



**Feedback from Imtac following Belfast  
Transport Hub update on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020**

**(July 2020)**

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## **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](http://www.imtac.org.uk). In addition we will provide information in a range of other formats. These formats include:

- Large print
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## 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 Imtac is to ensure that disabled people and older people have the same opportunities as everyone else to travel when and where they want.

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

## General comments

Imtac welcomes the latest engagement with the design team taking forward the development of the Belfast Transport Hub. Members received a remote briefing from the team on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, followed by a Q & A. Subsequently follow up information was provided by the team by email on the 16<sup>th</sup> June. The Committee wishes to record it's thanks to the Translink and the team for arranging the update in what are difficult circumstances.

The Committee has previously published detailed comments setting out its priorities for the Belfast Transport Hub<sup>1</sup>. In its general comments Imtac identifies two key elements essential to ensure the new Hub is viewed as an exemplar of inclusive design.

1. Engagement with disabled people and older people.
2. The adoption and application of best practice inclusive design guidance rather than adopting minimum standards or a DDA compliance approach.

Engagement to date has focused on the internal layout of hub building. **Further engagement will be required to discuss the station approaches and wider public realm proposals.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.imtac.org.uk/detailed-comments-imitac-around-proposals-belfast-transport-hub>

The focus of the engagement has been on the physical design of infrastructure. Some of the issues emerging from discussions relate to the management of the space at the Hub. The Committee believes it is useful to consider management issues at this stage, as it can potentially influence design decisions.

### **Specific comments**

The Committee welcomes the step-free design of the new hub with bus and rail facilities on the same level and is broadly content with proposed access to bus stands and rail platforms.

The Committee notes the information provided at the briefing and subsequent follow up regarding the provision of refuge points and evacuation from the proposed mezzanine level which will be a focus for retail, food and beverage provision. Members remain concerned that some disabled people and older people may be deterred from using the mezzanine level and **recommends that some retail, food and beverage be available on the ground floor.**

The Committee is broadly content that furniture within the building will be located in an orderly way. It welcomes proposals to provide a range of seating. **Future engagement should look at the final design details for seating and other furniture, ensuring amongst other things the use of good contrasting materials.**

The Committee welcomes the provision of an Information Point on the main concourse close to the entrance of the new Hub. Given the scale of the new building it is essential that staff are visible and available. **Future engagement should look at establishing clear procedures for the provision of assistance at the new hub.**

The Committee is satisfied that there will be different ticketing options at the new Hub, including the option to buy a ticket from a member of staff for those who find using automated ticketing options difficult or impossible. **Future engagement should look at the operation of ticketing services at the Hub.**

The Committee welcomes the provision of a Changing Place toilet at the new hub, designed to BS 8300 standards. The Committee also welcomes the provision of separate Parenting Rooms. **Further clarification is required around the overall provision**

**of toilet facilities at the Hub and their adherence to BS 8300 standards.**

The Committee is broadly content with the design and location of the proposed customer information screens. **Future engagement should focus on ensuring the detail design of internal signage in the Hub adheres to best practice inclusive design guidelines.**

The Committee recognises the challenges of providing coherent audio passenger announcements in a large open station. The Committee welcomes and supports the proposal to install BlueTooth enabled infrastructure to assist with wayfinding within the Hub. The Committee has some reservations about the proposed use of the BlindSquare application and **recommends that further engagement take place, looking at the range of potential applications, before final decisions are taken.**

During the briefing members raised queries over the importance of using of contrasting materials at the new Hub. As the remote nature of the presentation made it difficult to identify contrast clearly, **it would be helpful for the detail of the use of contrasting materials be circulated to members for further comment.**

In line with its original comments the Committee restates its recommendation for the provision of assistance dog spending facilities at the new Hub. **Future engagement should seek to finalise design and location of spending facilities.**

In its original comments the Committee suggested that the Hub include a Quiet Room / Space. A greater understanding of the scale of the proposals has reinforced the need for such a space for people who may find the busy environment of such a large station overwhelming. **Given the space available, a Quiet Room / Space should be provided at the new Hub. Imtac believes providing this facility will contribute to making the Hub an exemplar for inclusive design.**