SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY
BETTER IN THE MAKING

A Railway for Everyone:

A Strategy for Accessibility on Scotland's Railway

October 2023

Image credit: Peter Kindersley/GBRTT

Image credit: Network Rail Media Centre

Image credit: John Linton/Sustrans

Image credit: Peter Kindersley/GBRTT

A Railway for Everyone: A Strategy for Accessibility on Scotland's Railway

Contents

This document is also available in Easy Read: Scotland's Railway Accessibility Strategy Easy Read. A link will be included to the Easy Read version once it is published.

1. Executive Summary

A Railway for Everyone: A Strategy for Accessibility on Scotland's Railway considers the entire passenger journey with the high-level aims of reducing inequalities and increasing the attractiveness of the railway. This will encourage modal shift from private vehicles, support revenue generation and contribute to Scotland's climate change targets.

Our vision is to make it easy for everyone to choose rail as part of a sustainable journey. To achieve this vision, we recommend a more holistic view of the passenger experience as an end-to-end journey. We have developed four pillars of accessibility to illustrate where potential passengers might face barriers using the railway. The four pillars of an accessible journey – reaching the station, moving around the station, getting to your platform, and finding your space on the train – are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

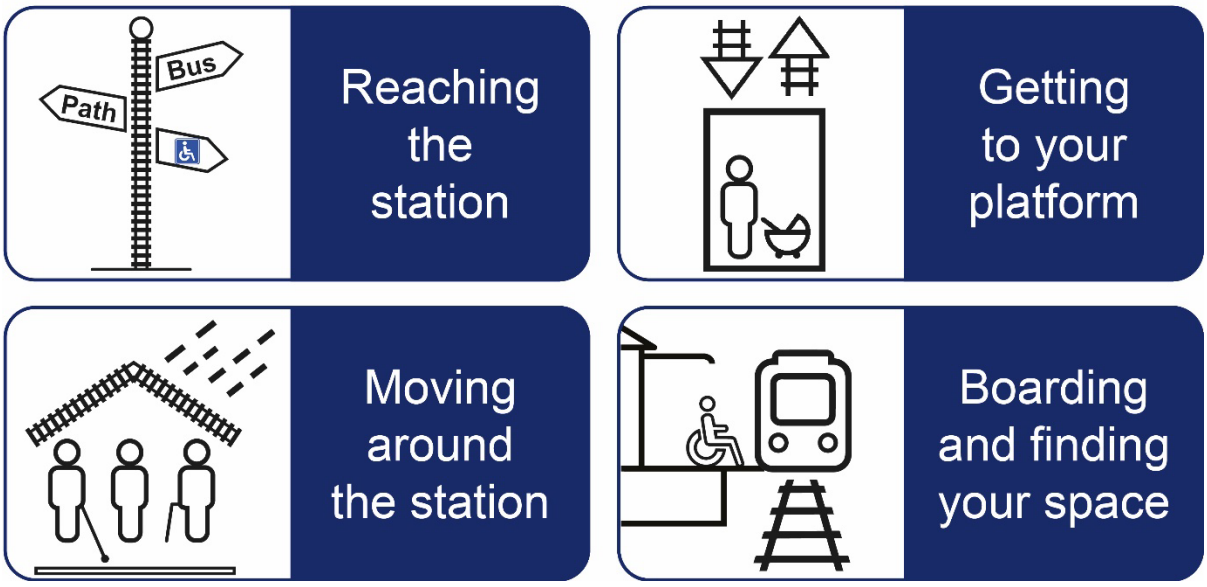


Figure 1: The Four Pillars of Accessibility

To support the implementation of the four pillars, this strategy helps create a framework of requirements and brings attention to opportunities to expand accessibility in and around stations. It recognises the need for collaboration and will set responsibilities and accountabilities.

A Railway for Everyone is our strategy to improve accessibility across Scotland's Railway. The strategy has two associated documents:

- **Easy Read** version, which communicates the strategy's main ideas in a format that is easier to understand.
- **Railway for Everyone Action Plan**, which sets out a delivery plan including how to monitor the industry's progress.

2. Introduction

This industry-wide strategy for improving accessibility across Scotland's Railway looks at potential barriers to a passenger's journey and how we can remove these barriers to make it easier for more people to use Scotland's Railway.

We must make accessibility a priority to:

- **Improve equality** –directly helping more groups access the railway and investing in transportation connectivity leading to economic growth for surrounding areas.[1]
- **Expand personal mobility and increase passenger numbers** – Ensuring easy access to stations via sustainable travel methods supporting the 30% of Scotland's residents without a car[2] and offer increased independence for more users.
- **Increase station usage** – At a sample of stations improved under the Access for All scheme, many surveyed passengers had increased their use of the station after accessibility enhancements.[3]
- **Support government low-carbon goals** – prioritise connectivity with active and low-carbon transport, integrated stations support Scottish Government's net-zero goals.[4]

This strategy:

- Provides a consistent definition of what accessibility means for passengers
- Provides clear accountabilities, aligning Scotland's Railway's efforts to deliver accessible journeys
- Is a framework through which station investment should be viewed to consider all elements of the passenger journey

3. Vision, Mission, and Purpose

Vision

To make it easy for everyone to choose rail as part of a sustainable journey.

Mission

To embed accessibility within Scotland's transport network by providing guidance to eliminate barriers, making the rail journey equitable and fair for all.

Purpose

To reduce inequalities, helping people choose rail as part of a sustainable journey. This strategy establishes a comprehensive view of accessibility within and around stations using the four pillars of accessibility. It proposes a holistic definition of what accessibility means to Scotland's Railway and demonstrates the importance of accessibility improvements in delivering a sustainable and modern railway that appeals to more passengers.

[1] Local Economic Benefits of Station Investment (raildeliverygroup.com)
[2] Scottish Transport Statistics: Road Transport Vehicles | Transport Scotland
[3] Impacts of Station Accessibility Improvements report from Department for Transport
[4] National Transport Strategy 2 | Transport Scotland

4. Why Do We Need an Accessibility Strategy?

Accessibility remains a barrier to passengers in Scotland

Of more than 360 stations across the network in Scotland, only a small number are accessible in the sense that passengers find them easy to get to and navigate around. An accessible passenger journey includes not only accessible stations, but also on-train experiences, ticket purchasing, and travel to and from stations. Good work has been done to improve upon station accessibility, but there is a need to give coherence and direction to better improve accessibility across the rail network to deliver the strategic priorities of Scotland's Railway and achieve Scottish Government policy targets.

