

## STAGE 1 BMAP PUBLIC INQUIRY

PAC CODE:

2965/22

BCC REF:

19P, 20P

ISSUE RAISED:

BT014/03; OBJECTION TO MATTERS RELATING TO PROPOSAL –  
RAPID TRANSIT SCHEME – SUPERROUTE

PARTICIPATION  
AT INQUIRY:

Informal

### COMMENTS (1500 WORDS)

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1. Like all the other rapid transit proposals the SuperRoute Rapid Transit scheme is intended to provide a new, faster, higher quality and more reliable form of public transport than is available on the existing bus services. These new rapid transit schemes are to be complemented by bus priority schemes on the existing, busy bus routes. These are referred to as Quality Bus Corridors (QBCs) and are to be similar to those already existing in Dublin (QBCs), Edinburgh (Greenways), London (Red Routes and Bus Priority Network) and many other cities. Whereas the rapid transit schemes require new infrastructure and capital investment and are longer term proposals, the QBCs could be implemented rapidly, as has been done in Dublin, where 12 QBCs have been completed in 10 years. Yet progress with the Belfast QBCs seems to be painfully slow and hesitant. Progress in postulating and planning new rapid transit schemes and the complementary city centre controls on parking and access should therefore be matched by progress in implementing the QBCs, in this case on the Ormeau Road, Stranmillis Road and Malone Road.

2. The SuperRoute rapid transit scheme appears at present to be little more than an interesting idea and has yet to be subject to any systematic planning or analysis. It would therefore be useful for the plan to establish a programme for the next steps to be taken rather than jumping ahead to postulate a route, which at first sight seems to avoid some of the obvious trip attractors, such as the Forestside shopping centre in favour of securing a fast route around the Belvoir Park Golf Course, an area devoid of population/potential customers and not likely to be developed.

3. If DRD already has a multi-modal land use/transport model for the region then the best way forward would be to tabulate the demand and then prepare a number of alternative schemes for testing with the model. In the absence of a model, census data should be used to plot the origins of trips to destinations within the corridor and notably within the city centre and its approaches. This will enable alternative routes to be postulated and these may then be evaluated using the full model to estimate likely usage and take-up.

4. This demand analysis should be complemented by an environmental analysis to assess where the major constraints are located and where genuine opportunities exist to accommodate a rapid transit route. Attention has already been drawn to the likely problems of using the Annadale Embankment. The appraisal of the SuperRoute case should also include a development review to identify all the land which might be considered for development with the introduction of SuperRoute and the development funding which might thus be released for the project. SuperRoute in short should become an exercise in land use and transport planning rather than a transport solution in search of a problem. And if as a result of this exercise there appears to be a good case for SuperRoute and its associated development plans then both should be included in the Plan.

**Recommendations**

5. The Council recommends that a full assessment of the SuperRoute alignment is carried out to identify possible interchanges and connections and opportunities to link to development opportunities or high density residential development.

6. A full environmental assessment of the proposed route is also required.

7. The Council recommends that targets should be set for planning and implementation of the proposed scheme prior to the review of the BMAP for inclusion as an amendment.

8. The Council recommends the establishment of the QBC's elements to support alignment and future development.

9. Consideration should be given to a suite of policies for these target corridors that would encourage transport orientated development. This would provide clear guidance as to the potential for differentiated development in these areas to support the establishment of public transport and address the broader regeneration objectives for the city.

**APPENDIX / REFERENCES / MAPS**



## STAGE 1 BMAP PUBLIC INQUIRY

PAC CODE: 2965/21

BCC REF: 18P

ISSUE RAISED: BT014/03:Objection to matters relating to proposal – Rapid Transit Scheme – WWAY

PARTICIPATION AT INQUIRY: Informal

### COMMENTS (1500 WORDS)

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1. Like all the other rapid transit proposals the WWAY rapid transit scheme is intended to provide a new, faster, higher quality and more reliable form of public transport than is available on the existing bus services. The new rapid transit schemes are to be complemented by bus priority schemes on the existing, busy bus routes. These are referred to as Quality Bus Corridors (QBC's) and are to be similar to those already existing in Dublin (QBC's), Edinburgh (Greenways), London (Red Routes and Bus Priority Network) and many other cities. Whereas the rapid transit schemes require new infrastructure and capital investment and are longer term proposals, the QBC's could be implemented rapidly, as has been done in Dublin, where some 12 QBC's have been implemented in 10 years and where the bus is now often faster than the car. In contrast with this success, progress with the Belfast QBC's seems to be painfully slow and hesitant. Progress in postulating and planning new rapid transit schemes and the complementary city centre controls on parking and access should therefore be matched by progress in implementing the QBC's, in this case on Grosvenor Road and Falls Road and Springfield Road

2. These QBC's are particularly important to WWAY, since without integration with the related public transport measures the proposed alignment is extremely short, extending only to the Royal Victoria Hospital. To support the reservation of such an alignment the plan should ensure that the related public transport measures and policies for the corridor are a priority.

