Purpose of Report:

To inform Committee of the progress made on the Glasgow Airport Rail Link Project

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee:

- notes the content of this Report;
- requests that SPT confirm that the present design allows for the provision of Ibrox Station at a future date and that provision will be made for the replacement off-road of the short term parking removed from within Central Station;
- supports the setting up of a memorandum of agreement between SPT and the Council to deal with outstanding issues; and
- confirms its support for the Glasgow Airport Rail Link proposal and indicates its support for the Bill.

1. **PRIVATE BILL**

1.1 Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT), on behalf of the Scottish Executive, introduced a Private Bill to the Scottish Parliament on 31 January 2006, for the Glasgow Airport Rail Link (GARL).

1.2 The Bill provides the powers necessary for SPT, and its successors, to construct the new railway and associated works.

1.3 The Bill is now at the objection stage, with the City Council a mandatory consultee. The objection period ends 3 April 2006.

1.4 Development authorised by the Bill will be permitted development, which means it can be carried out without the need for planning permission. This power is restricted to 10 years after the Act receives Royal assent. This is standard procedure for this type of Bill.

1.5 The Listed Building Act is ‘disapplied’ in relation to works proposed to Central Station with the Bill granting the necessary consents. However, details of any modifications to Central Station will be subject of prior consent
procedures by the Council, which cannot be unreasonably refused (see paragraph 2.5 below).

1.6 The City Council has previously provided its support for the GARL proposal to SPT in its response to the public consultation (Policy and Resources Committee 8 February 2005).

1.7 The Parliamentary process is likely to take about 1 year. The GARL is scheduled to be open in 2009.

2. PROPOSAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

2.1 GARL will provide a new rail service between Central Station and a new station at Glasgow Airport, with one interchange stop at Paisley Gilmour Street. The service will be every 15 minutes, with a journey time of 16 minutes. Transport modelling has indicated that 80% of air passengers will transfer from private car or taxi (currently 82% of passengers access the Airport by private car and taxi), along with 35% of employees, contributing to the relief of road congestion and the reduction of environmental impacts of road traffic.

2.2 Within Glasgow the GARL consists of two main elements, additional track and a new platform at Central Station.

2.3 A third track is added between the existing 2 tracks of the Ayr Line from the City boundary to Shields Junction (within the confines of the existing railway land). The impact of this work and the subsequent use, therefore, should be minimal. The intention is to bring the majority of materials in by rail.

2.4 To accommodate the third track, Hillington Rail Bridge over Sandwood Road will be widened (by connecting the two separate decks). In order to ensure that any necessary road closures are undertaken in an agreed manner, it is proposed that the Council and SPT enter into a memorandum of agreement.

2.5 The key impact is on the A listed Central Station with the creation of a new Platform 11A, at the current site of the short-term car park. This will involve the loss of 66 spaces, the threading of the track through an existing arch, the extension of a current short platform, installation of overhead line equipment, strengthening of the undercroft / Argyle Street Bridge and decking over of the down ramp for the car park. These works should also be covered by a memorandum of agreement.

2.6 Various mitigation measures are proposed for the loss of the short-term parking (which includes provision for 20 minute free drop-off parking). It is suggested that other car parks in the area (such as Oswald Street) can be
used instead, although there is currently no provision for free drop-off in these car parks. NCP have indicated to SPT that they are prepared to locate 3 disabled spaces within the Oswald Street Car Park, adjacent to the pedestrian entrance to Platform 13. It is proposed in the Environmental Statement that disabled access to Gordon Street be provided to allow Blue Badge drop-off and that better use is made of the Union Street drop-off facility by the enforcement of the traffic regulations.

2.7 However, general blue badge access to Gordon Street is not permitted in terms of the current traffic order and would be liable to be used by other than those accessing the station. Discussions on this matter are continuing between SPT and Land Services who have agreed that it should be feasible to allow ‘assisted disabled passengers’, pre-booked with the rail operators, access to Gordon Street (except during the weekend when Gordon Street is closed by the Nightzone arrangements and an alternative is required). However, to ensure that an alternative off-road, free of charge, drop-off parking facility is provided, the issue needs to be covered by the memorandum of agreement.

2.8 Four construction compounds are required in Glasgow with access via the local road network. These are:

- Cardonald Business Park, south of Fifty Pitches Road;
- Ibrox east of Transco Gas Holder with access off Broomloan Road;
- Kinning Park at Shields Junction with access off Cornwall Street South; and
- Central Station undercroft south of Midland Street.

2.9 The City Council in its response to the public consultation asked that as part of the GARL proposal the opportunity be taken to provide a new station at Ibrox (even if the Airport services did not stop there). Land for this station is safeguarded in the City Plan. SPT have stated that the GARL proposal does not include Ibrox Station as part of the current scheme. Confirmation is required from SPT that the present design allows for the provision of Ibrox Station at a future date

3. SERVICE IMPLICATIONS

Financial: None

Legal: Negotiation of memorandum of agreement

Personnel: None
Service Plan: Support the development of strategic transport links: Airport Link