Accessibility should consider the entire journey

Within the rail industry, the term 'accessibility' has many connotations ranging from step-free access to an improved overall passenger experience. 'Accessibility' traditionally considers whether stations meet the minimum standards for step-free access to the platform as set by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), with only 38% of stations in Scotland currently meeting these.[5,6] Even when stations are step-free, this does not make them accessible to everyone.

We need to upgrade our rail network

The rail network in Scotland began without central planning in the early 1800s and the first regulators were established in 1840.[7] Stations on the network were built to different standards and must accommodate multiple types of rolling stock. Because of this, stations across Scotland have varying levels of accessibility.

Setting a new definition of accessibility

Following discussions with stakeholders, Scotland's Railway has developed a broad view of accessibility that considers the barriers created by the rail network at each stage of a passenger's journey.

We have developed a view of accessibility that considers the passenger rail experience with the goal of eliminating barriers within and around stations to unlock the rail network for more people. The passenger experience has been visualised by the four pillars of accessibility. The pillars identify how the railway can ensure that everyone, including the 32% of adults and 10% of children in Scotland estimated to be disabled[8] and the 30% of Scottish residents without cars,[9] can get to their destination with confidence and security, by offering a reliable and accessible network.

[5] Station Accessibility Analysis
[6] Accessible Travel Policy: Guidance for Train and Station Operators from Office of Rail and Road
[7] 175 years making Britain's railways safer | Office of Rail and Road
[8] Scotland's Wellbeing: National Outcomes for Disabled People report from Scottish Government
[9] Scottish Transport Statistics: Road Transport Vehicles | Transport Scotland

Improving accessibility expands equality

Prioritising accessibility benefits disabled people and can also improve journeys for people who are older, younger, pregnant, or are travelling with small children, luggage, or bicycles. Any improvements to services and journey times will continue to exclude many passengers if Scotland's Railway does not, at the same time, make it easier for everyone to access stations and use the railway.

5. Strategic Context

Strategic objectives

The strategy has five strategic objectives:

- Provide one definition of accessibility for Scotland's Railway
- Recognise the importance of accessibility improvements and of integrating the principles within current and future work
- Facilitate information sharing across industry and to customers to increase passenger confidence and security in travelling by rail
- Define roles and responsibilities to ensure everyone understands their role in improving and prioritising accessibility
- Demonstrate that improving accessibility can increase patronage, contributing to reducing Scotland's Railway's net cost and net zero carbon goals and Scotland's overall transport policy objectives

To achieve these strategic objectives, staff from across Scotland's Railway must understand how to prioritise accessibility in their work. This strategy will be supported a Railway for Everyone Action Plan including a communications plan.

Strategic priorities and policy environment

Scotland's Railway has a mission to increase passenger numbers through modal shift to rail. To enable this, it is essential to both encourage existing rail users to use the railway more frequently and attract non-rail users. Securing increased patronage will be assisted when stations are integrated, navigable and equitable for everyone.

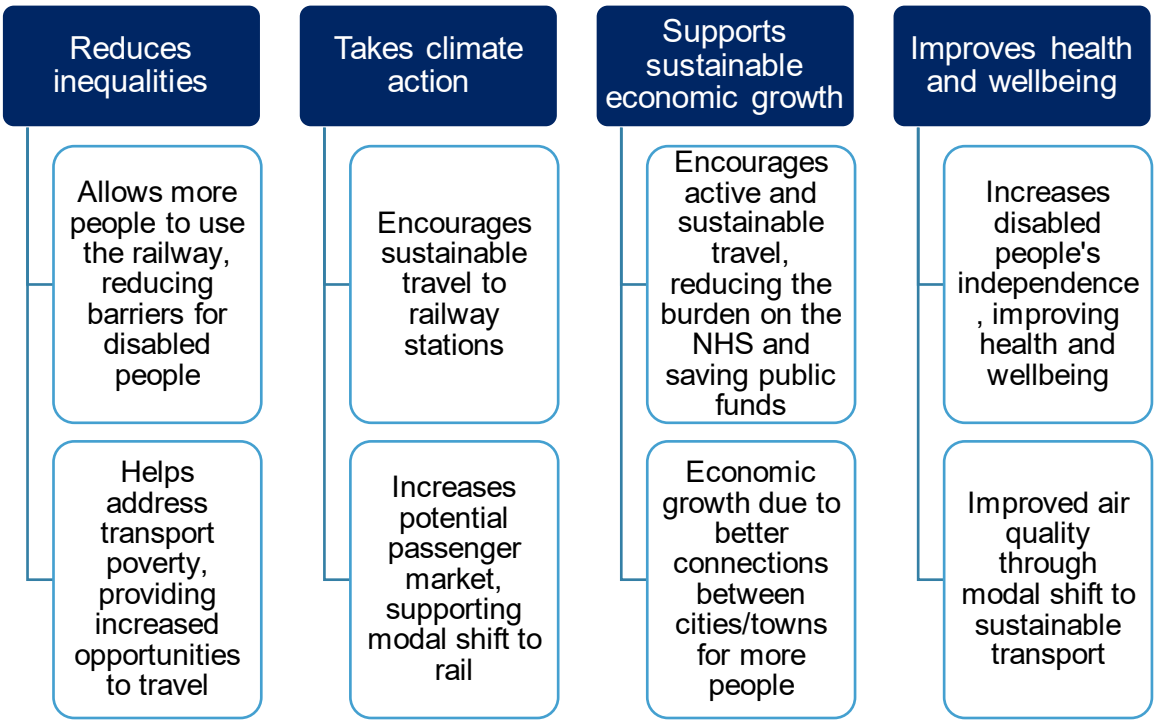


Figure 2: How the accessibility strategy supports the four priorities outlined in the National Transport Strategy (NTS2)

Meeting Scottish Government's National Transport Strategy objectives

This strategy addresses the key Scottish Government objectives presented in the National Transport Strategy (NTS2) including reducing inequality, taking climate action, supporting sustainable economic growth, and improving health and wellbeing (Figure 2Figure 2). We have both moral and financial imperatives to increase equality of access to rail services.

Supporting Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) recommendations

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) presents 45 recommendations to achieve the objectives of NTS2, with a timeframe for delivery of 2022 – 2042.[10] Recommendations focus on themes including improving active travel infrastructure, enhancing access to affordable public transport, and decarbonising transport. 'A Railway for Everyone: A Strategy for Accessibility on Scotland's Railway' is directly aligned with STPR2's Recommendation 19: 'Infrastructure to provide access for all at railway stations.' Recommendation 19 calls for a Scotland-wide review of station accessibility and establishes Transport Scotland's aim to make accessibility improvements as part of larger investment projects.

