



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 3 June 2015



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**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>MAJOR URBAN RAILWAY STATIONS (ACCESS).....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ANNUAL REPORT .....</b>	<b>27</b>

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**INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**  
**12<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2015, Session 4**

**CONVENER**

\*Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Adam Ingram (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab)

\*Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

\*David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Nathan Kaczmarek (Cycling Scotland)

Tony Kenmuir (Scottish Taxi Federation)

John Lauder (Sustrans)

George Mair (Confederation of Passenger Transport Scotland)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Steve Farrell

**LOCATION**

The Adam Smith Room (CR5)



# Scottish Parliament

## Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee

*Wednesday 3 June 2015*

*[The Convener opened the meeting at 10:00]*

### Major Urban Railway Stations (Access)

**The Convener (Jim Eadie):** Good morning. I welcome everyone to the 12th meeting in 2015 of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee.

Everyone present is reminded to switch off mobile phones as they can affect the broadcasting system. As meeting papers are provided in digital format, you may see tablets being used during the meeting.

No apologies have been received, although Mary Fee has given notice that she might arrive late.

Our first item is for the committee to continue to take evidence on access to Scotland's major urban railway stations.

I welcome George Mair, director of the Confederation of Passenger Transport Scotland, Nathan Kaczamarski, senior communications officer at Cycling Scotland, Tony Kenmuir of the Scottish Taxi Federation and, last but not least, John Lauder, national director at Sustrans. Alex Johnstone will kick off our questions.

**Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** How would your organisations characterise the accessibility of Scotland's major railway stations?

**Tony Kenmuir (Scottish Taxi Federation):** Good morning. I have been conferring with our colleagues at the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance and, during the past couple of days, we have been discussing access to Waverley station in particular. If you do not mind me holding the floor for a couple of minutes, I can speak about that.

I had a look at the station's website this morning, just to make sure that my information is completely current. I will walk you through my experience of attempting to engage with a taxi from the capital's main train station.

If you access the website for Edinburgh Waverley station, there is a very prominent link labelled "Disabled access". If you follow that link and request assistance, you are presented with 10 different phone numbers to ring or text to

assistance for when you arrive at the train station. Underneath the phone numbers, and where things begin to go wrong, is a note that says:

"If you need help around the station, speak to a member of staff or go to East Coast reception opposite the entrance to platform 7 next to the taxi rank."

That is the first deliberate mistake: there is no longer a taxi rank in Waverley station. Following on from there, on the same page there is a link to taxis. A note there says:

"The taxi rank is on Waverley Bridge. The rank in the station has closed."

Immediately there is conflicting information about how to get egress—I presume egress, because you are already in the station—or where you will be dropped off by a taxi.

Under the note that says that the taxi rank in the station has closed is a link to a website called traintaxi that provides information. First of all, there is a little field that asks you to type in the train station that you want information for. According to that field, Waverley station does not exist. I tried the combinations "Edinburgh Waverley" and "Waverley Edinburgh". Eventually I tried "Edinburgh" and three stations were listed: Edinburgh, Haymarket Edinburgh and Edinburgh Park. I clicked the link for Edinburgh, and the title "Edinburgh" came up, with "also called Edinburgh Waverley" in brackets.

A short paragraph on that page says:

"Edinburgh is a major station with taxis usually available on a rank."

There are not.

"Advance booking is not normally necessary or even possible",

which is an astonishing comment

"unless arriving early in the morning or late at night."

It also says that operators who may accept bookings include Central Taxis, City Cabs and Radiocabs, which would come as news to Radiocabs because it ceased trading 15 years ago. Below that—this is my final piece of evidence on this topic—it says:

"All or some of the vehicles used by this operator are understood to be wheelchair accessible."

Central Taxis and City Cabs are licensed public taxis so they are entirely wheelchair accessible. It is one of their licensing conditions. The website also recommends that people

"call to check availability ... before travelling".

Without foreknowledge of Waverley station, how it works and recent changes there, the information that is being provided for a traveller arriving by taxi or attempting to leave by taxi is woefully contradictory, if that answers your question.

**Alex Johnstone:** It is certainly consistent with some of the things that we have heard previously. Does anyone else want to comment on the accessibility of the major railway stations?

**John Lauder (Sustrans):** I am happy to comment from the point of view of pedestrians and people who use bicycles to get to the main stations. In my evidence, I referred to the red line that is drawn around a station when it is being upgraded or developed. That creates a culture whereby the inside of the station that is being renovated, regenerated or indeed built, such as the new station at Haymarket and the improved Waverley station, are very good to move around in. However, the red line that Network Rail draws around a station when it is being developed seems to lead to Network Rail focusing its attention inside the red line. What happens outwith the red line makes it quite difficult to get to stations.

There seems to be a lack of communication between Network Rail and the local authority that provides the road and the streetscape around the station. For example, it is quite difficult to get to Haymarket station simply because it is a very busy area. A lot of people use it and it has been redeveloped to include the tram system. In addition, despite being redeveloped so that it is a very good station when you are inside it, the narrow pavements on the approach to it remain, so it is very busy and congested at peak times. That strikes me as showing a lack of joined-up thinking. Network Rail develops a station at considerable cost and makes it really good, but it does not improve the area for, say, a mile around the station where people might walk or 3 miles around it where people might cycle to it. There have also been tensions at Haymarket around access for taxi ranks.

The other issue that we found with Haymarket, which astonished me, was that we were unable to have a back door to it so that we could access it from the Dalry side of the line. That meant that anyone approaching Haymarket from the west side of the rail line is still on the same narrow pavement that existed before the station was improved. It seemed to be a very easy option to create a back door into Haymarket from Distillery Lane; it would be similar to the Market Street entrance at Waverley. It was never developed and Network Rail consistently told us that it could not be delivered. It got to the point where I backed away from that because I felt that I was really annoying Network Rail. I felt that I did not want to go any further because we want to work in partnership with Network Rail. It got to the point where I felt that I had done all that I could, so I had to withdraw from pursuing that issue.

To return to the point about the red line that is drawn around the redeveloped stations, we fully

support station redevelopment—it is really good when stations are redeveloped. However, one of our major concerns about the proposals for Queen Street station, for example, is that again there does not seem to have been an assessment of how people who walk or cycle—or, very probably, go by bus or taxi—are going to get to the station. I imagine that the redeveloped Queen Street station will be great when people are in it but my worry is about how people will get to it. Will there be any change at all?

