

Subway Step-Free Access Improvements – award of contract

Date of meeting 28 November 2025

Date of report 11 November 2025

Report by Director of Transport Operations

1. Object of report

To recommend that the Committee approves the award to COWI UK Limited of a contract for design of step-free access improvements within the Subway.

2. Background to report

SPT's Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)¹ defines an objective "to improve accessibility, affordability, availability and safety of the transport system". In line with this objective, SPT has undertaken studies to explore the feasibility of providing step-free access to platforms within the Subway, with a view to supplementing existing step-free access provisions at Govan and St Enoch stations.

Amongst options considered, outline feasibility has been established for providing step-free access between concourse level and the Outer Circle platforms at Hillhead and Buchanan Street stations. The compact nature of the stations, within built-up urban locations, results in a range of technical and design challenges that will need to be satisfactorily addressed as proposals are progressed through early and detailed design, prior to any potential construction phase.

3. Outline of proposals

3.1 Scope of services

SPT has defined a requirement for a consultant to design suitable step-free access provisions to the Outer Circle platforms at Hillhead and Buchanan Street stations. The scope includes requirements for the consultant to:

- Fulfil the roles of designer and Principal Designer (PD), in line with the Construction Design and Management Regulations, throughout the life of the project.
- Develop front end design, informed by site surveys and studies, and including: structural assessments and proposals for required station layout modifications; specification and design of lifts, lift shafts, and ancillary services; proposals for revenue protection (gate lines); pedestrian flow analysis; fire strategy review; development of impact assessments; and preparation of bill of quantities and associated cost and programme estimates for works at both stations. Submissions shall also be prepared for required consents.

¹ Strathclyde Partnership for Travel, A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland 2023-2038

- Mature designs to approved for construction status and prepare required technical inputs to a contractor scope of works for the construction phase. As well as update of the items identified above, this will include preparation of staging drawings that set out how the consultant considers that the works can be delivered on site without compromising continued safe station operation. At this stage, pre-construction information and Health and Safety Files will be prepared for issue as part of the works tender package.
- Provide support throughout the pre-construction and construction phases. This will include: review of contractor proposals and methodologies; site visits to inform response to any arising technical issues and to provide assurance of contractor adherence to defined quality control processes; and update of relevant design drawings to reflect as-built conditions.

Gateway reviews will be held at the end of each design stage. For each location, SPT will instruct the next stage only where the gateway review demonstrates readiness and where relevant consents have been obtained.

3.2 Procurement process

In September 2025, SPT issued an invitation to tender via its Design, Technical and Professional Services (DTPS) Framework under Lot 7 (Civil and Structural Engineering). The invitation to tender was issued as an NEC Professional Services Contract with Main Option A.

The tender evaluation was based on the most economically advantageous tender, adopting a 60:40 quality:price split. Quality was given a higher weighting in order to reflect the technically complex nature of the scope. Commercial assessment was based on total price submitted for support throughout all phases from early design, through detailed design, to support during the construction phase and subsequent close-out activities.

The tender quality submission required tenderers to respond to a series of questions to confirm understanding of the scope, to outline the methodology, programme and resources proposed for delivery of the scope, and to identify risks to success and measures that will be adopted in order to mitigate against such risks.

Two submissions were received. The evaluation results are:

Supplier Name	Quality Score	Price Score	Total Price + Quality
COWI UK Ltd	60	38	98
WSP UK Ltd	45	40	85

4. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to approve the award to COWI UK Limited of a contract for design of step-free access with value of up to £1,331,690 (excl. VAT).

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with Equalities Outcomes and Regional Transport Strategy.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>Contract will be awarded subject to the conditions of contract contained within SPT's ITT.</i>

Financial consequences	<i>The costs will be accommodated within the capital budget, under project 10310 “Station Minor Works”.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None identified.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Enhancing Subway access is a core objective of the project. Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the project.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None identified.</i>
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	<i>None identified.</i>

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