Supporting the Accessible Travel Framework

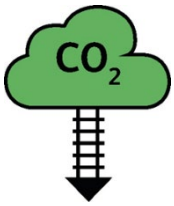
Through its focus on making the entire multi-modal rail journey from origin to destination easier for disabled people, this strategy supports the vision of the

[10] Strategic Transport Projects Review 2: Technical Report

Accessible Travel Framework: *All disabled people can travel with the same freedom, choice, dignity and opportunity as other citizens.*[11]

Supporting the strategic priorities of Scotland's Railway

Table 1: Strategic priorities for Scotland's Railway

 Everyone home safe every day	 Reduce net cost	 Deliver net zero	 Run a reliable railway	 Track and train working closely together
Increase safety in railway stations by improving platform access and lighting and helping more passengers receive safety announcements	Open the railway to more passengers and make it easier for existing passengers to travel by rail	Improve sustainable access to stations and achieve modal shift to rail through enhanced accessibility	Improve customer confidence in the reliability of escalators, lifts and toilets, staff assistance, and the accuracy of online information	We plan to improve accessibility by communicating as a joined-up organisation and delivering as a whole industry

The Accessibility Strategy supports Scotland's Railway's overall strategic priorities (Table 1 above). Most current passengers reach stations actively or sustainably, but there is room for growth. It is vital that passengers can easily travel to stations via active travel or public transport, as growing passengers by encouraging driving is counter to reducing emissions from the transport sector. Additionally, evidence suggests that increasing car parking at stations does not increase the numbers of new passengers using the railway.[12]

Benefits for passengers and the economy

The availability of accurate information prior to and during a journey, ability to access public transport vehicles and interchanges, and safety and comfort can create barriers to rail travel that particularly affect disabled passengers.[13]

Benefits for passengers

Improving accessibility increases safety and helps disabled and non-disabled passengers.

Station accessibility allows more passengers to travel, expanding personal mobility and independence. Disabled adults comprise a large proportion of Scotland's population and is projected to further increase. The proportion of Scottish adults with

[11] Going Further: Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework
[12] The Effects of Park and Ride Supply and Pricing on Public Transport Demand
[13] National Transport Strategy

a disability or long-term health condition increased 6% between 2008 and 2017.[14] In 2021, 42% of people over State Pension age were considered disabled[15], and 19.6% of Scotland's population was aged 65 and over.[16] From 2028 to 2043, there is projected to be a 14% increase in people aged 65 and over, with an even higher increase in the years to 2028.[17]

Expanding accessibility additionally helps non-disabled passengers including those who are elderly, pregnant, travelling with small children, or travelling with luggage, and these passengers also represent a sizeable user group. Accessibility improvements will help provide a safer experience for everyone.[18]

Societal and economic benefits

Improving accessibility exemplifies 'putting passengers first' and has social, financial, environmental and commercial benefits.[18]

An economic appraisal of stations improved under the Access for All (AFA) scheme determined that economic benefits exceeded costs by an average of 2.4: 1 even without considering benefits to non-disabled users.[19] This is in addition to benefits already provided by increased economic activity, and commercial interest around a station.

It reduces social inequalities that disproportionately affect disabled people

A lack of convenient and accessible public transport is a barrier to disabled people participating in society.[20] New and improved stations and services can assist in delivering greater social justice: the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)[21] notes that a joined-up public transport system can improve life chances. A transport system with robust public transport and active travel provisions offers additional opportunities particularly for people who are disabled, young, elderly, or on low incomes.[22] A more accessible transport network also helps reduce risks of social isolation.[18] Making public transport accessible across the UK would result in £72.4 billion of economic benefits from improving disabled people's well-being, access to employment, and access to education.[23]

Expanding accessibility fulfils the Fairer Scotland Duty by reducing inequalities of outcome due to socioeconomic disadvantage. Further, enabling active travel of short distances can improve both physical and mental health.[24] This strategy seeks to capitalise on the opportunity for the railway to promote and prioritise active travel to and from stations.

[14] Scottish Health Survey (2018 edition)
[15] Family Resources Survey 2020 to 2021
[16] Mid-Year Population Estimates | National Records of Scotland (nrscotland.gov.uk)
[17] Scottish population demographics - ScotPHO
[18] Step-free railway station access in the UK: the value of inclusive design | European Transport Research Review
[19] Access for All Benefit Research (steergroup.com)
[20] Lifetime Opportunities Survey Factsheet: Transport (publishing.service.gov.uk)
[21] Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation - Delivery Plans October 2022 - gov.scot
[22] The Social Benefits of Infrastructure Investment
[23] The Transport Accessibility Gap (motability.org.uk)
[24] Transport and Health | The Health Foundation

Benefits for the rail industry

Disabled passengers often experience problems with rail journeys

In 2014, approximately 10% of disabled people in the UK experienced difficulty getting to rail or bus stations, and a similar proportion had problems boarding or alighting from a train or bus.[25] A 2019 report found that two in three disabled passengers experienced problems when travelling by rail, with many problems occurring on the train or when buying tickets.[26] A frequent problem encountered across the stages of a rail journey was a lack of confidence. When passengers have negative experiences using the railway, whether due to lack of information, awareness, or assistance (particularly during times of disruption e.g. lifts out of service), they may lose trust in the railway network and no longer see rail travel as an option.

Many people can benefit from accessibility improvements

Disabled people are less likely to use rail: from 2015 to 2019, 18% of disabled people had travelled by train in the previous month compared to 34% of non-disabled people.[27] As almost half of those with highly limited day-to-day activities due to disability do not have access to a car in their household,[28] improvements to station accessibility can have a large impact on the individual.

Accessibility can increase passenger numbers and revenue

As the Scottish population ages, the percentage of disabled passengers will increase. Over the medium term, this will mean that a growing number of people will stand to benefit from accessibility improvements. Making more of the railway network accessible to disabled passengers and making stations easier for everyone to access expands the potential user base. Transport providers in the UK lose £42 million annually due to being inaccessible.[29] Offering accessible journeys should thus have a positive impact on future revenues.