The final example—poor old Haymarket, but it needs to be cited—is that, despite being a multimillion pound development that given us a very good concourse, no improvement has been made to the cycle parking at Haymarket. We have an aim and a nationally agreed vision that 10 per cent of everyday trips will be by bicycle by 2020.

I thought that we would have had an improved position with the ability to park more bicycles at Haymarket, but that was not delivered as part of the scheme and we are now retrofitting improved parking for bicycles, in partnership with Network Rail and the City of Edinburgh Council. We are doing that with money that we have had to find, as opposed to it coming out of the Edinburgh to Glasgow rail improvement programme budget, which is huge. I would have thought that the £500,000 budget that is needed to build new cycle parking could have been found from that budget, rather than from other budgets that are now being pieced together retrospectively.

There is a lack of joined-upness—I know that that is not a very good expression—and a lack of cohesion caused by looking only within the red line around the station and not at anything outside it.

**James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):** You mentioned Queen Street station, and I was going to ask Tony Kenmuir about that, but other witnesses might want to answer. Queen Street station is excellent for taxis now. You come out of the station, get into a taxi and get away and there do not seem to be any issues. What concerns do you have about the redeveloped Queen Street station, and what role has the Scottish Taxi Federation had in ensuring that accessibility for taxis will be of the same high standard as it is at the moment?

**Tony Kenmuir:** I will let John Lauder answer first.

**John Lauder:** I will be as quick as I can. We have some profound concerns about the proposals for the redeveloped station. We initially wrote a reply to Network Rail's consultation and submitted our ideas and concerns. Its reaction was to send us a letter pretty much like the letter that any other constituent or member of the public would get, so we had to do a bit more work to get

the chance to meet and sit down with Network Rail representatives. We think that we have some skills in that area, and Sustrans manages funds on behalf of the Government, so we could have provided some funding.

We got that meeting with Network Rail, but it was hard won. Since then, I have continued to be quite worried about Queen Street station for two reasons. One is the red line that I alluded to earlier. It seems to be Glasgow City Council's role to sort out what is happening outside that red line, and there does not seem to be any way for Network Rail to work with the city council to plan how patrons will get to the station. That worries me because the area around the station is already busy and I wonder how busy the streets around the station will be for people who try to reach the station by bicycle.

My second concern is about the plans for cycle parking. After a series of meetings, we were shown drawings. We understand that the interior of the station will be constrained because the platforms need to be extended. That will limit the space that is available in the station to park bicycles, but there does not seem to be a plan to provide better or improved cycle parking around the stations. As I said in my evidence, my big worry—and what I found a bit perplexing—is that there is a proposal to have a short shopping mall under the multistorey car park that will be built next to the station, but there is no plan to use the space to create a bicycle park or hub such as might be found in any other big city in northern Europe, or indeed in Leeds or London. The area is very much earmarked for shopping and retail. It is under the control of a different part of Network Rail, and the two do not seem to be speaking to each other. I still find that worrying.

We have now had a series of meetings and have shown on the drawings where we think a cycle parking area could go, but we are now back at square 1 and having to start again with the whole process of looking at the drawings with Network Rail. That is why I am still worried about Queen Street station.

**James Dornan:** I will come back to Mr Kenmuir later with my question about Queen Street station.

10:15

**George Mair (Confederation of Passenger Transport Scotland):** As a trade association, we have not had a great deal of involvement with the Queen Street station redevelopment, but that does not mean that operators in Glasgow have not been involved with setting bus stops and public transport. Strathclyde partnership for transport recently invited us to participate in a transport integration forum that will include the current

ScotRail franchisee as well as Network Rail. It might give the opportunity for detailed discussions about some of the issues that concern the committee.

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):**

I have a brief question for Mr Kenmuir. I have been advised that taxis have been taken out of Waverley station and put above ground because of security advice from the UK Government and the security services. Is that a myth? Do you have any evidence that that advice is genuine? It is about the type of station, so stations that are not as enclosed might not receive the same advice. Otherwise, I would be concerned that every time a station is developed, the taxis would have to stay outwith the station concourse.

**Tony Kenmuir:** That is an excellent point. We were given the same story—we understand that our unceremonious ejection from Waverley station was for security reasons. I commend the city council for its reaction to developing accommodation on the street. That is not just an issue at Waverley station; it ties in with Queen Street station and Haymarket. The reasons that we were given for vehicles no longer being allowed underground in Waverley were about security, but hard on the heels of that, we were also expelled—if that is the right word—from Haymarket train station in Edinburgh. We were not given any particular reason for that, other than the lack of a drop-off area.

The old entrance to Haymarket station has a little off-road turning where the taxi stands used to be. Unfortunately, the development of the tram meant that if taxis were overranked, or if other vans and deliveries or an excess of people were attempting to drop off, it would cause an obstruction. We are now across the street, but we left Haymarket for a combination of reasons including lack of space, lack of a drop-off, particularly for people who have special needs, and the possibility of encroaching on tram tracks. The cycling community now has a special lane that takes cyclists off the main thoroughfare into that drop-off area and back out, so that they can avoid crossing the tramlines at too shallow an angle, which can cause spills. Unfortunately, as is widely publicised, that is still an issue.

The committee might think that being decanted from a train station is a highly emotive and confrontational subject for us, but it has distinct benefits. Taxis are now able to pick up the general public without paying anybody for the privilege, which is a big issue for us. Sometimes transport hubs take it upon themselves to introduce a permit system, levy or toll of some sort, and they charge us as a public transport provider for dropping off and picking up the general public. In most cases, we regard that as an abuse of a dominant position,

and unfortunately, most of those in the taxi community are small and independent businessmen who do not have the resources to combat that. Being out on the street can therefore be a benefit.

**David Stewart:** I personally do not have a problem if the taxis were moved because of security advice. Having some experience of the Parliament building, I understand that the security services do not want to give us the specifics of that advice, but perhaps the police could confirm whether such advice was given. Passengers and the taxi industry might understand the reasons better if they were told, “Yes, security advice has been given. You have to move out”. That is perfectly understandable, but there is genuine confusion, so perhaps we should seek confirmation from the police that such advice was given about Waverley station and perhaps other stations.