3. WWAY is intended to be a westwards extension of EWAY, cross-linked via the city centre, which will have extensive public transport priority, and with an interchange with rail and long distance buses at Great Victoria Street Station and Europa Bus Station. From the interchange WWAY will be segregated from other traffic as far as the Royal Victoria Hospital. It has been suggested that the rail station entrance should be relocated to the west of Boyne Bridge, as the platforms currently lie on that side of the Bridge. There is obviously a case for considering a second station entrance serving the proposed busway, but the main station entrance should be retained east of the Boyne Bridge as part of the traditional city centre.

4. Beyond the Royal Victoria Hospital the WWAY services is shown as branching in both directions on the Falls Road, the northern branch going along either Springfield Road or Divis Street or possibly both.. Nevertheless the cross linking of EWAY and WWAY looks a sensible policy and one with social cohesion as well as transport objectives

5. Because WWAY is short and dependent on two QBCs for its further extension west and because these QBCs should be implemented as a priority and within the timescales of EWAY, there is much support for combining EWAY and WWAY into a single project, which would launch the rapid transit schemes as a part of an integrated network, serving the whole city. This would also avoid the inefficiency and intrusiveness of terminating bus services in the city centre and provide the beginnings of the city centre distribution network which the city currently lacks.

6. The Plan should therefore include a commitment to a comprehensive review of all aspects of the joint implementation and linking of EWAY and WWAY and their related QBCs. This should

include, the definition of the segregated busways to be provided on both sides of the city centre, the design of alternative public transport services to exploit the potential of both, the means of cross-linking the services through the city centre and the comparison of options in terms of capital and operating costs, revenues, and passenger and wider social benefits. The resulting plan should integrate the Metro strategy already being implemented by Translink and the new regulatory arrangements due to be introduced for bus operations. It should be for the model implementation of a major cross town set of bus services using both dedicated busways and QBCs, providing Park & Ride as appropriate and linked to major landuse developments designed to take advantage of the new public transport services and capacity being provided.

**Recommendations**

7. The Council recommends that the timing and phasing of the WWAY should be considered in BMAP. Targets for planning and implementation should be set and refined at the Plan Review stage to include the related public transport infrastructure.

8. The Council recommends that the integration of the WWAY proposal to other transport proposal such as P&R, QBC's and other Rapid transit proposal such as EWAY should be given more consideration in the plan in particular in relation to phasing and implementation of the scheme. Also policy which protects the route alignment and links it to traffic generators and also incorporates other policy such as housing density should be considered.

9. Consideration should be given to a suite of policies for these target corridors that would encourage transport orientated development. This would provide clear guidance as to the potential for differentiated development in these areas to support the establishment of public transport and address the broader regeneration objectives for the city.

**APPENDIX / REFERENCES / MAPS**



## STAGE 2 BMAP PUBLIC INQUIRY

PAC CODE:  BCC REF:

ISSUE RAISED:

PARTICIPATION AT INQUIRY:

### COMMENTS (1500 WORDS)

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- 1 **The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland 2025** sets out the following in relation to Rapid Transit provision for Belfast:  
“**BMA 4.2 Rapid transit, both guided bus and light rail based systems, has a potential longer term role in delivering integrated transport solutions for the BMA:** keep rapid transit options under review for addressing future transportation requirements of the BMA. Examine the development of a BMA Rapid Transit Network in order to offer high quality, high capacity, accessible services using a mix of bus priority, guided bus and light rail, operating on-street and utilising existing and new rights of way”. (RDS P.77)
  - 2 The BMAP 2025 Strategy outlines proposals to introduce rapid transit services as a major element of the delivery of a step change in the quality of public transport in the BMA.
  - 3 The BMAP 2015 Plan proposes the EWAY as the pilot rapid transit route for the city. The 2015 Plan also identifies opportunities to extend the rapid transit network and outlines three other possible routes:
    - WWAY as a rapid transit route from Belfast city centre into West Belfast;
    - CITI-Route a route linking Belfast city centre and Belfast City Airport through Titanic quarter
    - Superoute linking the Downpatrick corridor Annadale to the south of the city.
  - 4 The Council objects to the exclusion of a Rapid Transit proposal for North Belfast. Consideration should be given to a suite of transport policies for the northern corridor that would encourage transport orientated development and support the regeneration objectives for the north of the city. The Belfast Zoo is also located in the north of the city and should be taken into consideration in any transport proposals for this area. It is one of the main tourism attractions in the City and a modern, fast and convenient public transport option to the Zoo would support its continued development.
- Recommendations**
- 5 The Council recommends that a full assessment of the northern corridor is carried out to identify an alignment for a rapid transit proposal, possible interchanges and connections and opportunities to link to development opportunities or high density residential development.