Accessible stations increase passenger usage

In 2015, passenger surveys conducted at six stations around the UK (Rutherglen, Huddersfield, Kidderminster, Vauxhall, Bridgend and Purley) indicated increased passenger usage after Access for All (AFA) improvements. Three of these stations' works solely improved access from platform to platform, while the other three stations' works improved access both platform to platform and at the station.[30] On average, one-third of wheelchair users, 19% of hearing-impaired passengers, and 11% of all surveyed passengers increased their use of a station after improvements were undertaken through the AFA scheme (Figure 3).[30]

[25] Opinions and Lifestyle Survey data for the Fulfilling Potential Outcomes and Indicators Framework
[26] Experiences of disabled rail passengers (publishing.service.gov.uk)
[27] Disability and Transport Findings | Public Transport | Transport Scotland
[28] Census 2011: Release 3L from National Records of Scotland
[29] The Purple Pound – Infographic – Purple (wearepurple.org.uk)
[30] Impacts of Station Accessibility Improvements report from Department for Transport

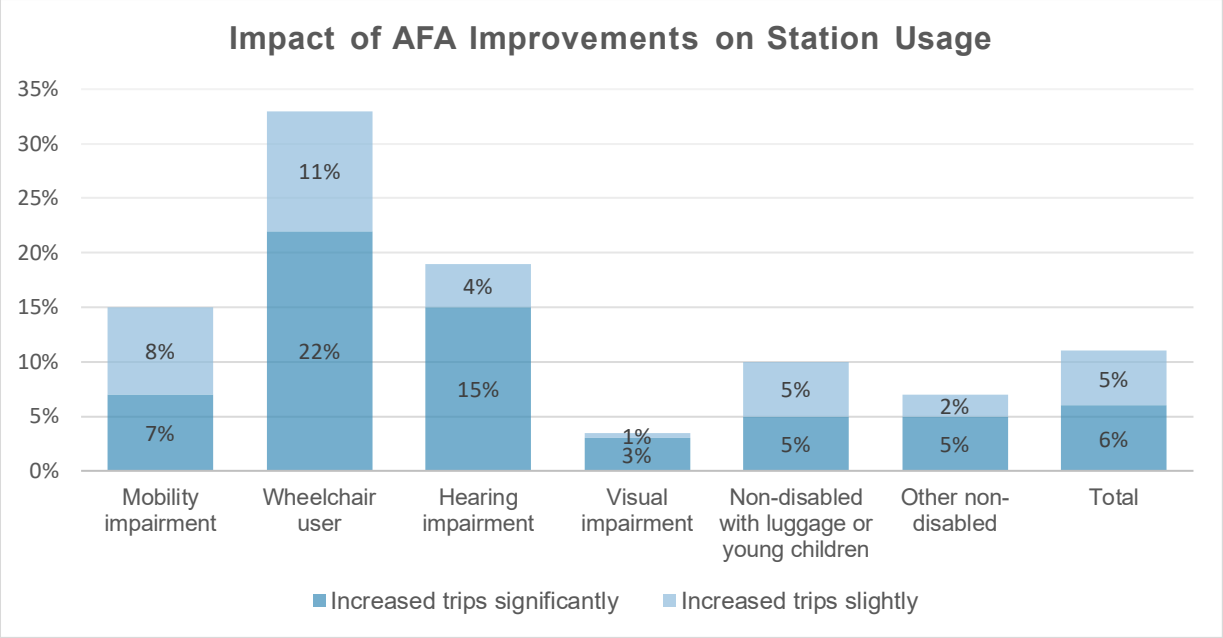


Figure 3: Impact of Access for All (AFA) improvements on station usage according to passenger groups

6. Four Pillars of Accessibility

The four pillars of accessibility aim to ensure that most people can independently navigate from their communities onto the train with ease, comfort and speed.

Breaking the passenger's journey down, there are four areas of accessibility – or pillars – that require consideration to ensure a station can be deemed fully accessible (Figure 4).

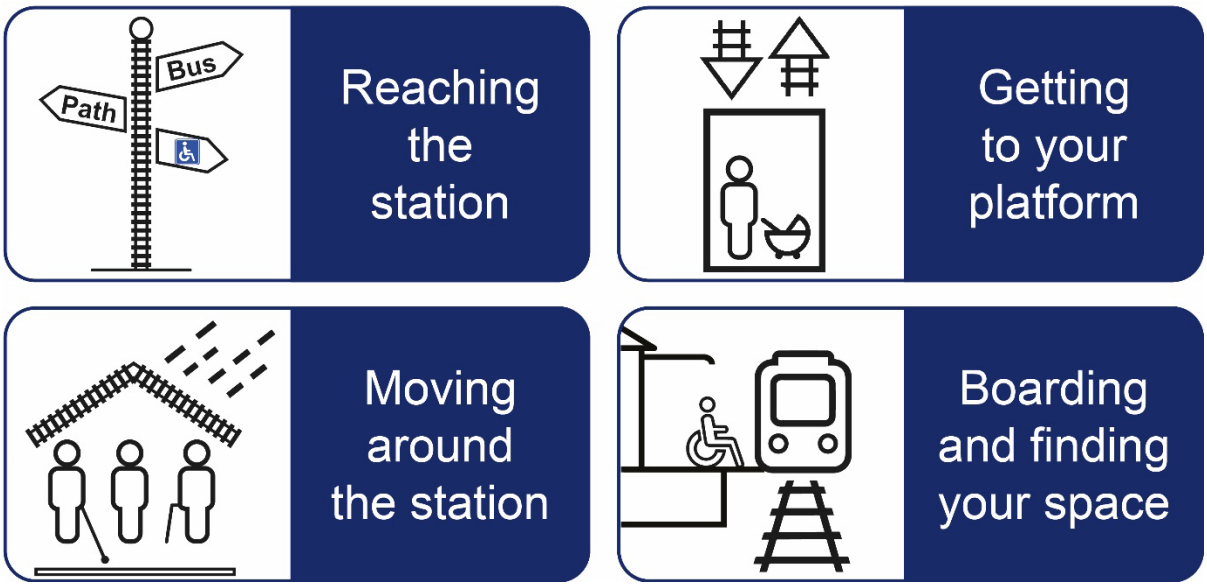


Figure 4: The four pillars of accessibility

The passenger journey from home to destination and back

The pillars are bi-directional, taking into account alighting from the train for example. Consideration needs to be given to each element of the passenger's journey. For

example, there is less benefit in providing step-free access to all platforms if there are steps on a key walking route to the station or having great cycling links without enabling a cyclist to leave their bike at the station or take it on the train.

For each pillar, we must provide information to help customers confidently complete their journey

Providing an accessible railway requires sufficient information availability and passenger confidence. Scotland's Railway's efforts to improve wayfinding and information displays at stations would be well complemented by improving online information including station features and journey planning. Scotland's Railway should ensure passengers feel confident that their journeys will be accessible, and that information online and at stations is accurate and up to date. Confidence in completing a rail journey can also be informed by personal experiences and by stories of others' experiences. As accessibility is prioritised and passengers have more positive experiences, confidence can be expected to increase.

Accessible and integrated customer journeys are a joint effort

The current structure of the Scottish transport system means that enabling a customer to access the rail network in an integrated and joined-up way is difficult. Scotland's Railway does not have direct control over how passengers travel to stations or use rail as part of a wider journey. For example, local authorities are responsible for the provision of active travel routes, buses are often run by private operators and the provision of facilities to enable people with reduced mobility to access the transport system can be limited. To provide seamless multi-mode journeys, for the benefit of Scotland will require collaboration and potentially trade-offs.