**Tony Kenmuir:** The space formerly occupied by taxis was converted to retail accommodation—an indoor market—very quickly. The committee can take from that what it will.

**The Convener:** Alex, you have been very patient while other members have sought to hijack your questions.

**Alex Johnstone:** I am very patient. I want to bring the two other panel members into the discussion as they have not had much opportunity to comment yet. I want to know their views on accessibility. However, as we have already strayed into the area of the next question, I would also like to know their views on the apparent lack of co-ordination between local authorities, Network Rail and transport providers—I think that Mr Lauder called it the red-line issue.

**Nathan Kaczmariski (Cycling Scotland):** I will comment on your point about co-ordination first. John Lauder touched on the cycling action plan for Scotland’s shared vision of 10 per cent of everyday journeys being made by bike. In the original CAPS and the refreshed version in 2013 there is specific reference to ScotRail, Network Rail, rail integration, and rail and cycling being key complementary journey modes. On the long-term vision for active travel in Scotland, the CAPS also talks about transport integration and provides a good overview of what makes a station accessible in terms of information, parking, clear routes and things like that.

I want to touch on the opportunities. The CAPS delivery forum is made up of a range of stakeholders including ScotRail, and at the most recent forum meeting there was a presentation that talked about the door-to-door journey. I will touch on that in a moment, but I note that there are plenty of opportunities for anyone who is

involved in the Queen Street station redevelopment—and anything else that is being developed in terms of rail—to get information on best practice, because there is a lot out there. For example, cycle hire has been put in place at Glasgow and Stirling; there is the Stirling cycle hub, which is a pilot project that has been successful so far and could be rolled out elsewhere; and there is Abellio’s identification of cycle points and various things that could be put in place at rail stations. All of that is discussed at the forum meetings. As George Mair noted, there are forums out there to provide and explain examples of best practice.

On access, we would like to focus on the door-to-door journey. Many of the stations that are identified in the study that you are looking at, the evidence that you are gathering and the surveys that you have undertaken are within huge population areas, given the people who live and work there. To understand what is needed in terms of access, it is important to understand the door-to-door journey—what people are travelling to do, what their destination is and what their origin is. John Lauder touched on parking and things like that, and Queen Street station is a good example in that regard.

What everyone in the cycling community—and probably people from the communities for many other modes—has fed back is that access is important. There is an ambition to put in improved cycle parking, and Abellio and others have identified that it is possible to incorporate such improvements in mainline stations. They want to do that, there is the drive to do it and it is supported by cycling organisations. It is important to understand and ensure that people can make door-to-door journeys so that, when they arrive at a station, they can store their bike and continue with their onward journey.

On the responses from Network Rail on the back of the Queen Street consultation, as John Lauder pointed out, it is not clear that that ambition for door-to-door journeys is being taken on board. As I said, there are plenty of opportunities to identify good practice not only from the continental experience but within Scotland, given that we have in place, for example, the Stirling cycle hub and cycle hire schemes. In addition, as John Lauder mentioned, there are already successful cycle parking and other integrated transport schemes in Leeds and London.

**George Mair:** I concur with John Lauder’s view on the red-line issue. There are good practices in many locations, which might be down to the local bus station manager and local rail station manager working jointly to put things in place to help, such as bus information and appropriate bus stop locations. There is a need for a consistent

approach in that regard, and as an industry representative group we are happy to engage with ScotRail, Abellio and National Rail to try to facilitate such an approach.

The point about security is interesting. I would have thought that the security issue should apply in all stations, but in Aberdeen, where I live, the station taxi rank is a pane of glass away from the main concourse. Surely what is good for one should be good for the other. However, I recognise that there are things that the industry, Network Rail and ScotRail need to work on better to provide facilities for public transport information.

**Alex Johnstone:** It is interesting that that taxi rank in Aberdeen is also below street level in much the same way that the taxi rank at Waverley used to be.

We have talked a lot about the lack of co-ordination. Do you think that Transport Scotland, as the major funder of both ScotRail and Network Rail, has been sufficiently clear in directing both organisations to maximise accessibility to stations? Do you think that it has a role?

**George Mair:** Yes—I think that it has an important role to play. Whether it is a dictatorial role or a role that advocates closer collaboration between local authorities, Network Rail, ScotRail and the bus industry, it has a major role to play in that respect.

**Alex Johnstone:** Has it done anything, or should it be doing something?

**John Lauder:** My understanding is that it is doing something now and that a chief executive and two directors—one for ScotRail and one for Network Rail—will work together as a team, although I may be wrong about that. That is a really good development because it will tackle a culture in which Network Rail pretty much did its stuff and ScotRail ran the trains on the infrastructure that Network Rail provided but a lot of things fell between the cracks.

I agree with George Mair. Transport Scotland has a leadership role in ensuring that everyone works in a much more cohesive way. The transport community is really quite small. We give evidence to the committee regularly, so members know that there is a fairly small band of key operators. There is bound to be a willingness to work together; indeed, I do not think that there is any indication that people would not want to work together. Those people need to be brought together in a team effort.

For me, the particular issue is the separation between Network Rail and the local authority, which George Mair mentioned. How do we bring them closer together and really make getting to and from the station a much better experience for

the patron? I am hopeful, and the appointment of Abellio could be a really good development.

**Alex Johnstone:** Is there a danger? The development of Waverley has been completed, and in other areas where developments have still to be completed, the plans have at least been finalised. Are we in danger of having missed the boat a bit on that?

**John Lauder:** Yes, I suppose that we are. My worry about Queen Street station is that the plans seem to be fairly well developed and we are now retrofitting bits in. My major worry is about that station.

A slight concern is that a lot hinges on Abellio making changes. I hope that it gets enough support to be able to make all the changes that it has indicated. There must be a huge amount of pressure on it now to deliver the changes. That said, it is a hopeful sign that there will be a more cohesive team at the top.

**The Convener:** I want to return to the access to Edinburgh Waverley station, which we have already touched on. The committee previously heard evidence from Transform Scotland, Transport Focus and the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland that the closure of the vehicle access ramps at Edinburgh Waverley station has significantly worsened accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists and that it has had a particular impact on access for older and disabled people. Do you have a view on that?

**Tony Kenmuir:** I have tried the set-up at Waverley station and worked my way from one platform to another. There is an excellent system of elevators, but it strikes me as being like something out of “Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator”. Trying to navigate the way from one part of the station to the other—up, up, along, down, along, up, along—is like solving a Rubik’s cube.