- 6 The Council recommends that targets should be set for planning and implementation of the proposed scheme prior to the review of the BMAP for inclusion as an amendment.
- 7 The Council recommends the establishment of the QBC's elements to support alignment and future development.

## **APPENDIX / REFERENCES / MAPS**

### **References**

2965/16 2965/21 2965/22

## STAGE 1 BMAP PUBLIC INQUIRY

**PAC CODE:** 2965/16

**BCC REF:** 11P

**ISSUE RAISED:** BHA12:OBJECTION TO PROPOSAL – RAPID TRANSIT SCHEME – BELFAST HARBOUR

**PARTICIPATION AT INQUIRY:** Informal

### COMMENTS (1500 WORDS)

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1. The CITI-Route rapid transit scheme is intended to serve the city centre, the Odyssey, the Titanic Quarter, Belfast City Airport and the proposed new Tillysburn rail station. The present plan for a single BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) or LRT line fails to serve: the Harland Technology Park, the Airport Road West corridor and the proposed Tillysburn park and ride site. CITI-Route is also likely to fail to compete effectively with taxis, from the Airport, or the existing airport-city centre bus service, despite the latter's relatively poor (20 minute) frequency. Unless its frequency is high, CITI-Route will also fail to provide a satisfactory link between the Airport terminal and the proposed Tillysburn rail station (passengers are unlikely to be prepared to wait 10 or 20 minutes for a bus to take them 600m.) These failings in CITI-Route arise despite, or partly because of a proposed swing bridge across the Musgrave Channel. Swing bridges are notoriously expensive and this one allows CITI-Route to access the Airport via the East Twin Island but in so doing obliges it to miss the Harland Technology Park altogether. Moreover, when in use, the bridge will close the Musgrave Channel.

2. As with most BMAP public transport proposals, the route to be adopted through the city centre is unspecified, as are potential cross centre connections with other services/corridors. In other words, like EWAY, CITI-Route remains another proposal for a new route rather than a part of the integrated public transport network which Belfast needs. In particular CITI-Route is trying to serve with a single route an area that can only be properly served by a network.

3. The CITI-Route proposal therefore needs a comprehensive reassessment, beginning with a statement of its proposed purposes and its relation to existing airport services (the airport bus and particularly the taxis), The reassessment should consider any bus services planned for the Titanic Quarter and any proposals for putting these and other services together to provide the cross city centre links and the city centre distribution network which Belfast currently lacks.

4. In the absence of clear and tested concepts it is also unwise to specify CITI-Route as needing to be a "rapid transit route", when what is really required is a network. On the one hand it might operate better as a set of conventional bus services of the sort which were suggested in the Titanic Quarter Master Plan. These could combine to provide an integrated public transport network. Different services might be branded and marketed differently, eg the Airport bus. However, such bus services would be unlikely to compete effectively with the car and the taxi.

5. On the other hand buses hardly have the image for a modern hi-tech development adjacent to a capital city centre. Belfast City Airport might also wish to follow the example of London's Heathrow Airport and employ new Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) technology to provide a new C21 public transport network capable of linking all the different origins and destinations in the area, including the Airport Road West, the whole of the TQ, the Airport, its car parks, the new superstores around the IKEA site and the existing and proposed rail stations with an automated system, able to provide non-stop travel between any pair of "stations" on the network. Such systems would not require expensive bridges across the Musgrave Channel and could undoubtedly serve the entire area far

better and more cost-effectively than BRT or LRT. Passengers wishing to get from the Airport to the city centre could be taken there non-stop, directly and without diversions via East Twin Island.

6. A PRT network would also be likely to attract developer contributions for the track and for stations, many of which would be located within particular developments or buildings. This would allow for the incremental development of a system linked to the overall site development.

7. The Plan should therefore be amended to be much less prescriptive about the solution to a problem which it has not clearly articulated. A completely new approach should be formulated with the first step being an analysis of the travel markets to be served and the potential revenues to be earned, first by competing effectively with services to the Airport, secondly from developer contributions and thirdly from the growth likely to arise as the limitations of the car within the area are increasingly recognised. The TQ Master Plan should also be reviewed with a view to include an innovative public transport system to attract people from their private cars such as the PRT system which is to be implemented at London Heathrow airport. With less reliance on the car usage and a reduced requirement for parking, higher density developments could be facilitated.

## **APPENDIX / REFERENCES / MAPS**