Disability organisations and local groups provide valuable insight

Accessibility-related organisations such as Access Panels and disability groups can provide information on the intricacies of transportation access at a local level as well as considerations for specific passenger groups. Groups such as the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)[31] and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee[32] should be consulted whenever station developments are considered to ensure they benefit as many people as possible and do not exclude any particular group. Community rail groups can apply their local knowledge to help improve accessibility and can take the lead on small-scale improvements such as signage and welcoming station environments.[33] Potential proposals for improving accessibility should also consult panels such as Network Rail's Built Environment Accessibility Panel (BEAP) from an early stage to ensure their inclusivity.

Reaching the station

We acknowledge that Scotland's Railway does not have direct control over how passengers reach a station. As this is an important part of the passenger journey, we

[31] Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) | Transport Scotland
[32] Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
[33] Community Rail Inclusive & Accessible Travel Report

want to help improve access to stations through collaboration with other parties such as local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships.

How passengers reach a station is a key part of station accessibility

This pillar is addressed by the Sustainable Travel to Stations (STtS) strategy, which aims to make it easy for most passengers to get to and from railway stations without a car. STtS presents a vision and sets a mission to help increase passenger numbers, contribute to a net zero economy, and help people to live locally.

Stations should encourage sustainable first and last mile travel choices

Stations can encourage sustainable travel choices by providing suitable facilities for active travel, easy connections with local bus services, and electric vehicle (EV) charging points while prioritising blue badge parking near to the front door. Active and sustainable modes currently dominate the trip to the station (Figure 5Figure 5), but there is room for improvement. Scotland's Railway currently collaborates with stakeholders including Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), local authorities (LAs), and housing developers to improve travel links to stations, though this is often reactive– with Scotland's Railway responding to individual active travel or transport integration requests.

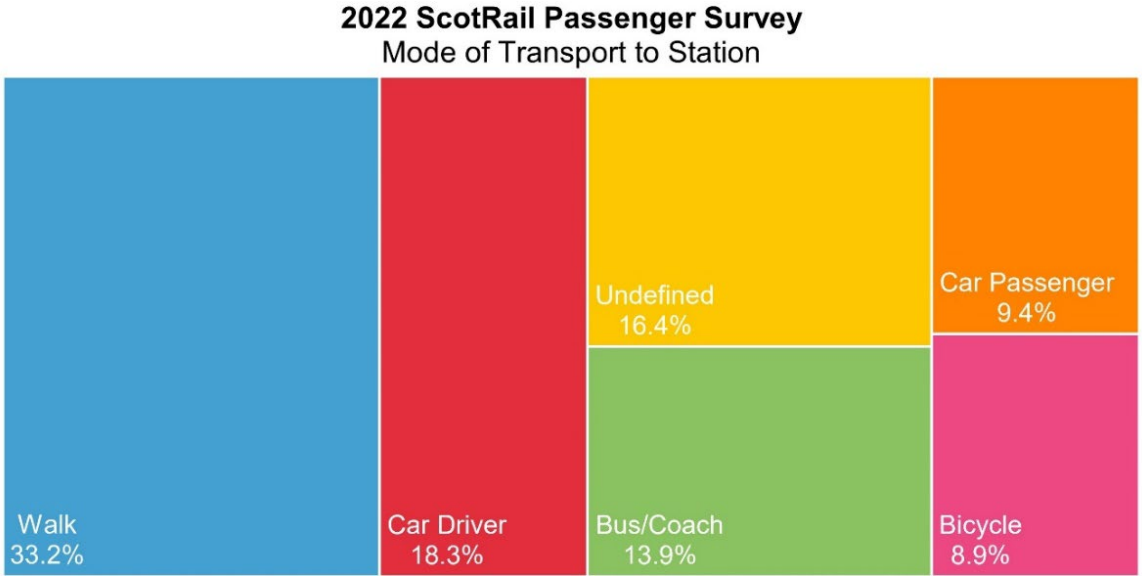


Figure 5: Method of transport to travel to station. Figures gathered via logon to station Wi-Fi with over 100,000 responses recorded. Collated and analysed by Market Insight Team, ScotRail.

Considering local context: residents, geography and transport availability

As car usage and public transport availability vary by geography, the approach to integrated stations will consider stations' local context in collaboration with local stakeholders. STtS highlights an opportunity to consider the sustainable transport offering both on a rail corridor basis, as well as in wider local authority areas by approaching them to understand plans and aspirations via mechanisms like Local Development Plans and Regional Spatial Strategies. STtS reviews how best to coordinate and align strategies, developments and plans between all statutory

bodies and Scotland's Railway and recommends a new approach involving collaboration with others to assemble joint funding packages.

Access to stations is important for people across Scotland

Increasing station connectivity can help alleviate transport poverty for the million people in Scotland who have difficulty completing essential journeys due to a combination of station access, high costs, and transport connectivity.[34] Public transport is essential for the 30% of Scottish residents without cars to access necessary services.[35] Further to this, having an integrated public transport system is a benefit to all.

Moving around the station

Once passengers reach a station, they must be able to navigate within the station.

This pillar covers navigation and access to services around the station concourse, facilities, and platform furniture, such as ticket purchasing, passenger assistance, wayfinding, station furniture, and passenger safety and confidence.

Ticket purchasing needs to be accessible

Passengers need adequate facilities for using e-tickets, for purchasing tickets at the station via ticket machines and station staff, and for receiving information in multiple formats. As of January 2019, only 40% of stations in Scotland had accessible ticket machines.[36] Ticket machines need to be clear and legible, well-lit, free of glare, of a suitable height for all users, and should not be the only ticketing option available.[37] Many passengers also need information to understand which ticket best suits their journey, as ORR research demonstrates that 9-20% of passengers using a ticket machine do not choose the most appropriate ticket.[38,39] Clear information on ticket restrictions and conditions is necessary to help passengers choose suitable tickets. Information on ticketing and other topics should be provided via a variety of sources such as main and subsidiary information screens, audio announcements, station staff, help points, and digital interactive displays.[40] This allows passengers to receive and process information in a format that suits them.

Passengers need to find their platform and access services and facilities

The passenger should be able to easily find and know how to get to the relevant platform in time for their train. Wayfinding signage, lighting, the positioning of platform furniture, indoor navigation apps, and in-station information and communications on relevant platforms or changes all play their part in helping passengers to find their way. Passengers may also need to access passenger assist services or facilities such as toilets, Changing Places facilities, catering, calm rooms, or heated waiting rooms.