10:30

The key access concern is when someone is dropped off at an entrance. Most wheelchair users understand that they must make arrangements ahead of travelling in order to be met and assisted with luggage, access or whatever, but they might still have a bit of a wait for someone to appear to assist them. The best entrance for dropping off and collecting passengers is Calton Road, but a person who is dropped off there is isolated until someone arrives to assist them. Therefore, a burden is placed on whoever drops them off to perhaps wait there for an extended period.

I mentioned the instructions on the website on how to get assistance, but even finding out who you should contact for assistance is something of a maze to navigate your way through.

The drop-off distances from the entrances and exits are an issue. An example is Waverley steps on Princes Street. The elevator is at the back of the shopping centre, which is a fair distance from the road. Even getting to the elevator is an issue.

Another potential problem—in addition to the taxis being out on the street, the entrances being relatively small and the provision of elevators mostly being the only way to get people down to the station—is that no trolleys are available. When a driver has an elderly person with a bit of luggage or a person in a wheelchair who cannot carry anything, how do they find a way to convey their luggage? It is not possible to leave a taxi anywhere in the vicinity to allow the driver to go into the station to get and bring out a trolley, get them loaded up and get them back into the station. There is simply nowhere to park a vehicle. That is an enormous issue.

**The Convener:** So there are issues around older and disabled people being able to access taxi services, as well as an impact on your ability to provide that service.

**Tony Kenmuir:** Yes. I am thinking about taxi services only from the point of view of providing a service to people who want to enter or leave the station. I am leaving our commercial interests out of it.

We do not want to abandon someone in a wheelchair who has luggage or an elderly person who needs assistance on Market Street, Calton Road or Princes Street, but there is just nowhere for us to stop, wait and ensure that someone from the station engages with them. We have no control over that; we have no contact there at all.

**The Convener:** Can the temporary measures be improved or are you looking for the ban to be revoked?

**Tony Kenmuir:** We do not need the vehicles to have access into the station. However, it is key to have a designated pick-up and drop-off space. If everyone who required assistance went to Calton Road and there was a ready connection with someone who could assist them, along with trolleys, that would be a major step forward.

**The Convener:** What discussions have you had with Network Rail in order to find a solution to the difficulties?

**Tony Kenmuir:** None whatsoever.

**The Convener:** What consultation did Network Rail engage in prior to imposing the station vehicle ban?

**Tony Kenmuir:** None whatsoever.

**The Convener:** You have talked about the justification for the ban being around security issues, and Dave Stewart mentioned that, but you

also imply that the real justification might be around increasing the retail footprint in the station. Do you have any evidence for that?

**Tony Kenmuir:** That was an observation rather than an implication.

**The Convener:** Do you have any evidence to support that observation?

**Tony Kenmuir:** No.

**The Convener:** That is helpful. Does anyone else have anything to say about taxis?

**John Lauder:** You might have heard this before, in which case please stop me, but the closure of the vehicle access means that people using bicycles must share a narrow pavement with pedestrians.

**The Convener:** I will allow you to elaborate on that point in a moment. On cyclists' access being restricted because they must share a narrow space with pedestrians, tourists and those with small children, particularly on the north ramp, you highlight what appears to be a solution in your written evidence to the committee. Will you say a little bit about that?

**John Lauder:** The barriers look as if they were put up in an absolute emergency. They are a physical block. There is revamped security around the Parliament building, with substantial bollards, but people can still get past them.

I would have thought that it would be perfectly possible to have bollards that go up and down. That happens all over the place—it is a simple and well-tested technology. Previously, there was a barrier that might not have been robust enough for the security requirements but which worked perfectly well. It was easy to go by on your bicycle, and you did not end up clattering people's shins with your pedals as you apologised your way down into the station. To design something quite simple that would work perfectly well would be a 10-minute job for a junior engineer.

**The Convener:** On that point, I ask you the question that I put to Mr Kenmuir. What discussions are you having with Network Rail in order to find a solution?

**John Lauder:** I am worn out on that, I am afraid. We all tried over and over again, but we got nowhere.

**The Convener:** What do you think that that says about Network Rail's approach to engaging with stakeholders on issues of mutual concern that are very much in the public interest?

**John Lauder:** It is surprising, from a public body.

**The Convener:** Can you tell me a bit more?

**John Lauder:** I am not being facetious. We would never expect an airport to make it that difficult to get in and out, so I am surprised that it is so difficult to get in and out of a really busy railway station. It obviously has a narrow footway, and it must be clear to the staff and management of Network Rail that that provides a poor visitor experience. That poor experience will be a daily one for commuters who use a bicycle or a wheelchair or have substantial luggage. Public money is being spent, and I would have thought that it could be used in a more welcoming way for people who are paying to use the train system.

**The Convener:** Mr Lauder, Mr Mair and Mr Kaczmariski, what formal consultation did Network Rail undertake with your organisations?

**John Lauder:** On the barriers?

**The Convener:** On the ban on vehicle access.

**John Lauder:** I am happy to be corrected, but I think that the answer is none.

**George Mair:** In my six years in this job, I have never met Network Rail, so the answer is none at all.

**Nathan Kaczmariski:** It is the same for us. We have not been consulted.

**The Convener:** So there has not been any formal consultation.

**Nathan Kaczmariski:** Not with us.

**The Convener:** On vehicular access to the station, it is interesting that Mr Kenmuir said that he is not looking for the ban to be lifted and for taxis to be admitted into the station. Is that the same for other witnesses?

**Tony Kenmuir:** I would be delighted for the ban to be lifted as long as there is no permit system in place or any form of charge for allowing taxis to engage with the general public. We would be delighted to be inside, under cover, providing a service. We have no objection to being there, but we have no particular desire to pay £1,600 a year per taxi for the privilege.

**The Convener:** And how realistic is that?

**Tony Kenmuir:** It remains to be seen.

**The Convener:** You have highlighted a possible solution that would not involve taking taxis into the station. How do you intend to take that issue forward?

**Tony Kenmuir:** I am not sure that I understand the question.

**The Convener:** You said that it would be possible to reconfigure arrangements without taxis going back into the station. How is that going to

happen? What attempts are you making to engage with Network Rail in order to make it happen?

