

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Tuesday, 12th December, 2017

SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillors Boyle, Dudgeon, Kyle,
Mullan and Walsh.

Also attended: Alderman Rodgers;
Councillors Armitage, Heading and McReynolds.

In attendance: Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development;
Mr. D. Durkan, Director of Development;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Chairing of Meeting

In the absence of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson at the beginning of the meeting, it was agreed that Councillor Walsh take the Chair.

(Councillor Walsh in the Chair)

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor O'Donnell (Chairperson), the High Sheriff (Alderman Haire), Aldermen Kingston and L. Patterson and Councillor Hargey.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Armitage and Mullan declared an interest in Item 2a, BelTel LLP, in that they were Members of the Planning Committee. The Director of City Centre Development advised the Committee that, as the presentation was for information only, and as long as they did not make any comments which would commit them to any particular course of action in relation to the proposals, there was no conflict in them being present for the presentation.

Restricted Item

The Information contained in the following report is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion of this item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42 (4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

BeITel LLP

The Acting Chairperson introduced Mr. S. Surphlis, McAleer & Rushe, Mr. P. Beacom, McAleer & Rushe, and Mr. M. Kininmonth, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris architects (AHMM), to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Kininmonth provided the Committee with an overview of the design for the former Belfast Telegraph site. He outlined that they would refurbish and upgrade the 1889 Belfast Telegraph Building and that they planned to reintroduce the dormer windows which were once along the top floor of the building.

Mr. Surphlis explained that McAleer & Rushe were longstanding investors in Belfast and that they saw this project as a great opportunity for that area of the city centre, particularly the adjacency to the Ulster University's new campus and the emerging digital and tech sector in the city. He explained that the floorplans would be flexible to the tenants' requirements.

Mr. Beacom advised the Committee that McAleer & Rushe and the Council had jointly acquired the building last year and that interim tenants were already occupying parts of the building.

In relation to a Member's question regarding car parking, Mr. Surphlis advised the Committee that, while the design was still at a schematic stage, he did not envisage providing more car parking than was necessary for the tenants and that it would be in the basement of the complex. He outlined that the project would go through the usual exercise with Transport NI in that regard.

In response to a further Member's question, he confirmed that the delay to the completion of the new Ulster University campus would not impact upon the BeITel LLP project.

The Committee thanked the representatives for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

Presentations – City Infrastructure

Transport NI

The Acting Chairperson introduced Mr. K. Monaghan, Eastern Divisional Manager, Mr. T. McClay, Belfast North Section Engineer, Mr. G. Doherty, Belfast South Section Engineer, and Mr. C. de Burca, Director for Transport Projects and Business Services in the Department for Infrastructure, to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Monaghan provided the Committee with updates on the main strategic transportation schemes for the city. In relation to the York Street Interchange, he advised the Members that the tender process to appoint a contractor to bring the scheme to construction-ready stage had been completed but that the tender award

could not occur due to a legal challenge. He advised the Committee that a date for the legal hearing had been agreed for February 2018 and that, following a Ministerial approval, the process of consulting local residents and key stakeholders on issues identified in the Inspector's Report had since commenced.

He provided the Members with an update on the extension of the bus lanes along the M1, between the Applegreen services and the Sprucefield Park and Ride site at Blaris, and citybound on the M2 between Fortwilliam and Duncrue Street. He reminded the Committee that tendered costs for the project had come in significantly higher than expected, and so the contract had not been awarded. He explained that a review of the works had taken place, where they had considered the technology used in the smart motorways across the UK, and that a new scheme would be going out to tender early next year.

He advised the Committee of the creation of the Antrim Road tidal urban clearway, from the Cliftonville Road to the M2 over-bridge, which would operate citybound lanes between 8am and 9.30am and countrybound lanes between 4.30pm and 6pm.

He also highlighted to the Members that the first Residents' Parking scheme would shortly be implemented in the College Park Avenue/Rugby Road area in south Belfast, subject to satisfactory completion of the statutory procedures.