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[34] Transport and Inequality: An evidence review for the Department for Transport
[35] Scottish Transport Statistics: Road Transport Vehicles | Transport Scotland
[36] How accessible are Britain's railway stations? (parliament.uk)
[37] Station Facilities & Amenities Design Manual | Section 5.6 | Network Rail
[38] Research into passengers' experience of ticket vending machines - 2017 | ORR
[39] Research into passengers' experience of ticket vending machines - 2018 | ORR
[40] Passenger information at railway stations report | Transport Focus

All passengers need to feel confident that they will get required assistance

Station staff are crucial to enable some disabled passengers to travel by rail. Some passengers will need assistance to complete their journeys. For passengers who booked in advance, only 68% felt confident that their booking requirements would be met.[41] Passengers with mental health, social or behavioural, or learning conditions were least likely to report that they found staff helpful, which suggests a need to review staff training. Staff training must be up-to-date and help staff understand how to better assist passengers with non-visible disabilities. Ensuring and communicating that staff are disability equality trained should further increase confidence for disabled people and should increase the percent of people finding staff assistance helpful.

Negative experiences with staff assistance decrease passenger confidence

According to a 2019 ORR report across operators, 21% of people with a vision disability and 23% of people with a physical disability did not receive some or all of the assistance they booked.[42] For ScotRail stations, 76% of people received all the assistance that they booked.[43] Out of passengers who did not pre-book, 10% of passengers who requested 'Turn Up and Go' assistance did not receive the requested assistance.[44] Customers who do not receive suitable staff assistance may be unable to complete their journeys or may have an unsatisfactory journey. These negative experiences and perceptions affect the decision to travel by rail in the future.

Build passenger confidence in the railway

To increase confidence in rail use, the railway also needs to tackle passenger safety and confidence. Some potential passengers do not feel confident using the railway due to disability, age, English fluency or disadvantaged backgrounds, so Scotland's Railway could offer 'Try a Train' days allowing people to learn about a station and take a group journey.[45] ScotRail's Rail Awareness Open Days offered people the opportunity to interact with station staff and to board and alight a train.[46]

Helping passengers feel safe to travel

It is important to reduce actual and perceived risks to passenger safety on trains. While over 93% of passengers feel safe and secure on trains in the daytime, only 80% of non-disabled passengers and 68% of disabled passengers feel safe and secure on trains at night.[47] Publicising available support including the Hate Crime Charter[48] may help passengers gain the confidence to travel, although awareness campaigns may be less effective than CCTV or other security measures.[49]

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[41] Experiences of Passenger Assist research report | ORR
[42] Experiences of Passenger Assist research report | ORR
[43] Passenger assistance | ORR Data Portal
[44] Experiences of Passenger Assist research report | ORR
[45] Southern - Try a train (southernrailway.com)
[46] More rail awareness open days announced | ScotRail
[47] Disability and Transport: Findings from the Scottish Household Survey - Public transport | Transport Scotland
[48] Tackling Hate Crime on public transport | Transport Scotland
[49] Fear of crime on the rail networks: Perceptions of the UK public and British Transport Police

Getting to your platform

This pillar covers the passenger experience of identifying and reaching the appropriate platform.

Passengers may need to find the platform from the station concourse, from the entrance, or from another platform when changing trains. To be fully accessible, this pillar requires convenient step-free access to all platforms, clear signage and wayfinding with sufficient colour contrast, and real-time journey updates.

Accessible footbridges, lifts, and tactile paving help people change between platforms

Passengers may need to safely and easily change between platforms. Step-free, well-placed, well-signed and well-lit footbridges encourage people to cross the track in a safe location and help reduce the occurrence and fear of crime.[50] Corduroy tactile paving at stairs and level crossings warns visually impaired people to proceed with caution.[51] Lifts that are easy to find are more likely to be used by people with luggage and buggies as well as people using wheelchairs, which reduces accidents on escalators.[50]

Maintenance of accessible infrastructure should be high priority

Existing accessible infrastructure is only of value when able to be used by passengers, and passengers should be able to access up-to-date information on the status of lifts and escalators. It is crucial that lifts and escalators are maintained to high standards, as out of service infrastructure can abruptly leave passengers unable to complete a journey. When appropriate, lifts and escalators will need to be renewed to ensure that they are reliable in the future.

Some step-free access is provided via level crossings, which need to be safe for all

Some public level crossings at stations provide step-free access between platforms, either as the only route or as an alternative route to a bridge or an underpass with stairs or a steep gradient. Public level crossings can also be used for community access to reach stations or to cross the rail network. Level crossings can provide access to platforms and other destinations, and Scotland's Railway will continue to ensure that these public crossings are safe for individuals and communities.

Interchanging passengers benefit from real-time updates

Being able to navigate between platforms is essential particularly if passengers change trains as part of their journey. Providing interchange information at the start of, and during the journey is the ideal as this enables passengers to know where to alight the train, the platform their next train will leave from, and the time required to make their connection. However, real-time updates should be provided to inform passengers of any last-minute journey changes. These updates can be delivered via mobile apps, on-board visual and auditory announcements or staff meeting passengers off the train at interchange stations. The latter will be particularly

[50] Spaces and Places for Everyone. Our Inclusive Design Strategy (networkrail.co.uk)
[51] Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces (publishing.service.gov.uk)

important for passengers who are disabled, travelling with luggage or have reduced mobility. This will reduce stress and anxiety for passengers, enabling a good passenger experience, and will help improve safety by reducing accidents caused by rushing to platforms.

Finding your space on the train

This pillar covers the passenger experience of boarding the train from the platform and reaching a seat or space on the train.

For an accessible experience, passengers need to know where to board the train, identify platform edges, be able to board the train, and successfully navigate to an appropriate space.

Level boarding is a key aspiration that will improve independence and safety

Scotland's Railway has an aspiration to provide level boarding, allowing more passengers to board trains unassisted. Boarding a train can be dangerous: in 2019-2020, six people died when falling from the platform to the track.[52] With level boarding, passengers using wheelchairs and other mobility devices could travel independently without staff needed to arrange ramps, increasing confidence and overall safety. There are many elements to consider when implementing level boarding, including platform height and how this relates to the train, the size of the vertical and horizontal gap between platform and train, the availability of ramps and platform conditions such as curvature.

Our gauging and rolling stock strategies will support level boarding

Scotland's Railway Gauging Strategy describes the approach to achieving Scottish Gauge, which will allow train and freight operating companies to know which train classes are suitable for use across the network and will identify nonstandard platform heights. Scotland's Railway aims to support level boarding as part of our gauging and rolling stock strategies. Our aspiration to provide level boarding will be achieved over time in coordination with rolling stock and infrastructure developments.

