1. Introduction

1.1 TRANSform Scotland, Scotland’s campaign for sustainable transport, supports in principle the proposal to build a heavy rail link to Glasgow Airport. Although we are opposed to the uncontrolled growth of air traffic on sustainability grounds, we feel that this rail link is necessary in order to increase the current low proportion of passengers who travel to Glasgow Airport by public transport.

1.2 Notwithstanding our support for the principle of providing rail access to Glasgow Airport, there are specific aspects of the project that give us concern, namely:

- The proposed location of the station at the airport
- Track capacity between Glasgow and Paisley
- That nothing in the scheme aims to reduce car use at the airport directly
- The lack of consideration given to the project in a wider context.

2. Station Location

2.1 The consultants considered a wide range of possible locations and track alignments into the airport site. The final choice of track alignment enters the airport land heading approximately north-east, immediately after crossing the M8 motorway. It then curves around to run parallel with the main entrance of the terminal building and terminates facing east. The line and station are to be elevated on embankments or viaducts throughout and are determined by the position of the station.

2.2 According to the consultants’ reports, the station has to fulfil a number of criteria:

- To give access to the airport terminal and create a “seamless journey” from city to aircraft
- To allow for possible future (eastward) extension of the line
- To allow for expansion of the airport terminal facilities
- To take account of security considerations
- To give best value within the constraints of the project as a whole.

2.3 At the conclusion of the Stage 2 (out of 3) report, the consultants had arrived at three favoured locations:

- Above Caledonia Way at the western end of the terminal building
- Above Caledonia Way at a more easterly location
- Parallel to Caledonia Way to the south of MSCP no.2.

2.4 The first of these was originally chosen as the preferred location with the best combination of access and value for money. The third location was felt to be sub-optimal in terms of giving access to the airport terminal as a 150-200...
metre elevated walkway would have to be constructed linking the station and airport. This walkway would have to be equipped with travelators to assist passengers in the movement of their luggage, adding to the cost of the scheme. The MSCP no.2 would also be located between the terminal and station, reducing the impact of the station as the main transport link at the airport. Furthermore, there was a concern that the alignment required to access the third location would have to cross the airport fuel farm, which would then have to be relocated. However, by the Stage 3 report the preferred location had moved to the position south of MSCP no.2, in accordance with the wishes of BAA.

2.5 The consultants record in the Stage 3 report that BAA may wish [our emphasis] to further extend the airport terminal building to the south and that that was the reason for the preferred location being changed. The Stage 2 report notes, however, that the key developments forthcoming to the airport site are located to the east of the existing terminal, presumably including developing the existing small “T2” building. The copy of the master plan on the BAA website has nothing specific about a southerly extension.

2.6 The Stage 3 report describes the station as being at the centre of a new transport hub for the airport. None of the station sites discussed preclude vehicular access to Caledonia Way and neither does the BAA website. Taxi drivers cannot be foreseen as using another site 200m further away unless they are forced to do so, thus taxis will present themselves as the main means of transport to and from the airport as at present.

2.7 We feel that there a number of possibilities in order to get around the problem of southerly expansion:

- The extension could be built around, to the east and south of, as well as beneath the station. This could preclude eastward extension of the railway, but need not necessarily do so. Given that a heavy rail route accessing the airport from the east has already been examined and dismissed, the importance of this option seems overplayed.

- A grade-level station on the alignment of Caledonia Way does not seem to have been considered. This would block the existing Caledonia Way access, but so would any southern extension of the terminal building. If the easterly extension of the railway were still considered of prime importance then the terminal extension could be made above the station leaving a void for any extended right of way. A grade-level station would also create considerably less in the way of mobility access issues between the station and the main check-in area.

2.8 Finally, we have serious concerns for the consequences of the chosen alignment in that it will require the relocation of the airport fuel farm. The site for the relocated fuel farm is adjacent to the Paisley Moss Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and although mitigating measures will be undertaken to separate the LNR from the fuel farm, the possibility of contamination cannot be ruled out. Additionally, the LNR would be subject to the disturbance of lorry
movements, both supply tankers and landside-airside transit bowsers. Concerns in this regard have also been raised by Scottish Natural Heritage, SEPA, Glasgow Museums Resource Centre (Natural History section), and the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

**Conclusions and recommendations:**

Press for the proposed station location to be immediately outside the existing terminal building, as originally recommended.

Require BAA to be specific as to why this location is unsuitable.

Examine the feasibility of a grade-level station.

If the station has to be located south of the multi-storey car park, ensure that a transport hub for the airport is created at that site.

3. **Track capacity between Glasgow and Paisley: three vs. four tracks**

3.1 Originally, we were strongly in favour of the reinstatement of four tracks between Glasgow and Paisley. Having examined the consultants’ reports in detail, we accept that the main constraint to expansion of capacity on the Glasgow – Paisley railway is Walneuk Junction rather than track capacity between Glasgow and Paisley. We also note the particular difficulties in reinstating a four-track layout between Cardonald and Shields.