The Committee was also advised that Transport NI had recently received funding from the Department for Communities to widen and resurface the Comber Greenway and that this would take place in the early part of 2018.

Mr. de Burca provided the Members with an overview of a number of the recently completed works across the east and west of the city in preparation for the introduction of the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme, which was due to launch in September 2018.

He advised that an average of 3 halts per week would be installed across the city, with 103 halts in total.

During discussion, he pointed out that, while the recently replaced roundabouts on the Whiterock Road and Kennedy Way had drawn some criticism initially, the traffic flow had improved. He highlighted that the CITI route works had been suspended over Christmas.

He advised the Members that an example of the new 'Glider' vehicles which would be used for BRT would be on public display at Custom House Square, on 13th and 14th December 2017, from 11am-3pm.

He highlighted that the consultation on the 12-hour bus lane legislation for BRT was open and that the deadline was 12th January, 2018.

During discussion of the recent snow and ice, Mr. Monaghan outlined that main roads, those being roads with more than 1500 vehicles or hilly roads with more than 1000 vehicles per day, were gritted across Belfast, as were settlements with more than 100 dwellings. He outlined that this network covered most schools but not all. In response to a Member's question regarding the collection of grit from the Transport

NI HQ at Airport Road, he advised the Members that they did not provide grit outside their HQ anymore due to a previous legal challenge.

In response to a Member's question about the North/South line of BRT, Mr. de Burca advised that preliminary studies had been carried out and that there were a number of possible routes for the line to take, particularly in the south of the city.

A further Member questioned the Department's rationale behind the prohibition of vehicles travelling from Donegall Square East onto Adelaide Street during bus lane operating hours. Mr. de Burca explained that this arrangement had been implemented as part of Belfast on the Move scheme to deter traffic from using that route as a short cut through the city centre from the northwest to the southeast of the city. He clarified that the Department's view was that the current arrangement was a success, and highlighted that the number of motorists illegally driving from Donegall Square East onto Adelaide Street had decreased from a daily average of 106 in September, 2015, to an average of 35 per day in September, 2017.

(Councillor Dudgeon, Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

The Members drew the attention of the officers from Transport NI to a number of other matters, a number of which are set out hereunder:

- that Transport NI would directly consult those traders which fronted onto Wellington Place, Chichester Street and Queen Street, regarding the operational hours of the loading bays in the City Centre;
- that a Residents' Parking scheme for the Malone/Wellington Park area would continue to be considered;
- that Members would send the names of streets which required gullies to be cleared and locations streetlights which needed repaired directly to Transport NI;
- to consider whether yellow lines were necessary in Lower Donegall Road and Fitzwilliam Street;
- that Transport NI representatives would undertake a site visit to consider changing the crossing at My Lady's Road/Ravenhill Road to a pelican crossing;
- that Transport NI would liaise with the developer who was carrying out construction in Montgomery Street/Joy Street to discuss ways in which traffic disruption could be minimised;
- that Transport NI would consider moving the bus lane from Glengoland Avenue to Glengoland Park;
- to provide information on the adoption of the Colinvale development in Dunmurry;
- to consider the replacement of the traffic crossing at the Knock Road A55/Brandiel estate junction with a Toucan crossing or a cyclists crossing (funding dependent);
- that a site visit would take place to consider increasing the size of the yellow box at the junction of Great Victoria Street and the Grosvenor Road; and

- that the out of hours contact number for Transport NI would be circulated to the Members.

Mr. Monaghan advised that, where relevant, action would be taken on these issues by Transport NI if it was deemed necessary after inspection.

After discussion, the Deputy Chairperson thanked the representatives from Transport NI for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

NI Water – Living With Water

(The Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Dudgeon and Councillor Armitage were in attendance)

The Deputy Chairperson advised that Mr. S. Wightman, Living With Water Programme Manager in the Department for Infrastructure, and Mr. P. Brow, Head of Living With Water at NI Water, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that the meeting had become inquorate and no official business could be conducted.

However, the remaining Members agreed that the presentation should continue in the form of a briefing for those still present and that a copy of the briefing would be circulated to all Members.

Chairperson