Tactile paving will help passengers board and alight safely

This pillar also recognises people's need to identify the platform edge. Tactile paving warns visually impaired people of platform edges. By early 2024, tactile paving is set to be installed at the platform edges of all stations in Scotland. helping visually impaired passengers travel safely.**Error! Bookmark not defined.Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Marked boarding locations make journeys easier for passengers

Another barrier when finding a space on the train is identifying where to board the train. The aisle width in trains cannot accommodate all wheeled mobility devices and prams. Passengers using priority seating areas need to board in specific locations; the same goes for those taking bikes or prams on trains. Platforms and trains which

[52] Station safety - Network Rail

clearly mark passenger boarding areas would make it easier for passengers to reach their seats, and speed up journeys through reduced dwell time at stations.

New technology can help more doors be available for boarding

As longer trains are brought into service, some platforms may need to be extended to accommodate new train lengths. However, new trains will be fitted with Automated Selective Door Opening (ASDO) which will ensure only doors which open safely onto the platform will be used. This also highlights the importance of on-train and on-platform real-time information to allow passengers to identify which doors will open ahead of their stop or their train arriving. Where ASDO is used, new train design will ensure door(s) to priority seating will always be in use, providing passengers with reduced mobility assurance that they can reach their seats.

Rolling stock specifications will include on-board experience

After boarding the train, passengers should be able to navigate through the carriage to reach an appropriate seat, store luggage or bicycles, and use the toilet. Passengers on the train should be able to receive real-time information about their journey, including clear auditory and visual announcements as well as communication with passenger assist services. We need to consider all of these as part of the on-board experience. Train specifications during procurement will cover this aspect of the passenger journey as new trains are brought into service.

Further considerations

Integrated ticket purchasing and online information can also make passenger journeys more accessible

In addition to the physical and communications barriers addressed by the four pillars, there are further elements of the passenger experience which could make a rail journey more accessible.

- Enabling integrated ticket purchasing for multiple types of public transport could result in lower costs for passengers, helping alleviate transport poverty while increasing passenger numbers.[53] This multi-modal trip planning is the focus of pilot projects underway led by HITRANS, Tactran, and SEStran.[54]
- Ease of access to online travel and ticketing information could encourage many groups to use rail more, including those with limited experience of using the rail system, lower level of English language fluency, learning disability, or lower income. Ticket websites should be accessible, enabling more people to feel confident purchasing online.

An action plan will be developed to further the accessibility concepts

This strategy has been developed to be a guide to organisations with a degree of control over the passenger experience. This is the first step of a policy that will continue to develop over a number of years.

[53] Transport and Child Poverty Report from Transport Scotland
[54] MaaS Investment Fund - Mobility as a Service | Projects | Transport Scotland

7. Our Starting Point

We need to understand current levels of accessibility at stations across the network against our definition of accessibility.

By doing this, we can identify the accessibility gaps within the railway network and work to improve them.

Previous accessibility classifications

The ORR classifies stations based on step-free access

Previously there have been few standardised ways of classifying accessibility at stations. The ORR classifies stations into three categories[55] with a focus on step-free access only.

Category A: Step-free access to all platforms

Category B: Some degree of step-free access, which may be in one or both directions or involve long ramps, steep ramps or access only via the street

Category C: No step-free access to any platform

Step-free access is only one aspect of accessibility

While this classifies stations by step-free access, it covers only one aspect of what makes a station accessible and is thus an insufficient definition.

How we can identify the accessibility gap

We now have the ability to develop a baseline of station accessibility based on the four pillars and new data

We recognise that Scotland's Railway should have a baseline for station accessibility and it is imperative that this is developed as soon as possible

In order to develop a baseline of station accessibility, the following are required:

- A holistic definition of accessibility
- Data on accessibility provision at each station across the network

This strategy presents a definition of accessibility based on the four pillars (see Figure 4), and data has become available that can support our baselining activity.

New data sources

DfT accessibility audits

Accessibility audit data provides a vast new data source covering all stations

In response to The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail,[56] the Department for Transport has completed accessibility audits for every station in Scotland. A panel of disabled people informed the project methodology and helped determine questions included

[55] Accessible Travel Policy Guidance for train and station operators | ORR
[56] Great British Railways: Williams-Shapps plan for rail - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

in the audit.[57] The audits provide recent and comprehensive information on stations' levels of accessibility for users with various disabilities or requirements for the three pillars inside the station. They also provide some data for the first pillar on access to and from stations regarding car parks, access paths, and availability of bus, ferry, tram, or taxi services.

Travel to station surveys

ScotRail passenger surveys indicate how people travel to stations

In autumn 2022 and spring 2023, ScotRail ran a survey at 66 stations asking how passengers reached the station to better understand station access. This helps provide a baseline of data for how people reach stations. In future, ScotRail plans to run the survey twice a year, which will help track changes in how people travel to stations.

Moving forward

Looking at station accessibility using new data

This new information helps us define how accessible our network is at a granular level, so we are taking a novel look at our stations to identify accessibility gaps.

Identifying the gaps in accessibility across the network is an extensive project. The data is currently being collated and input into a dashboard that is due to be available in spring 2024 as part of the National Rail Accessibility Strategy. We have additionally been working with the data in Scotland and refining the baselines for each pillar to evaluate the level of accessibility at each station in Scotland.

Integrating with our market-led approach

Our market-led approach is also informing our consideration of station accessibility. To meet passenger requirements, we need to understand passengers' wants and needs. Scotland's Railway is considering what makes a person choose to use rail versus other modes and how this varies between rail corridors with different customer markets. This work includes a pilot to analyse customers' needs and behaviours through analysis of payment card spending and passenger insights work to understand the needs of passengers and potential passengers at a local and regional level.

Considering accessibility by corridor can improve access to the wider network

Rather than simply looking at accessibility on a station-by-station basis, consideration should be given to the overall accessibility of each rail corridor. Scotland's eight rail corridors group routes by location and market characteristics, enabling whole-system planning across the country. Considering accessibility by corridor can facilitate investment in areas that are known to have higher access requirements, or poorer accessibility provisoion. A corridor-level view can also allow a focus on improving access to various routes and services across a corridor, enabling passengers to access the wider rail network.

[57] Making Our Railway Stations More Accessible

8. What Does This Mean in Practice?

Improving accessibility requires sustained effort from multiple organisations

We recognise the extent of the challenge to improve accessibility on the railway. Creating a railway for everyone will require sustained focus during a constrained funding environment. As highlighted by the four pillars, current and future stations need to consider a wide range of features to improve different types of accessibility and enhance experiences for as many passengers as possible.