3.2 However, we do still have a number of concerns regarding this layout:

- The Proposer’s Memorandum, which accompanies the Bill in submission to Parliament, states that the three-track layout will not preclude the installation of a fourth track at a future date should it be justified. However, the recommendation for the alteration of the Sandwood Road underbridge specifically states that the new deck will be for a third track only. We feel that a case should be made for re-instating the full four-track capacity of this bridge as part of the GARL project, which could be done at relatively low marginal cost. Having to reconstruct this bridge for a second time after a relatively short period would seriously damage any case that could be made for re-instating the four-track layout in future.

- In examining the wider benefits that could arise from the GARL project, consideration is only made of the additional fast paths that could be operated between Glasgow and Paisley. While we accept that the Airport service will, of necessity, be an express, no examination has been made of additional services for the local stations on the line, such as a Johnstone stopping service. The existing stations serve economically deprived residential areas (Penilee, Drumoyne) and important industrial and commercial areas (Hillington), and are poorly served at present with only one train every 30 minutes.
We accept that the question of additional stations between Glasgow and Paisley is outwith the remit of the GARL project. However, we feel that steps should be taken to ensure that any alterations to track layouts should facilitate additional stations (East Paisley/Arkleston, Ibrox/Paisley Road West, West Street) at a future date.

3.3 We note that concerns have also been raised regarding the proposed three-track layout by Patrick Harvie MSP, Ken Sutherland of Railfuture Scotland and the Scottish Association for Public Transport (SAPT).

**Conclusions and recommendations:**

Ensure that any works undertaken to facilitate the third track will not have to be reconstructed if a fourth track is laid in future.

Examine the effect of additional stopping paths between Glasgow and Paisley.

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4. **Measures to reduce car use at the airport directly**

4.1 We feel that there is a lack of consideration given to reduction in car usage at the airport. The scheme could be modified in order to require the operators (both airport and railway) to undertake specific measures which will bias access away from private cars and towards the rail-link, contributing to the long-term sustainability of the airport:

- The airport should reduce parking provision
- A levy could be made on airport parking charges which makes a contribution to the financing of the rail-link
- There must be no possibility of charging a “premium” fare on the rail-link service
- In the longer term, road pricing should be examined as part of a wider strategy for Scotland as whole.

**Conclusions and recommendations:**

Include requirements for parking reduction and/or additional parking charges within the GARL scheme.

Preclude any possibility of making GARL a “premium fare” service – *at least until* road users have also to pay a premium for use of the road network through a road user charging scheme.

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5. **Wider Context**
5.1 We accept that the consultants' reports were prepared in order to demonstrate a business case for a fixed rail link from Glasgow City Centre to Glasgow Airport. However, we are concerned at the lack of overall context in which the link has been considered.

5.1.1 Other research has shown that a low proportion of passengers using Glasgow Airport come directly from the city centre. The Airport Link needs to have the widest range of connections possible but Central gives poor connections with the rest of Scotland.

5.1.2 Glasgow Airport, as well as being Scotland’s largest, is also the focus of long-haul travel and can attract users from a wide area of the country. Users travelling from elsewhere in Scotland need an easy interchange onto the airport service and will not use the link if it requires a trek across Glasgow City Centre.

5.1.3 There is little potential in attracting longer-distance travellers from the south to Glasgow Airport.

5.2 The lack of Scottish connections could be improved by running some long distance rail services to Central rather than Queen Street.

5.2.1 A meeting between the Scottish Association for Public Transport and ScotRail established the feasibility of running a half-hourly express service from Waverley to Glasgow Central (on completion of the current Waverley upgrade). However, we feel that this may have limited connectivity to GARL due to the availability of Edinburgh Airport, and that one of these paths into Central would be better used to establish links from Aberdeen or Inverness. This is possible within the present railway network.

5.2.2 In the longer term, we feel that the Crossrail connection into Glasgow Queen Street Low Level should be developed to maximise the potential of GARL.

5.3 We feel there ought to be a wider examination of public transport links within the Glasgow urban area to Glasgow Airport as the only links that exist at present are from Glasgow City Centre and Paisley. GARL will not substantially change this.

Conclusions and recommendations:

Examine the possibility of improving Scottish connections at Glasgow Central.

Carry out a wider examination of transport links to the airport within the Glasgow area.

Develop the connection between GARL and Crossrail in the longer term.

Notes:
1 Faber Maunsell, St Stephens House, 279 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4JL. All documentation is available at <http://shandwick.fs-server.com/spt/documents.php>

2 Caledonia Way is the vehicle access road running immediately in front of the terminal building.

3 Walneuk Junction is the point at which the Glasgow – Paisley railway splits into its Ayrshire and Inverclyde components. It is presently located immediately to the east of Paisley Gilmour Street station.

4 Between Cardonald and Shields there are a number of bridges which have been built or altered since the reduction to a two-track layout which would need to be extensively reconstructed to accommodate the fourth track.

5 Sandwood Road passes beneath the line between Hillington East and West stations. The decking which accommodated the two centre tracks has been removed and the supporting structures are not in good enough condition to allow a straightforward reinstatement.