**Tony Kenmuir:** At all stations across the UK, it is commonplace for taxis to be present at each station entrance and exit, generally with some sort of cover, access to trolleys and reasonable signage. Those things are lacking in Edinburgh. However, being on the street near the entrance is not a huge issue in itself.

**The Convener:** Mr Lauder, what is your view on whether vehicles should be allowed back into the station? If that is not the solution, what are you looking for?

**John Lauder:** Vehicles can get into the station for deliveries, and bus operators use the ramp when there is an emergency and lines are closed—I have seen buses going right into the station.

The station is quieter and the ambience is perhaps better now that taxis are not going in and out, but that does not take on board everything that Tony Kenmuir said. As long as the taxi industry can work well and is working for patrons, I have no firm view on whether taxis should or should not be in the station. However, the observation remains that the two ramps are difficult to access and more could be done to use them better than they are being used at the moment.

**The Convener:** Do you want the vehicle access ramp to be reopened for pedestrians and cyclists?

**John Lauder:** It makes total sense to me. Dropping a bollard is easy to do and happens all over the place so I fail to see why it cannot be done there.

**George Mair:** Although I accept the point that Tony Kenmuir made in general terms, the closer to the concourse we can get people who struggle with lifts, escalators and a lack of facilities for luggage, the better it is for them, so there is a need to think through how we do that. If it can be done safely, why not do it?

**Nathan Kaczmariski:** I emphasise the point that the first priority is people who have disabilities or have mobility aids or who need to carry large things. We need to get them into the station comfortably. Any changes need to take that into consideration first and foremost. Ideally, we would like to overcome the issues that we have with moving bicycles down but, as John Lauder said, if the current ambience in the area is preferable, the question is how we ensure that access is granted but not to the detriment of others who need priority access.

**The Convener:** Are you saying that we should open the vehicle access ramps to everyone, just to cyclists or to cyclists and pedestrians?

**Nathan Kaczmariski:** As John Lauder said, it makes sense to put pedestrians and cyclists on that access ramp if we can. However, we must make sure that the access that is granted to anybody who does not have access at the moment does not impact adversely on the other users.

**John Lauder:** At the moment, deliveries come in a truck down the ramp. There is no reason why that cannot continue, why the ramp cannot be accessible for people with bicycles and why the footway cannot be widened. It is quite a big ramp. I imagine that the fire brigade and ambulance service would still need to be allowed access. It is all doable.

**David Stewart:** My questions are for Mr Mair but, if any other members of the panel want to answer, they should catch my or the convener's eye.

How does the CPT work to improve the integration of bus and rail services?

**George Mair:** The CPT has an overseeing role to represent the industry in a number of forums, such as the bus stakeholder group that the minister set up some months back, and to work with the regional transport partnerships and local authorities where required. We work across the full spectrum of national, local and regional politics.

We also work with other partners, such as MACS and other disabled groups, to try to get solutions to the many challenges that people face in using buses. We will work with anybody to try to improve things as best we can.

**David Stewart:** I think that I know the answer to this, but how receptive are Network Rail and ScotRail to your suggestions?

**George Mair:** We have not yet met Abellio. We indicated early doors that we would be happy to offer our facilities to start discussions between the bus operators and Abellio. By implication, with the new arrangement and the integrated approach that it has now, Network Rail would come as part of that. I have been to some briefings. I understand that Abellio has a fairly good approach to these things in Holland and we are keen to pick up on it in Scotland.

**David Stewart:** The committee carried out a survey on accessibility. It attracted one of the highest responses that any committee has had, so I thank everyone who put work into it and all the people who responded. Some of the concerns were quite obvious. For example, there were concerns about accessibility at railway stations and the fact that bus stops and routes can be located far from the local station. Why is that often the case?

10:45

**George Mair:** It is probably historical, as bus routes have been in place for a long time. That kind of discussion is needed. As I mentioned earlier, SPT has set up a transport integration forum, and the City of Edinburgh Council has done something similar. Working through that kind of forum can highlight such issues. If there is a need to look at the location of bus stops, that can be done locally. The bus company and the local station manager can try to work together and come up with a solution that addresses the problem.

**David Stewart:** In your experience, does that happen very often? If there are responses from customers saying that the bus stop is in the wrong place, how easy is it to move that bus stop, or indeed to change a bus route?

**George Mair:** It requires going through a registration process. Complaints would not come to us—they would probably go to the local bus company or the local authority. That is the kind of thing for which the partnership arrangement works best. It harks back to the red line that John Lauder mentioned. We need to go beyond that and look at the journey through the bus stop to the railway station. We can then identify whether there are issues, and get people in the room and get on and try to fix those issues.

There is a process to go through for registration change, which takes at best 56 days, or 70 days at worst. That process can be circumnavigated by the local authority supporting a short-term registration.

**David Stewart:** My final question is on something that was touched on earlier. Again in the survey, there were complaints about the lack of information for onward journeys by bus, including timetables and real-time information at or near railway stations. How are your members working with Network Rail and ScotRail to address those issues?

**George Mair:** It varies. In Aberdeen, there is an electronic screen that people can tap into and it will tell them where the nearby bus stops are and which services operate there. I think that there is a real-time link too. That happens in Aberdeen, but it is not consistent across stations in Scotland.

One thing that people can use in advance of their journey is Traveline Scotland. If they are travelling and they have a smartphone—it does not have to be the most expensive smartphone in the world—they can tap into Traveline Scotland and pick the bus that they want to take from the station. It will show them the bus stops geographically and tell them which services stop there. If there is a real-time link, it will tell them when services are running in real time. In the

absence of anything else, Traveline Scotland is probably the best tool that we can suggest that people use.

**David Stewart:** That is good practice, but the people who contacted us have said that, in their experience, they cannot access that information in a lot of areas.

**George Mair:** It goes back to the need for closer working between Network Rail, ScotRail and local authorities, and trying to get the best practices that exist in Scotland to be delivered in other locations. Best practice, in the absence of that, is Traveline Scotland. It works fantastically well and covers rail, bus and ferries right across Scotland. People can link up their journeys and get information on each of the different components. If they want to walk somewhere, it will tell them how to get there by walking. I am not sure whether it covers cycling—

**John Lauder:** Yes.

**George Mair:** It works extremely well.

**David Stewart:** Yet, in answer to the earlier questions, all the witnesses said that they had very little communication with Network Rail.

