



Subject:	Update on Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel
Date:	8 February 2023
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officers:	Callie Persic, Development Manager Chris McNaney, Regeneration Project Officer

Restricted Reports	
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"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline to Committee the ongoing work across Council and with stakeholders in respect of the Committee’s strategic priority of Access, Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel as set out in the CGR Committee Plan, and alignment into the Corporate Plan and refresh of the Belfast Agenda including the new Connectivity, Active & Sustainable Travel subgroup.• Seek approval from the Committee to convene an All Party Round Table regarding Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel that will provide an opportunity for Members to have a focused and informed discussion around this Strategic Priority.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advise Members of the request from Sustrans to present to a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in relation to their experience of designing and implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note the content of this report and the emerging work from the Community Planning: Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel subgroup. II. Agree to convene an All Party Round Table regarding Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel in the city. III. Agree to receive a presentation from Sustrans at a future meeting of the Committee in relation to their experience of designing and implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.
3.0	Main report
	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>3.1 Members will be aware that Active and Sustainable Travel is a strategic priority of this Committee as set out in the Committee Plan under 'Access, Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel', which aligns into the Strategic Priority of 'City Connectivity' as set out in the Corporate Plan. Of relevance to highlight is the further synergy to the ongoing refresh of the Belfast Agenda and the priority theme of Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel under the area of City Development.</p> <p>3.2 Members may also be aware that there are a number of existing Notices of Motion relating to Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel currently open across Council, with regular quarterly reporting to the relevant Committee. Sustrans have noted the recent Notice of Motion on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and have requested to present to the Committee on their experience of designing and implementing these initiatives.</p> <p>3.3 Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel cuts across a number of different stakeholders, including Council, DfI and other Government departments, Sustrans, Translink, communities, businesses and anchor institutions. This includes the work being taken forward by the Community Planning structures via the Connectivity, Active & Sustainable Travel subgroup as part of the Belfast Agenda refresh and via the Climate & Resilience Board; Council led Physical Programme projects; A Bolder Vision and the strategic and large-scale infrastructure projects</p>

being led by public and private sector city partners, including Translink, Belfast Rapid Transit, DfI etc.

3.4

Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel are critical cross cutting levers and span across a number of areas including:

- Policy , including LDP/BMTP etc
- Strategy, including Bolder Vision
- Physical Delivery
- Modal Shift/Behaviour Changing eg Cycle to Work/School etc
- Climate related.

There is a need to amplify the intricacies of the ongoing work across Council and with stakeholders around Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel to ensure that there is a complete line of sight and to enable Council to effectively position itself in terms of what we can deliver, who we need to work with and what we need to influence to ensure that the wider associated benefits of connecting people to opportunities and creating a better connected and environmentally sustainable city are realised.

3.5

Following recent discussions between officers and Elected Members regarding various matters associated with active and sustainable travel, and given how it cuts across various Committees and via the Community Planning process, it has been proposed that it may be helpful for Members to convene an All Party Round Table meeting to ensure they can see all this work holistically, which is not always possible via the current structures. It will provide an overview of the various streams of work underway and where they feed into Council's strategic priorities and governance structures.

3.6

There are internal and external plans that aim to improve Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel in the city and the Belfast Agenda is key to focusing on these priorities and setting out measurable actions that will be delivered by Community Planning partners. As Members are aware the Belfast Agenda is currently going through a refresh and a Sub-Group for the priority area of 'Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel (CAST)' under the City Development Board has been established to co-design a four-year Action Plan The current draft (subject to further engagement) is focused on two strategic intents (and with corresponding draft Action Plans).

- Replacing car journeys with walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport
- Supporting projects that encourage people to use forms of active and sustainable travel

3.7	<p>The focus of the group is not only to improve connectivity in the city but to also deliver on the many other benefits that are linked to active and sustainable travel such as improving quality of life, health and wellbeing, access to employment, access to education and tackling climate change. The subgroup is co-chaired by Sustrans and Translink and has representation from various city stakeholders including the VCSE Panel. The draft CAST Action Plan along with the draft Action Plans of the other priority areas of the Belfast Agenda are due to go out for public consultation in Spring 2023.</p>
3.8	<p>A Bolder Vision (ABV) is a key lever for delivering Active and Sustainable Travel in the city. ABV is a joint BCC/DfI/DfC initiative that aims to provide a holistic look at the city centre's infrastructure and connectivity with surrounding communities, its streets and places. This Committee has received several reports on the implementation and progression of the A Bolder Vision Strategy that included agreement on the Visioning Principles and Key Moves. The Visioning Principles set out the vision for the city that includes 'prioritising integrated walking, cycling and public transport and ending the dominance of the car,' 'Providing lively, safe and green streets' and 'Removing severance and barriers to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities.'</p>
3.9	<p>The strategic direction of the Belfast Agenda and A Bolder Vision sits alongside Council's Physical Programme that oversees the delivery of a number of connectivity projects including Lagan Gateway, Greenways, Belfast Bikes expansion and a range of partnership projects.</p>
3.10	<p>An internal officer Connectivity and Active Travel Group has been established and is seeking to ensure that our policies, projects, interventions, funding opportunities and programming are aligned to not only our internal corporate priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan, Belfast: Our Recovery, LDP and Belfast Agenda but link with various external structures and plans e.g. Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, Belfast Cycling Network and with key city partners that have clear interdependencies for example the Community Planning Partnership Boards, Innovation & Growth Commission, specific sector groups and NI Executive/Government.</p>
3.11	<p>Key to the successful delivery of these priorities is the ability of Council to collaboratively work with external public and private sector partners in relation to strategic opportunities and overcoming challenges. It is important to note that whilst Active and Sustainable Travel is a strategic priority of this Committee and of Council, the powers and responsibility for a significant amount of delivery lie with DfI, including for example, road cycling infrastructure and the delivery of the Department's <i>Belfast Cycling Network</i>.</p>

3.12	Subject to Members approval, it is proposed to convene an All Party Round Table meeting focused on Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel, which will provide an opportunity for Members to have a focused informed discussion and to consider ongoing activity, potential opportunities and the work of the Community Planning, CAST Sub Group.
3.13	Financial & Resource Implications
	No costs associated with this report.
3.14	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
	None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None.