

# Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

7th December, 2021

## **MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will be a hybrid meeting on Wednesday, 8th December, 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**

(d) Correspondence Received - Public Realm Projects (Pages 1 - 14)

6. **Issues raised in advance by Members**

(a) A Bolder Vision Consultation - Councillor McMullan





<b>Subject:</b>	Correspondence – Public Realm Projects
<b>Date:</b>	8th December, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Carolyn Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To note the correspondence received regarding City Regeneration and Development.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the correspondence as set out in the report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b> At its meeting in August 2021, Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Communities and the Minister for Infrastructure, in relation to public realm projects within the city centre specifically in relation to ensuring that the outworking's of the Bolder Vision are adequately captured and addressed within public realm

3.2	<p>scheme designs, and that a number of capital schemes are progressing through design without an holistic overview of a modern transport plan. The Committee asked that the Ministers consider the impacts of the current BRT2 preferred route options would impact the public realm and open spaces of the city centre, but also noted that effective public transportation connections would need to be delivered and asked both Ministers to address these issues as a priority and to bring forward capital investment at pace.</p>
3.3	<p>Accordingly, Democratic Services wrote to the Minister for Communities (Appendix 1) and Infrastructure (Appendix 2). A response was received on behalf of the Minister for Communities, from the Acting Director, Belfast Regeneration (Appendix 3) and on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure, from the Private secretary to the Minister (Appendix 4). The response highlights on behalf of the Minister for Communities, outlines awareness of the challenges that the current BRT2 preferred options poses to the public realm and the city centre environment and further outlines an upcoming joint DfI/DfC/BCC meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, with both Ministers for DfI and DfC due to attend, to discuss these issues and to agree a way forward.</p>
3.4	<p>The response on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure outlines that the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) will be developed in a collaborative manner with the five relevant councils, and that early engagement between the Department's officials and council representatives has taken place. The response further advises that the city centre will be the initial focus for the BMTP and early in the New Year, along with supporting consultants, the intention is to commence the detailed work of considering changes to walk, cycle, public transport and road networks to meet the shared objectives of the Department and the council. The Department have advised that they will contact Democratic Services to organise a meeting/ workshop which hopefully can be held in January 2022. The response further outlines the development of plans for the delivery of phase 2 of the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Project and the option that was recently consulted on, which recommends two-way operation of Glider along Donegall Place and Royal Avenue. The Department advise that if the aspiration of significant modal shift to sustainable transport is to be achieved, public transport must be made more attractive than car, and that pushing public transport to the fringes of the city centre would be counter to this. The response also highlights that considering public transport in advance of the BMTP could result in a relatively narrow view that does not integrate sustainable transport modes nor provide the solutions necessary to meet the future needs of a cleaner, more attractive and more accessible city. The Department also advise that Translink is engaging on The Bolder Vision, Streets Ahead and BRT projects and encourage Council to continue to engage proactively to ensure the best outcomes for public transport and the city.</p>

3.5	<p>Members should also note that under the Bolder Vision officials and officers from DfI, DfC and BCC are under taking extensive consultation across all sectors of the community and city stakeholders to provide an holistic approach to how we can effectively deliver quality space within the city centre while maintaining effective public transportation connections and reducing the severance to communities and the wider Belfast area. These engagements include meetings with senior officials from DfI, Translink, QUB, Ulster University, the Chamber, BIDs, BHC, Section 75 Groups and community groups across the city.</p>
3.6	<p>Future reports on the outworking of these engagements will be brought to this Committee at a future date.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – CGR Letter to Minister Hargey  Appendix 2 – CGR Letter to Minister Mallon  Appendix 3 - DfC Response  Appendix 4 – DfI Response</p>

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# Legal and Civic Services Department

## Democratic Services Section



Date: 11th November, 2021

Email: [private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Minister for Communities,  
Ms Deirdre Hargey MLA,  
Causeway Exchange,  
1-7 Bedford Street,  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG

Dear Minister,

### **Public Realm Projects Belfast**

At its meeting in August 2021, Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreed that the Council would write to the Minister for Communities and the Minister for Infrastructure, in relation to public realm projects within the city centre.

At its meeting on the 13th October 2021, the Committee raised concerns regarding the proposal to revert Donegall Place to two-way bus lanes with associated adjacent halts as a retrospective step in public realm and infrastructure provision through the Civic Spine of the city centre. These decisions were subsequently ratified at full Council on 1st November.

In advance of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, the Committee would welcome your support in progressing a short, sharp review of effective public transportation connections into the city centre and city centre network planning, led and prioritised with a people and place based design approach.

The Committee would also welcome your support in expediting the processes to deliver public realm and infrastructure projects within the city centre, to assist in transforming the city at a faster pace. The Council is committed to working collaboratively with the Departments for Communities and Infrastructure, through the Bolder Vision for Belfast, supported through representation from Council officials on the relevant Belfast Streets Ahead Programme Board.

Democratic Services Section

**Belfast City Council**, Legal and Civic Services

City Hall, BELFAST BT1 5GS

Tel: 028 9032 0202 Textphone: 028 9027 0405 Fax: 028 9050 2999

Email: [democraticservices@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Accordingly, I would be grateful if you would please consider how your Department can assist in bringing forward, at pace, the required interventions and projects to transform the city.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a smaller 'D' and a trailing flourish.