**George Mair:** Yes—we are perhaps as much to blame for that as anyone else. We should be pushing harder for those kinds of discussions to take place.

**David Stewart:** Would any of the other witnesses like to respond to the questions that I have raised?

**John Lauder:** I have one comment, Mr Stewart. To be fair to First, it is very good at providing signage for cycle routes at stations; I acknowledge that it did a really good job for us. There are signs for the national cycle network at every station where it is within a couple of miles—for example, on the lines up to Aberdeen and Inverness—so credit is due there. First was very helpful and worked well with us.

**Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** I have a brief question. I am sure that David Stewart would agree with this point, which I am raising to get it on the record. George Mair has described what in theory is an excellent system, but it depends on reasonable 2G and 3G connectivity. These systems can work extremely well where there is that connectivity. However, George Mair mentioned that Traveline Scotland also applies to ferries. I represent the Highlands and Islands, and most of our ferries operate in areas where there is very poor connectivity, so these excellent systems cannot really be of use to ferry users. Will you acknowledge that point?

**George Mair:** I am certainly not an information technology expert, but I recognise that challenge. I

remember raising it in a meeting that I had with Highland Council, which was looking to put in an electronic bidding process for tenders. It said that in that part of the world there is probably better IT than in some other parts of Scotland, because it had been an early adopter of new technology. When people in Scotland travel to a location to pick up a ferry, they will get a signal if they go into cafes and shops. There are many places where you can get wi-fi for free.

**Mike MacKenzie:** Sometimes what you are saying is true and you can get wi-fi. Often, though, it is linked to a land line that itself has very poor broadband and, as more people use their devices, it gets choked off. I concede the point that Inverness has reasonable connectivity.

**James Dornan:** I return to the question that I asked about Queen Street. We have excellent facilities there now. How do you see that changing after the redevelopment, in terms of taxi access and egress, which is more important for people coming off the train? Just now it is nice; you can wait under cover and get a taxi right there. How will that be affected?

**Tony Kenmuir:** I conferred with our colleagues at Glasgow Taxis just yesterday, Mr Dornan, and they would agree that Queen Street station works very well. They are maybe a little unclear whether any significant change to the current taxi arrangements is planned but, as things stand, they are relaxed about that. The station is working well and we are not aware of any major changes for taxi provision.

**James Dornan:** Your answer brings on another question. You said that your colleagues were “unclear” about how they were going to be affected. What sort of discussions have you had with Network Rail?

**Tony Kenmuir:** Those discussions have been at local level with Glasgow Taxis, rather than with the Scottish Taxi Federation. I should have phrased that by saying that my colleagues did not give me any indication that they were expecting any substantial change to the current situation, once the plans have been completed.

**James Dornan:** We have talked plenty about Edinburgh Waverley. Are there any other major Scottish railway stations where provisions for taxis are particularly poor?

**Tony Kenmuir:** No. The recent change at Waverley has been controversial. We had some notice that it was going to happen. This might sound like a contradiction: we knew that the change was tabled, but when it happened, it happened very quickly and with little notice. That has been an issue in itself.

Generally speaking, taxis are in close proximity to stations and deal with dropping off and picking up their passengers at a local level.

**The Convener:** For the record, what was the notice period at Waverley?

**Tony Kenmuir:** Anecdotally, I heard from transport people in the City of Edinburgh Council that they found out about the final date for change by reading it in the *Evening News*, which is where I got my information.

**The Convener:** That is helpful.

**James Dornan:** My last question is about signage. A number of witnesses have complained about signage to their next mode of transport when they leave stations. Do you accept that that is a problem? Secondly, how would you go about improving the signage in and around the station to assist passengers?

I will start with Mr Kenmuir, but I am sure that others will want to respond.

**Tony Kenmuir:** Certainly, I am conscious that the last thing that anyone wants is to have a pedestrian environment bristling with signs.

One of the proposals for the further development of connections at Waverley station is to move the major taxi provision to Calton Road. The development of the entrance there is terrific. It is a relatively quiet road, and the new drive-in has been really well designed and built. Unfortunately, the only way to get from there to the station and on to the network is by lift. It is a drop-off only at present, but there is a suggestion that a taxi rank on Calton Road might become the main provision. In principle, that is an excellent idea. Unfortunately, however, Calton Road exits on to Leith Street at the top of Leith Walk and it is only possible to turn left, towards Princes Street. The taxi would then go past the taxi rank that is at Waverley Steps. It does not lead you anywhere.

Our major concern with moving taxis anywhere would be the provision of signage. There are some signs with the word "taxi" if you look hard enough, but they are not obvious and neither are the signs for assistance.

**James Dornan:** If there were to be a change in the position of the taxi ranks, would you be informed of that in advance or be given help to organise the signage?

**Tony Kenmuir:** The conversations that we have been having have mostly been with the City of Edinburgh Council. The council has been suggesting that it would in turn put the necessary pressure on Network Rail to provide the signage.

**John Lauder:** From the point of view of the pedestrian or anyone using a bicycle, signage is very important, particularly for knowing the best

route to get to a station. On my regular commute to my office, which is at Haymarket, I speak quite frequently to visitors who are trying to figure out the way to Haymarket station, very often when they are only half a mile or less from it.

When a station is being redeveloped, it is important to determine the radius for people walking to it or getting to it by bicycle and look at how it can be signed. People rely on signs more than clever technology or maps. Signs on the street to, say, Queen Street station make them think "Oh, that's great—I will follow that sign and that will take me to the station." It would be unthinkable to develop a road network to drive on without signage, but quite often it is an afterthought for people who are walking or cycling.

When a station is being redeveloped or promoted, there should be a sum of money available to spend outwith the boundary of the station. The local authority, or whoever it should be, could then be employed to do a signage schedule for key routes from hotels and the places where people stay, so that people could get to the station. Quite often, there is a feeling that the station is impenetrable because people do not know where it is in relation to where they are in the city. Signage is massively important for people who are walking.

**James Dornan:** I suspect that I know the answer to this, but what sort of discussions has Sustrans had with Network Rail or the local authorities about signage?

**John Lauder:** None. I should pause there and say that we would have had discussions if the national cycling network, which we are responsible for, runs near to the station. Outwith that circumstance, none.

We talk to local authorities quite a lot more now through the Government's new funding stream, smarter choices, smarter places. The stream is very welcome and allows local authorities to invest more in signing plans and schedules. However, there is no coherence between Network Rail, local authorities and groups such as ours.