To decrease cost we must look at existing projects and external funding sources

All work within or surrounding railway stations should also seek to address as many of the four pillars of accessibility as is affordable while maximising value for money. We must aim to maximise Access for All funding and combine this with funding for the public realm to improve the environment both in and around stations. To do this it is essential to:

- Strengthen our relationship with partners such as local authorities
- Look to improve accessibility as part of existing works

Existing programmes and station projects offer opportunities to increase accessibility according to the decision framework below

There are bridges that need to be renewed under programmes like decarbonisation because they are too low for electrical equipment to fit underneath. These renewal programmes provide opportunities to consider how accessibility at these stations can be improved. As such, any station investment project should use the decision framework in Figure 6 to deliver affordable improvements that offer demonstrable benefits to passengers.

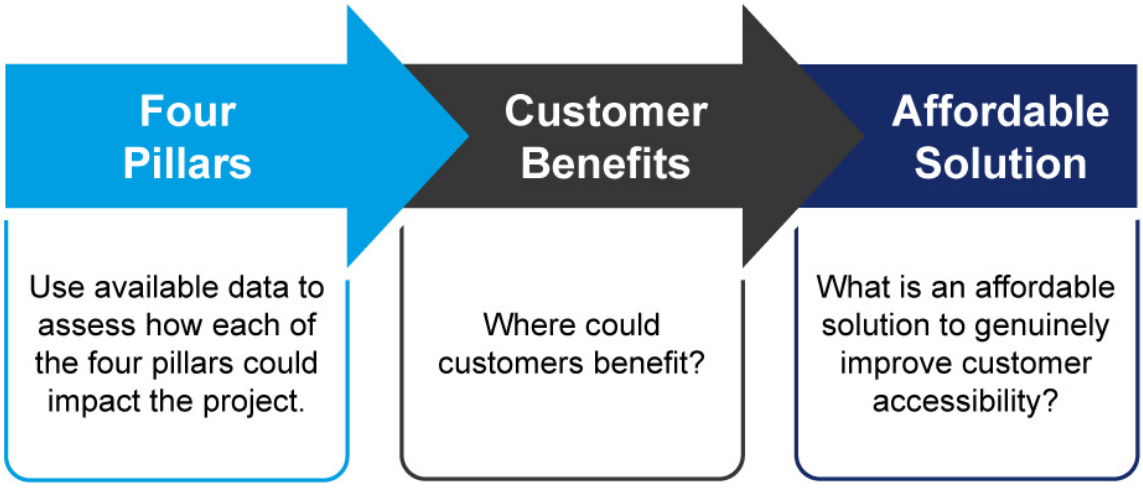

Figure 6: Decision framework for assessing accessibility requirements within any investment project

It is less expensive to prioritise accessibility from the start of a project

As the cost of implementing inclusive design is far greater after completion than during the concept and design stages, as well as much more expensive after

completion than during construction,[58] it will be much more affordable to improve accessibility in conjunction with other improvement works. To maximise affordability, accessibility should be considered during initial station design or when undertaking any investment project at a station, with focussed spending to deliver benefits to passengers. Low-cost changes such as signage and vegetation management can improve passenger experiences at minimal cost.

Cross-Working and Accountabilities

Cross-working is needed across Scotland's Railway

Scotland's Railway is a formal alliance between Network Rail and ScotRail and is supported by numerous organisations and suppliers across the rail industry. With most stations owned and operated by different parts of Scotland's Railway, cross-working will be key. To prioritise accessibility across the business, teams across Scotland's Railway need to understand their roles in helping make the railway more accessible.

We need to collaborate with external organisations and make it easier for them to reach appropriate rail industry contacts

Implementing accessibility at and around stations requires involvement beyond the rail industry. Stakeholders such as local authorities, active travel partners, and Regional Transport Partnerships can help improve the passenger experience of getting to or from a station to destination. When planning access to stations, collaboration between these groups is vital to create the most integrated experience for passengers. The rail sector can collaborate with relevant planning departments in local and regional authorities to achieve Scotland's ambitions for accessibility and modal shift. The rail sector can support this collaboration by helping external parties find the appropriate rail industry contacts.

Many groups have a role to play in implementing the accessibility strategy

A focus on the development of more collaborative relationships with industry partners, local authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships and other organisations can help us identify and propose cost-effective solutions to accessibility. This strategy will result in the assignment of stakeholder responsibilities, and alignment of efforts, to help Scotland's Railway deliver accessible journeys.

[58] 'Successful product development: Management case studies' Design Council report by Mynott et al.

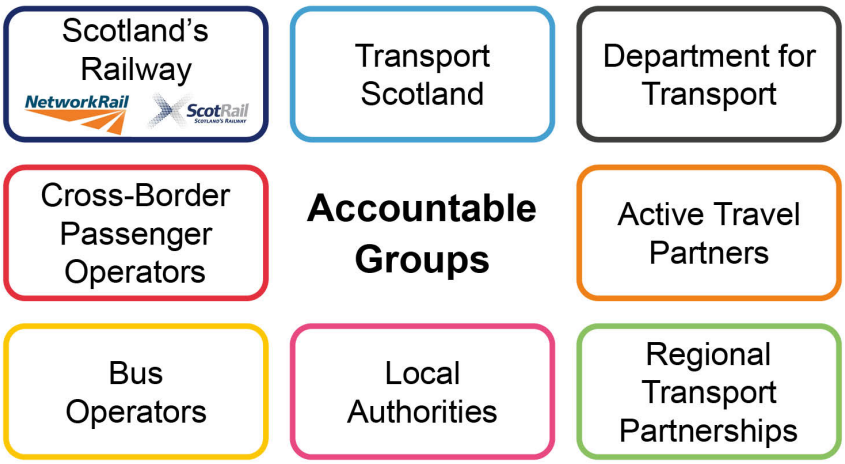

Figure 7: These accountable groups can help implement the four pillars of accessibility

More detailed accountabilities will be developed as part of action planning

Figure 7 above recommends the general accountable parties for implementing *A Railway for Everyone*. Detailed accountabilities will be determined as part of the Railway for Everyone Action Plan. This will identify responsibilities across Scotland's Railway and relevant stakeholders.

Funding

Funding is competitive and can be achieved more easily via collaboration

Funding requires alignment and is competitive due to public sector affordability challenges. Obtaining funding requires planning and collaboration across sectors, and will require forward planning.

A more collaborative approach towards assembling funding packages for stations and their surroundings is therefore required. Scotland's Railway will consider which areas deliver real benefits to our customers via a suitable business case. This might mean, for example, looking at a corridor holistically to understand where limited investment is best targeted.

Funding considerations and potential funding streams will be explored as part of future action planning activity.