Carolyn Donnelly  
Democratic Services Officer  
Legal and Civic Services  
02890 320202 Ext. 3494  
[donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk)



# Legal and Civic Services Department

## Democratic Services Section



Date: 11th November, 2021

Email: [private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Ms Nichola Mallon MLA  
Minister for Infrastructure  
Corporate Policy Unit  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8GB

Dear Minister,

### **Public Realm Projects Belfast**

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Carolyn Donnelly  
Democratic Services Officer  
Legal and Civic Services  
02890 320202 Ext. 3494  
[donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk)



Department for

**Communities**

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**Commonities**

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

Carolyn Donnelly  
Democratic Services Officer  
Legal and Civic Services  
Belfast City Council

Belfast Regeneration Directorate  
Level 4, NINE Lanyon Place  
Belfast  
BT1 3LP  
Phone: 028 9082 9274  
email: [Patrick.anderson@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Patrick.anderson@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Via email: [donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Your Ref:

Our Ref: CORR-1734-2021

30 November 2021

Dear Ms Donnelly,

## **PUBLIC REALM PROJECT BELFAST**

Thank you for your letter of 11 November 2021 in relation to public realm projects in Belfast city centre. Minister Hargey has asked that I respond on her behalf.

As part of the Belfast Streets Ahead (BSA) programme the Department plans to deliver two major public realm projects over the next number of years. The BSA Phase 3 will see public realm improvements delivered in the north of the city and BSA Phase 5 will deliver public realm improvements in the south of the city centre. Together these projects will cover a significant part of the Civic Spine (from the Ulster University to Queens University) as set out in "A Bolder Vision for Belfast".

The Department has ambitious plans to deliver high quality streetscapes and public spaces for those who live, work and visit the city centre as well as creating an enhanced environment for those communities living on the periphery of the project areas. In order to deliver these schemes effectively consideration must also be given to the Department for Infrastructure's plans for the area and the future operation of the transport system before BSA Phase 3 and BSA Phase 5 plans can be finalised.

Minister Hargey has noted that the Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 (BRT2) proposals, (which were recently consulted on) and realises that these could potentially pose challenges for the strategic commitment as set out in the Bolder Vision, "for a greener, cleaner and more liveable city centre". The potential BRT2 route along Royal Avenue/Donegall Place and along Dublin Road impacts will impact upon both the BSA

Phase 3 and Phase 5 projects and may be regarded by some to reverse improvements achieved in Donegall Place which were introduced in BSA Phase 1 of the programme.

As a result, Minister Hargey has asked officials to set up a workshop with the Minister for Infrastructure, her senior officials and Belfast City Council to discuss these issues and agree a way forward. This workshop has been arranged for 12 January 2022.

Subject to the outcome of this workshop it is the Department's intention to move forward with finalising the designs for both BSA Phase 3 and BSA Phase 5 as quickly as possible so that we can commence the construction stage of these projects. It should, however, be noted that, due to the exceptionally high levels of funding required to deliver these schemes and taking account of Departmental budget constraints it is planned that the construction stage of BSA Phase 3 will have to be completed before the construction of BSA Phase 5 can commence on the ground.

I trust this addresses your concerns but if you require any further information please let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Anderson', is written on a light yellow rectangular background.

**PATRICK ANDERSON**  
Acting Director, Belfast Regeneration



Department for

**Infrastructure**

An Roinn

**Bonneagair**

[www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure  
Nichola Mallon MLA**

**Ms Carolyn Donnelly**

**[DonnellyCarolyn@BelfastCity.gov.uk](mailto:DonnellyCarolyn@BelfastCity.gov.uk)**

Room 708  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8GB  
Telephone: (028) 9054 0105  
Email: [Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Your reference: XXXX  
Our reference: CORR-1912-2021  
06 December 2021

Dear Ms Donnelly

## **PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS**

Thank you for your email dated 11 November 2021 in which you have requested an update on the above.

The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) will be developed in a collaborative manner with the five relevant councils. Early engagement between the Department's officials and council representatives has taken place and they soon intend to reconvene the Project Board previously used to develop the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Study (BMTS).

The city centre will be the initial focus for the BMTP and early in the New Year, along with supporting consultants, the intention is to commence the detailed work of considering changes to walk, cycle, public transport and road networks to meet the shared objectives of the Department and the council.

The BMTS, which the council inputted to, reviewed the existing transport conditions. The Minister is happy for your committee to meet and work with the Departmental

BMTP team at the start of the process. Departmental officials will contact you to organise this meeting/ workshop which hopefully can be held in January 2022.

The Department is currently developing plans for the delivery of phase 2 of the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Project. The option for BRT2, which the Department has recently consulted on, recommends two-way operation of Glider along Donegall Place and Royal Avenue.


Penetration of the city's main retail and commercial thoroughfare by public transport is vitally important for the economic vitality of the city and to enable accessibility for those who are less mobile. Such an approach would be consistent with most vibrant cities.

If the aspiration of significant modal shift to sustainable transport is to be achieved, public transport must be made more attractive than car. Pushing public transport to the fringes of the city centre would be counter to this.

Establishing clear and effective priority for public transport services into and across the city needs to be at the forefront of future planning, however, transport for the city needs to be considered holistically, if it is to be successful in meeting the desired outcomes. Consequently, considering public transport in advance of the BMTP could result in a relatively narrow view that does not integrate sustainable transport modes nor provide the solutions necessary to meet the future needs of a cleaner, more attractive and more accessible city.

In addition to delivering significant enhancements in the city through development of the Belfast Transport Hub and Yorkgate Station, Translink is engaging on The Bolder Vision, Streets Ahead and BRT projects, with the aim of finding the optimum layout for roads and public realm, balancing place-making aspirations and transport needs.

Given the work outlined, I would encourage the council to continue to engage proactively to ensure the best outcomes for public transport and the city.



**KATHRYN MCFERRAN**  
**Private Secretary to the Minister**

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