



**Feedback from Imtac about proposed changes
to Central Station frontage**

November 2017

Imtac is committed to making information about our work accessible. Details of how to obtain information in your preferred format are included on the next page.

Making our information accessible

As an organisation of and for disabled people and older people Imtac recognises that the way information is provided can be a barrier to accessing services and participation in public life. We are committed to providing information about our work in formats that best suit the needs of individuals.

All our documents are available in hard copy in 14pt type size as standard. We also provide word and pdf versions of our documents on our website – www.imtac.org.uk. In addition we will provide information in a range of other formats. These formats include:

- Large print
- Audio cassette or CD
- Daisy disc
- Braille
- Electronic copies on disc or via email in PDF or word
- Easy read
- Information about our work in other languages

If you would like this publication in any of the formats listed above or if you have any other information requirements please contact:

Michael Lorimer
Imtac
Titanic Suites
55-59 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8FE

Telephone/Textphone: 028 9072 6020
Email: info@imtac.org.uk

About Imtac

The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (Imtac) is a committee of disabled people and older people as well as others including key transport professionals. Its role is to advise Government and others in Northern Ireland on issues that affect the mobility of older people and disabled people.

The aim of the Committee is to ensure that older people and disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else to travel when and where they want.

Imtac receives support from the Department for Infrastructure (hereafter referred to as the Department).

Background

This paper provides feedback from Imtac about proposed changes to the frontage of Central Station. Although not as major as some infrastructure projects, the Committee views it as significant given it will link the existing rail network with the new Glider service.

Current provision

There are currently two public access points to Central Station. There is a side entrance from the car park and taxi rank at Mays Meadow. This provides level, step free access by means of a lift. This access will remain unchanged.

The second and main entrance to the station is from East Bridge Street and involves a significant change in level from the street into the main station concourse. Currently access is provided in the entrance hall via an internal ramp. This ramp is curved in shape and contains one central handrail. This is an example of poor design as the curved shape and limited handrail provision is likely to cause difficulties for some disabled people. Whilst within minimum standards, pavement width outside the entrance on East Bridge Street could be improved given usage particularly during peak times.

Overview of proposed changes

The plans propose changes to the East Bridge Street entrance. The changes include taking down the current stone façade and replacing this with glazed façade.

In making this change it is proposed to move the façade further back from the footway. The current change in level will be addressed by providing stepped and ramped access outside the entrance to the building. A canopy will provide protection from the weather.

Two glazed automatic doors will provide access to the current entrance hall from East Bridge Street. Under the proposals there will be no further changes in level once inside this area. The entrance hall will be refurbished with new ticket desks, ticket vending machines and a retail unit. Current flooring and lighting will also be replaced.

Alongside the changes to frontage of the station the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) plan to carry out improvements to the footways in front of the station. These improvements are linked to the provision of a BRT/Glider halt in close proximity to the station.

Comments and recommendations on the proposals

Using optimum design standards

In making the changes Translink is required to meet minimum standards in relation to accessibility as laid out by both European and domestic legislation. In line other advice given by Imtac, the Committee recommends the proposed changes should seek to deliver optimum rather than minimum standards in relation to accessibility. The project team responsible for delivering the changes must be required to use [Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations \(DfT 2015\)](#). Where standards provide for a range of options, the design for Central Station must be required to provide the optimum standard. If for whatever reason this cannot be achieved with any aspect of the design Imtac recommends that further consultation be undertaken by Translink with DfI and Imtac.

Station approaches

The change in frontage is part of a wider project linked to Glider/BRT. As part of this work the pedestrian approaches to and from halts and the station entrances are being upgraded. Imtac recommends that DfI consult with Imtac about this wider work with a view to maximising accessibility and opportunities for disabled people and older people to move easily between Glider and rail services. The priority for Imtac with these works is to broaden and declutter pavements to and from the halts and to improve and enhance the current pedestrian crossing across East Bridge Street.

Changes in level

Having viewed the site Imtac believes there is nothing that can be done about the difference in levels between the station concourse and the footways. The current ramped provision is poorly designed and its use problematic for some disabled people. Whilst the provision of steps and a ramp at an entrance is not ideal, the Committee believes it is the only option and believes there is an opportunity to improve provision through the proposed changes.

Proposed ramp

Imtac recommends the ramp be designed to the optimum standard set out in Section P1 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations. In general Imtac recommends the following:

- The ramp should have the lowest practical gradient not more than 1:20.
- The ramp should be sufficiently wide to the likely high usage at the station – in line with guidance Imtac recommends a width of 2m.
- Handrails should be provided on both sides of the ramp, designed to optimum standards
- A continuous upstand of at least 100mm should be provided along any open edge of the ramp.
- The surface of the ramp should be slip resistant and contrast with the surface of the proposed landing and footway.

Proposed steps and handrail provision

Imtac recommends steps with the appropriate handrails should be provided and designed to the optimum standards set out in Section Q1 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations, including the provision of corduroy tactile surfaces at the top and bottom of the steps. Tactile paving should contrast with the surrounding materials as should the nosing of the steps. All materials used should be slip resistant.

It is imperative that handrails provided at the steps and ramp at the entrance provide a contrast with surrounding materials used on the project. Imtac has not been provided with details of all the materials to be used, however the plans do indicate that handrails used will have a stainless steel finish. Experience from other projects indicates that this type of finish often does not provide the required contrast and the Committee recommends Translink consider an alternative finish.

Good and consistent lighting should be provided at entrance and stepped area in line with optimum standards set out in Section H1 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations.

Glazed frontage

The glazed frontage has the potential to create difficulties for some users. Imtac recommends that all glass should be marked with a strong contrasting tonal colour, visible in different lighting and conditions. As the automatic entrance doors are also glass the Committee recommends some visual means be included in the design to ensure that doors can be differentiated from the surrounding glass walls (See section J1 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations).

Entrance doors

The inclusion of automatic doors is to be welcomed. Imtac recommends the entrance doors and any subsequent internal doors should be designed to optimum standards as set out in section D1 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations. Given the likely high usage levels, entrance doors and subsequent doors opening width should be 1200mm.

Reception area

Imtac recommends lighting, flooring and internal walls should be designed to maximise accessibility, in line with optimum requirements set out in Sections H1, I1 and J1 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations. In general this should include:

- The use of materials that are slip resistant and that reduce glare and reflection.
- A contrast between the floor and walls.

Ticketing

The refurbishment of ticket desks is to be welcomed. Imtac recommends work be carried out to meet optimum design standards set out in Section N1 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations. Ticket desks should include an induction loop.

In line with previous advice around the Ticketing project, Imtac seeks assurances from Translink that Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) will not be used instead of ticket desks. The Committee recommend passengers have an alternative means of purchasing tickets at all times.

Other issues

Consideration should be given to providing somewhere to allow passengers to rest on route to and from the car park/taxi ranks. Imtac recommends seating should be provided in the entrance hall, designed in line with standards contained in Section J2 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations. Seating should be positioned away from main pedestrian routes so as not to cause obstructions.

Imtac recommends the project includes the provision of appropriate signage around the approaches to the station and within the refurbished entrance hall. This should be designed to optimum standards as set out in Sections K1-8 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations.

Finally the project must consider maintaining unobstructed access to the station and its facilities during the planned building works. Section F2 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations sets measures that Imtac recommends must be introduced. Temporary ticket desks should include a section of low-level counter and an induction loop.