**Nathan Kaczmariski:** There is huge potential around stations for getting people to walk or cycle to them. In Scotland, a cycle journey is about 4.4km on average. That is similar to the Netherlands and Denmark, where cycling has a very high modal share. Journeys there average about 3 to 4km. If we drew a 5km ring around each of the stations that are identified in this study, it would encompass a huge number of people who are able to access that station and are, therefore, able to access employment and education, visit friends and family, and access services and leisure.

11:00

I will use employment as an example. As I was saying before, the door-to-door journey is very important. Although we are focusing on the main stations, lots of people use the train in places such as East Renfrewshire, which is a satellite of Glasgow. Approximately 15 to 20 per cent of those within 2km of a station use the train to travel to work, meaning that a huge number of people are already engaged in using the train.

John Lauder's point was about making sure that people know where the cycle routes and walking routes are, and what the distance is to the station. It was also about promoting the fact that it is possible to travel by bike or on foot to the station.

Good signage is obviously good for those people who need to find their way and have already decided that they want to travel on foot or by bike. However, there is huge potential to target people who had not thought about that at first but who might, if they see good cycle parking or signage in place, be encouraged to use a bike or travel on foot to the station, and to enjoy all the benefits of changing to a low-carbon mode of transport.

**George Mair:** Many of the local authorities have bus operator forums. Bus signage at railway stations is an issue that is very often on the agenda. I am not sure that we have closed the loop, with the local authority working with Network Rail and ScotRail to deliver something. There is probably a need to go back and look at how we can improve that and close the loop. It is important that people can arrive at a train station and have a good idea that, if they go out through the door at the left, they can get a certain bus, and, if they go out through the door at the right, the options are A, B and C. We are not quite there yet in some locations, but closing that loop is the important issue.

**James Dornan:** That sounds like a good idea.

**Mike MacKenzie:** Before I start, I would like to commend Mr Lauder for the terrific work that Sustrans has done across the Highlands and Islands in providing a cycle network and pathways.

The committee undertook its own survey of passengers on the issue of the accessibility of stations. One of the interesting things that we found was that cyclists were much more likely than other station users to give very poor ratings for accessibility and general friendliness for the perimeters around stations. Would you agree with that, and can you shed any light on why cyclists, in particular, are so critical of that aspect?

**John Lauder:** Stations create a lot of movement: they are busy places. Naturally, in getting to and from them, there will be a lot of

movement of vehicles on the streets around stations and the roads to stations. That is understandable. Taxis are plying their trade, and buses need to drop people off, pick people up and move them. That creates a general sense of busyness in the streets around the station: the closer someone gets to the station, the more congested the roads become. We are focusing on the big stations and that is definitely the experience at those stations—the closer you get, the busier the roads are.

Leaving aside Haymarket, where cyclists now have the added concern about dropping the front wheel of the bike into a tramline, cyclists simply experience more and more busyness as they get to the station, because the roads are busy. They will not have the type of segregated cycle lane that would be found in a northern European city. Therefore, cyclists are mixing all the time with other traffic, and that can be tricky and challenging.

There are some quite busy roads outside some of the stations that we are discussing—Haymarket Terrace in Edinburgh, for example. The other traffic wants to move at 30mph and is therefore accelerating and decelerating. Cyclists find themselves really having to look out for themselves, which makes getting to a station on a bicycle not at all a pleasant experience.

Cyclists might have a good experience around, say, Central station in Glasgow, where a segregated, two-way cycle lane comes down Waterloo Street. That is great, but it is only one way of getting into the station, which is probably why cyclists are unhappy with the situation there.

I imagine that cyclists are also unhappy because, as our evidence shows and as Nathan Kaczmarek has covered, there is little space outside the station for people to park their bicycle, and it is difficult to get the bicycle into the station and park it there.

There is limited parking for bikes around Queen Street station, which means that cyclists looking for a place to park their bike are mixing with pedestrians, bumping into them and just getting in everybody's way, which cyclists obviously do not want to do. The experience in other small northern European countries is that cyclists know that there will definitely be a substantial place in a station for parking their bikes and that they will not have to mix with pedestrians or people getting in and out of taxis.

I am sorry if I sound like a stuck record on the issue, but it appears that a physical red line is drawn round a development and Network Rail focuses on what happens inside and the local authority deals with what is outside. If the local authority does not have a budget with which to

lower traffic speeds, reallocate road space and make the whole experience better and more predictable for cyclists nothing will improve and the whole emphasis will just be on cyclists trying to find their way and figure out where they go next.

**Mike MacKenzie:** Thank you. That is very useful, and you have anticipated my next question. Would it be fair to say that the solution to the problem of improvements lies more with local authorities than with Network Rail?

**John Lauder:** It is about a combination of the two, which is difficult because different people have to be brought together. We have Network Rail anticipating increased demand and patronage, with more people being drawn to its facilities; and we have the local authority, which is almost cut out of the loop in terms of providing improved access to Network Rail's facility. There might be a very large budget to improve the facility, but it cannot be used outside the station boundary.

It should be possible to bring those two groups together. Such partnerships work in other areas, such as with major retail and housing developments. For the latter in particular, the traffic implications are assessed quite rigorously before the development is given approval. However, I am not sure that that is done for station developments. Nathan Kaczmarek might know more about this, but I do not know that a station or Network Rail needs to talk to a local authority about how to cope with increased demand to get to a station. I therefore do not think that solving the problem lies more with one side than the other; it is about bringing people together to work on the issue and using public funds in a better way.

**Mike MacKenzie:** Does anybody have anything to add?

**George Mair:** I echo John Lauder's comments. The best outcome would be for everybody to work together to make the experience so simple and easy that people want to come back and experience it again and become regular users of rail no matter what means they use to get the station, which includes buses and taxis.

From its beginning, a journey must work its way its way easily through to the station, into the station and on to the platform, and it should be the same for anybody at an intermediate point on a rail route. If I board my train at Waverley station on a Thursday evening to go back up to Aberdeen, I can go to the train and find carriage A; but if I am on the platform at Haymarket station, I will not know whether carriage A is at the front or the back of the train. In this day and age, when more information is being provided to the public to make things easier, why cannot carriage A always be at the front of the train when it leaves the station?

