

**Democratic Services Section  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast  
City Council**

22nd September, 2021

**MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee be a hybrid meeting (both remote and in person) in the Council Chamber on Wednesday, 22nd September, 2021 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

**AGENDA:**

1. **Routine Matters**

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Declarations of Interest

2. **Presentations**

- (a) Transport Hub Alternative Group (Pages 1 - 2)
- (b) Cathedral Gardens - Update on Masterplan and Next Steps (Pages 3 - 6)





**To: The members of the City Growth & Regeneration Committee**  
**From: Transport Hub Alternatives Group (THAG)**  
**Date: Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021**  
**Subject: Belfast Transport Hub & Boyne Bridge**

Dear Councillors

We look forward to meeting you all at the committee. In order to provide you with information before the meeting, we have listed a number of our concerns and general comments. We understand that much of the development has become 'crystallized' but there is still the opportunity to make changes. We will try to make the following as brief as possible.

- 1- Entrance to the new station is nearly as far away from the door to the City Hall as the existing distance to Maysfield.
- 2- Translink's Proposals involve demolition of the Boyne Bridge and replacing it with a busy four lane road. This means people walking from Belfast City Centre will have to cross two busy roads to get to the station. A Toucan crossing, similar to a puffin crossing will be the only means of crossing Durham Street to the station. Accidents will happen and even fatalities, completely unnecessary if the bridge is maintained as a safe crossing. This point was made to members of the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Infrastructure, who held a number of site meetings. The committee is to explore the possibility of another visit to the site. We would also add that accidents (and even bad weather) at the crossing will also result in travel delays and more demands on the emergency services.
- 3- There will be Increased traffic, noise and pollution, especially for Sandy Row residents.
- 4- The proposals involve the demolition of the 1936 Bridge. The structure is unique and is a critical part of Belfast's industrial Heritage.
- 5- The proposals involve retention of the 1642 Saltwater Bridge, currently encased in concrete in the ramp to the 1936 bridge. The 1642 bridge is probably the most important historic monument on this Island; certainly as the most important introduction to the history of Belfast. The Boyne Bridge Defenders are concerned that the concrete casing and the remains of the bridge itself could be damaged during construction.
- 6- The approach to the station is along the windy Glengall Street; thus the importance of retaining the great Northern Mall.
- 7- The existing station is to be replaced with commercial developments provided by the Private Sector. The relocation of the station and the demolition of the bridge seems to be driven by commercial reasons.
- 8- We pointed out that the location of a thirteen storey Office Building on the south side of the new square will cast a shadow over it for most of the day and that all of Translink's 3D images show a square baked in sunshine. Translink has amended their plans to show this building to the north side, but we would still have concerns about this proposed building.
- 9- Two entrances to the station create a Catholic/ Nationalist access and a Protestant Loyalist Route. The current bridge has acted as an effective Peace Wall for the past 50 years.
- 10-The location of a Taxi Rank in Glengall Street is very far away from the station door. Taxi ranks in all great stations are at the entrance.
- 11- The Telecom Building with its high security fence faces the new public square.

12- Weavers Cross is a weak name. We suggest naming it 'Belfast Central' as with all the great railway stations throughout the world.

13- The folding roof with its reference to the linen industry is contrived. Why not use Historic Belfast Timber Truss?

14- A report by THAG shows that Translink did not follow the Gunning Principles in their Consultation Process. Why not?

15- An alternative scheme was presented by Declan Hill at a conference organised by the South Belfast Partnership Board in May 2017. The proposals he made, meets all the concerns listed in this document.

16- Many of the above points were raised in Translink's Presentation in Spring 2017. The Chief Executive of Translink, Mr Chris Conway responded by saying the concerns would be considered at a Gateway Review. We asked to be part of that review. We have received no correspondence from Translink since that meeting. It is very clear the internationally acclaimed consultants acting for Translink, also have little knowledge of how to promote the character of Belfast.

17- We would be concerned about the disappearance of the traditional entrance from Great Victoria Street. We need a firm guarantee that the Mall will be retained and a continuous walkway from Great Victoria Street (as it is at present) to Durham Street (Boyne Bridge).

18- The proposals could see the disappearance of traditional names such as The Great Northern, Great Victoria and Boyne Bridge.

19- There will be a loss of an ethnic groups place and structure attachment and a loss of local communities place and structure attachment.

20- The present 1936 Art Deco Boyne Bridge should be retained, a view supported by the Historic Buildings Council. The existence of the 1642, incorporated into the present bridge is now established as a result of the recent archaeological survey. Although pleased with the findings, we regret that the Burra Charter, produced by the International Council on Monuments and Sites, was not used before and after the survey. We seek the introduction of the Burra Charter Process for all future works at and around the Boyne Bridge site.

