

This Concept Statement has been prepared within the context of a 15 year franchise being offered for Cheltenham Spa Railway Station. It sets out informal views of the Council, has had limited consultation and is not council policy. It is intended to guide successful franchisees in respect of improvements to the station which might be considered commensurate with their term of tenure.

The station is currently uncomfortable and unattractive for passengers. The site is constrained but its design and layout appear further to inhibit efficient operation. It appears to have suffered from significant long-term under-investment. In the course of preparing this document, many suggestions have been made regarding a fundamental redesign of the site and its buildings (including demolition, rebuilding, relocation, additional lines & platforms and the incorporation of a terminus for light rail). These are unlikely to be feasible within the context of the franchise, but the responses clearly identify a level of concern for the current state of the station. With this in mind, this Statement should be considered the starting point, not the limit, of any improvements.

Aim

To establish a strategy which reinvigorates the station following a period of rapid increase in passenger numbers, so that it becomes a convenient and comfortable hub for sustainable transport; an attractive point of entry to the town; and a good neighbour.

Objectives

- To provide a comfortable waiting and interchange environment.
- To consider opportunities to improve the operation of trains.
- To improve pedestrian, cycle, taxi and bus access and help develop a better integrated, multi-modal transport hub.
- To provide a basis for improving the historic station building.
- To foster design quality
- To enhance the station setting in order to improve the approach to the site & sense of arrival in town.
- To increase car parking on-site & reduce impact on nearby streets.
- To provide a basis for service improvements and expansion of the rail facility

Constraints & Opportunities

- Opportunity to repair the station's existing character and layout, which is inward-looking, cluttered, shabby and poorly-structured.
- Limited space to alter two-track mainline operation or add platforms to enhance operation of trains.
- Uncomfortable and limited waiting facilities for passengers
- Adjoins Conservation Area (*Eldorado Character Appraisal and Management Plan (CBC)* www.cheltenham.gov.uk) and close to residential areas - sensitive treatments required.
- Main building is not listed or indexed, but has significant potential for enhancement.
- Retain TPO tree; better manage and plant-up areas of scrub; other areas of poor quality scrub are expendable.
- Uses to minimise impacts on neighbours (amenity, trade, nuisance etc)
- Sloping site gives opportunity for discrete decked-parking.
- Opportunity to extend cycle route to Lansdown Road, improving accessibility.
- Improvements should not hinder any opportunities for light rail provision

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Development principles

Character

- Proposals will create a pleasant, comfortable environment; welcoming to those coming to catch a train and establishing a sense of the town's wider design quality for those arriving by train. It will be an attractive, safe and well structured facility which is easy to use & understand, uncluttered and opens the site to surrounding streets.

Uses

- Uses will be permitted which improve the transport interchange function – including enhancements to bus & taxi interchanges; pedestrian & cycle access; parking provision; and passenger waiting facilities. New small retail, café & similar uses are acceptable.

Transport

- Seek opportunities to improve site layout & service timetabling to enhance site's function as a public transport interchange.
- Examine platform and track arrangements & land-holdings to establish what opportunities exist to improve passenger and freight services
- Provide decked car park, using the slope to lose mass and height. Built form to be no higher than ground level at the deck's junction with slope.
- Improve disabled access throughout the site.
- Extend Honeybourne Line cycle route to Lansdown Road to improve access to the station and improve the existing cycle/footway network. Secure, convenient, covered cycle storage.
- Ensure that layout alterations do not interfere with opportunities for light rail through the site.

Setting

Queen's Road entrance

- Reduce sense of severance between site and Queen's Road by removing all or part of the boundary wall and introduce a visually permeable boundary.
- Improve layout and legibility by addressing current conflict between buses, taxis, pedestrians, cyclists, drop-off/pick-up, car parking, waiting passengers etc. Structure the space using planting, furniture and surface materials.
- Consider how interventions on the building frontage can enhance sense of arrival & give weather protection for pedestrians & waiting passengers.
- Retain & improve embankment planting adjacent to Queen's Rd/Honeybourne Line/Kensington Ave. Tree survey needed to inform strategy.

Gloucester Road frontage

- Radical redesign of the Gloucester Rd frontage required. Maximise use of this frontage, reshaping entrance to establish a more welcoming plan-form, opening up the entrance to the street and integrating with new small retail, café etc. units to improve passenger waiting experience. Units to be accessible from platforms & street, presenting active street frontage. Offer opportunity for protected outdoor waiting.
- Make use of soft and hard landscape features. Remove existing scrub. Retain TPO tree.

Built form

- New buildings to use contextually sensitive contemporary style.
- Repair/restore historic buildings, platform and roof structures. Consider how a new "portico" could enhance sense of arrival and add to character – possibly providing foyer facilities.
- Building standards: BREEAM - Very Good; Secured By Design

Other Requirements

- Flood Risk Assessment
- Drainage Study, consider SUDS
- Waste Minimisation Statement
- Public Art

Contacts

Development Management	Rob Lindsey	01242 264249
Heritage	Karen Radford	01242 775218
Trees	Chris Chavasse	01242 264262
Highways	Claire Tyson	01452 425618
Urban Design	Wilf Tomaney	01242 264145
Planning Policy	Tracey Crews	01242 264382
Integrated Transport	Owen Parry	01242 774640