I find it really difficult to deal with the situation at Haymarket because I do not know whether carriage A is at the front or the back of the train and everybody is running back and forth to get the seat that they have booked—even with assistance, it must be horrendous. Making the system simple and easy for people to use so that they always know that carriage A is going to be at the front would save so much hassle. If we all worked with that aim in mind, as John Lauder suggested, we would get a good result.

**Mike MacKenzie:** Referring back to my earlier question, I have the sense from all the witnesses, both at today's meeting and at last week's session, that Network Rail has not been as good as it could have been in engaging with stakeholders. On the suggestion that there needs to be better collaboration between Network Rail and local authorities, is the reason for collaboration not happening a reluctance on the part of Network Rail, or is it just not on the agenda that these two public organisations should be talking to each other?

**Tony Kenmuir:** I think that you have hit the nail on the head: it has simply not been on the agenda. I have been conscious of change over the past one to two years, in the City of Edinburgh Council in particular, that puts much more focus on integration.

It is a shame that integration tends to become an item on the agenda once a project is completed. In the concept of modern transport, item 1 on the agenda for a project is: how does it integrate? I hate to mention the tram, but it has taught us some more lessons. Where do you pick someone up and drop them off if they want to take a tram? On York Place you do not, on Princes Street you do not, and at the west end you do not, because cars are not allowed near those stops.

Integration is a concept that is bandied about, and it is a word that comes into any discussion about transport, but it is rarely acted upon. I appreciated John Lauder's comments about the red line around the train station—that is a good way of picturing it; I had not thought about it in that way. It seems clear to me that the managers of transport hubs are focused very much on what they do with customers once they have captured them, but they have not thought about how the customers get there and how they leave. That seems fundamental to the concept of transport, but, unfortunately, it is so often missing.

**Mike MacKenzie:** Thank you very much. I used to be a joiner, so I am glad that I can still hit the odd nail on the head.

**The Convener:** Is there anything that the witnesses would like to put on the record that they have not had an opportunity to say?

**John Lauder:** There is one thing that I put in my evidence, but which I appreciate is outside the scope of the committee's inquiry. It is to commend the work of the team in Network Rail that is developing the Borders line. It has been really good to work with. We have been involved with the project right from the moment that the proposal was granted and it began to move forward.

That happened because the project sponsor in Network Rail for the Borders line was also the project sponsor for the Airdrie to Bathgate line. We were involved in that line because there was a cycle route on the line of the railway, which was rightly reinstated elsewhere. We worked with that person for quite a number of years, and I think that, as a result, the integration on the Borders line has been very good among Network Rail, Midlothian Council, Scottish Borders Council and groups such as ours that have had budgets. Others have been able to utilise budgets that we manage.

I hope that access to the stations along the Borders line is going to be quite good for people arriving on foot and with bicycles. I know that that is outwith the scope of the committee's current work, but I wanted to mention that.

**The Convener:** Thank you. I am going to ask each of the witnesses to leave a take-home message for the committee. As briefly as possible, what is the one thing that you would want us to take away from today's session?

**Tony Kenmuir:** I think I just gave my closing speech—

**The Convener:** I am not asking for a speech. *[Laughter.]*

**Tony Kenmuir:** As I said, the earlier that integration is considered in any development, the better for all concerned.

**George Mair:** You should generally encourage closer working between key partners to deliver simple and easy-to-understand information on how to link up journeys.

**Nathan Kaczmariski:** I would reaffirm what I mentioned before. There are policies and commitments in relation to the shared vision of 10 per cent of journeys being taken by bicycle by 2020, plus the long-term vision on active travel. I would encourage all parties to reaffirm their commitment to that vision and to take actions to deliver on it.

**The Convener:** What would you say about access to urban railway stations specifically?

**Nathan Kaczmariski:** The point that follows in terms of access to urban railway stations is that, as everyone here has mentioned, we have to learn from the things that have been positive and

successful in Scotland, such as the Stirling cycle hub and other approaches that have helped improve access for people who are cycling. We should learn from them, share the information and find out ways to implement those good practices in each of the mainline stations.

**The Convener:** Mr Lauder, you have the last word.

**John Lauder:** Gosh, that is a dangerous thing to give me.

I would draw the committee's attention to recommendations 3 and 4 in the Sustrans submission. I am quite hopeful: I think that, with the appointment of Abellio and the new management structure, we could be on the eve of a much more coherent approach to how we access our major urban rail stations. That is very positive.

There are some simple steps—he said—given in recommendation 3 that could be tackled now. Recommendation 4 says what we have all said, which is, essentially, that there needs to be a change in culture and a much less siloed approach to how transport is delivered. That is especially so because how stations are built and how local authorities operate is all being delivered with public money. That being the case, I would want to see those silos broken down and a much better team approach to how transport is delivered.

**The Convener:** I thank the witnesses for the evidence this morning. There will be a brief pause for them to leave the room.

11:16

*Meeting suspended.*

11:19

*On resuming—*

## Annual Report

**The Convener:** Our second item is consideration of our annual report for the parliamentary year between 11 May 2014 and 10 May 2015. I invite general comments on the draft annual report, which has been circulated in advance of today's meeting.

**David Stewart:** The report is well drafted and summarises the various issues that we have raised.

On European issues, the committee kindly made me its European Union rapporteur. I would like to put on record the fact that I have arranged to go to Brussels in the first week of the recess to pick up a few general transport issues, particularly on EU funding. I want to let members know that I am pursuing the EU rapporteur role with vigour and energy.

**Alex Johnstone:** That can go in next year's report.

**The Convener:** I do not think that that impacts on the content of our report, but that is a helpful piece of information.

Are there any other comments?

**David Stewart:** I understand that the annual reports will be produced in a much more user-friendly format in future.

**The Convener:** I believe that this report will be produced in that format. I am reliably informed by the clerk that, when it is published, it will have photographs and graphics that will provide a different look to that of previous years.

**Alex Johnstone:** Photographs of what?

**The Convener:** Photographs of matters that are relevant to the activities of the committee.

**David Stewart:** I saw some drafts of the new format. I think that it is a great project that will make the annual reports of all committees a lot more readable and accessible. We should be encouraging that and using the journalistic inputs, too.

**The Convener:** Do members agree to publish the report on 5 June?

**Members indicated agreement.**

11:22

*Meeting continued in private until 11:26.*

Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice to SPICe.

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