

Bus station site may be under threat

The future of Edinburgh Bus Station is hanging in the balance as its owners could attempt to redevelop the city centre site, it is understood.

The council has been told its lease of the station will not be renewed beyond 2027 and currently has no replacement identified, according to sources.

Transport convener Scott Arthur said he was “disappointed that such a modern and well used piece of Edinburgh’s sustainable transport infrastructure may be lost”.

Cllr Arthur said officials were “currently considering options which will be presented to and considered by committee at a future date”.

The Local Democracy Reporting Service understands bus station owners Coal Pension Properties, which manages property investments for a coal industry workers’ pension scheme, do not intend to continue leasing the Elder Street site when its current arrangement with the local authority runs out in 2027, amid hopes to turn it into a residential development.

Edinburgh Bus Users Group (EBUG) accused the firm of trying to “throw buses out” of the capital.

With no obvious alternative location to take the place of the existing bus station, one solution being considered by the council is to use Ingliston Park and Ride. However it’s

understood this would only be an interim option and officials are already exploring potential sites close to the city centre.

A concerned bus user who asked to remain anonymous told the LDRS the closure would be “disastrous not only for public and private transport but also for tourism in the city”.

Edinburgh Council’s public transport action plan, presented to councillors in January 2023, highlighted a need to “consider future options for the bus station”. It said by the end of 2030 it was hoped the authority would “retain [the] bus station or move to alternative location”.

Options listed in the plan include “potential redevelopment” or using a compulsory purchase order to buy the site – however, this is route is rarely used by local authorities as the process is complex and not always guaranteed to bring success.

A spokesperson for EBUG said: “Buses go from Edinburgh bus station almost all over Scotland, and further afield, so it’s very worrying to hear it is under threat. It’s not the grandest of its type, but what’s important is whether it does it does the job. Which it does, much better than some.

“We don’t know of a suitable site anywhere else in the city centre that’s likely to be affordable.

“And any suggestion of an out-of centre site with some yet-to-be imagined way of transferring passengers to their final destination is, frankly, poppycock.

“A bus station isn’t like an airport. Anyone seriously thinking of redeveloping the bus station needs to answer the question of just how the city, including this site, is to function, if they’ve squeezed public transport out of every key space.”

They added: "It's been a bad year for bus passengers so far.

"First the Scottish Government froze Bus Partnership Funding again, leaving no clear pathway to improve services. Then it cut climate targets, promising only an integrated ticketing scheme which it first launched 12 years ago.

"And now the owner of the bus station site seems to want to throw buses out."

Cllr Arthur said: "Officers are currently considering options which will be presented to and considered by committee at a future date.

"Personally, I'm disappointed that such a modern and well used piece of Edinburgh's sustainable transport infrastructure may be lost."

Coal Pension Properties was contacted for comment.

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter



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