobility in and around station environs of other protected characteristic groups, such as pregnant women.

This recommendation is therefore expected to have a moderate positive impact on this criterion in both Low and High scenarios.

3. Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA)

Low Scenario	High Scenario
0	0

This recommendation is not considered directly or indirectly relevant to island communities although there may be indirect benefits for those travelling from islands to the mainland when using the rail network to access key services.

Overall, this recommendation is expected to have a neutral impact on this criterion in both Low and High scenarios.

4. Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)

Low Scenario	High Scenario
0	0

Although children and young people with mobility impairments would benefit, this recommendation is unlikely to have any differential impacts for children and young people.

This recommendation is therefore expected to have a neutral impact on this criterion in

both Low and High scenarios.

5. Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA)

Low Scenario	High Scenario
+	+

Poverty rates are higher for disabled people, with a gap of around 12 percentage points between disabled and non-disabled people[xxi]. Improving accessibility at rail stations has the potential to reduce this gap by enabling disabled people to access education, healthcare, services, and jobs by rail; reducing forced car ownership and reliance on taxis.

This recommendation is therefore expected to have a minor positive impact on this criterion in both Low and High scenarios.

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