21- We call upon the Belfast City Council to support our application to have the Boyne Bridge and site listed.

22- The Bridge and the site should be promoted as a major tourist attraction with a Belfast Visitor interpretive centre located nearby.

23- The future plans for the future of what is to be named Salt Water Square, and the general area around the present bridge needs to promote the character of Belfast. THAG attended a pre-planning consultation meeting recently, however the information received does not give us any confidence, that what is proposed, will promote the City and Northern Ireland in a way that it should.

24- We need to have open and independent forums to consider all proposals. For a number of years we have asked that Belfast City Council should set up a Working Group to oversee all future developments in the Boyne Bridge area.

With regards,

Billy Dickson BEM  
Declan Hill  
Ken Martin



<b>Subject:</b>	Cathedral Gardens - Update on Masterplan and next steps
<b>Date:</b>	22 September 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Frankie Smith, Project Sponsor

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the development of the emerging master plan for the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note that they will receive a presentation on the emerging design concepts for the Cathedral Gardens Master Plan from Council appointed consultants – Hassell - at this meeting (22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021)</li> <li>• note that the next stage will be to go out for public consultation on the concept design with a further update to be brought back</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<b><u>KEY ISSUES</u></b>
3.1	<p>Members will recall that at Committee last month they received a detailed update paper in respect of ‘City Centre Open Spaces’. In this it was highlighted that the City Centre Connectivity Study: ‘A Bolder Vision’, in line with the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy (BCCRIS), proposes the development of a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre with a greener, walkable and connected core. BCCRIS identifies that the city centre lacks major publicly accessible open spaces, and that the majority of open spaces are disconnect and have a hard landscape and character, with the centre lacking in greener streets that can provide relief in the most densely developed part of the city. BCCRIS has also identified the opportunity to provide a sizable new open space and greening opportunities by linking St. Anne’s Cathedral to Cathedral Gardens and Writers Square. At the Future City Workshop, held with Members of the CG&amp;R Committee in May 2021, Members also noted that the provision of high quality, inclusive and sustainable open spaces for families and city users to enjoy and utilise the outdoor environment was a key priority.</p>
3.2	<p>The Council’s key asset in the city centre in terms of open space is Cathedral Gardens. The SP&amp;R Committee has previously agreed the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens. Members will be aware that originally this was to be taken forward as part of Streets Ahead Phase 3. However, when this was placed on hold it was agreed the redevelopment of the Gardens should be decoupled from this.</p>
3.3	<p>The redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens provides a significant opportunity to inject critical and much needed quality public urban space into the city centre. The area adjacent to and surrounding Cathedral Gardens is home to a rich history of fabrication and cultural identity. It is a precinct in the process of evolution through a mixture of commercial, education and housing related developments that are transforming this part of Belfast into a new and vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood for the city.</p>
3.4	<p>Members have been advised that the Council have commissioned Hassell Consultants to develop a concept masterplan for the redevelopment of the Cathedral Gardens space. The Master Plan has been commissioned with the intention to create a unique urban space. As part of this process a number of engagement sessions have taken place with key stakeholders to inform the emerging design concepts that will be presented to Members at this Committee for consideration. The emerging design concepts include the reinvigorating the civic space, the integration of landscape and urban forestry and building in exemplary grey to green infrastructure along with looking at how the site can be programmed to become a year round asset for use by all audiences.</p>

3.4	<p>The redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens is currently a Stage 2 – Uncommitted on the Capital Programme. The project will be required to go through the 3 stage approval process as agreed for all capital projects. This includes consultation on proposed designs. The next proposed step is to go out for wider consultation on the concept masterplan including public consultation via the 'Your Say' consultation platform, continued engagement with key stakeholders (e.g. UU, DFC, DFI, St. Anne's Cathedral), and targeted consultation with a range of stakeholders (e.g. the Events sector). Following this the final proposed design will be brought back to Members.</p>
3.5	<p>As previously outlined a key consideration during delivery of the project will be how to offset the loss of open space at Cathedral Gardens during the permanent construction works, with potential utilisation of vacant city centre lands for temporary open space currently under exploration by Officers. Pending agreement and subject to funding it is proposed to recreate a play space within a suitable site. The final scope of these works will take into consideration the final design for the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens to ensure complementarity. This work is continuing and an update report will be brought into this Committee for approval prior to proceeding.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b></p>
4.1	<p>Finance - The redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens is an agreed project on the Council's Capital Programme.</p> <p>Resources - Officer time in terms of the next steps of consultation</p>
5.0	<p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.</p>
6.0	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>N/A</p>

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