

Appendix 1

Extract from Rapid Transit Network – Belfast Metropolitan area Highlights from Strategic Outline Business Case April 2008

Key findings for CITI

CITI Key Findings

The analysis carried out over the CITI rapid transit scheme proposals has found that it has the potential to be an economically viable scheme if bus-based technology is utilised. It has positive environmental, social and economic benefits for the wider Belfast City Centre area and the Harbour area.



The **Key Findings** from this assessment are:

- A viable core route has been identified that connects Belfast City Centre and Titanic Quarter via Queens Quay, Sydenham Road and Abercorn Crescent. This is the core route that has been assessed within the SOC. An extension of the scheme eastwards to Belfast City Airport / Tillysburn and an extension to Queens University/Belfast City Hospital were also considered;
- The number of passengers that have been forecast for a new bus-based scheme for the morning peak period in 2015 is 1,250 passengers. This forecast cannot adequately be served by existing Metro bus services;
- The initial cost estimate for a bus-based scheme is between £5.2million and £8.8million (including optimism bias);
- The initial capital cost estimate for an LRT scheme is £91.8million (including optimism bias);
- The initial economic assessment has identified that benefits of the bus-based options outweigh the costs by between 3 times (for buses that are guided through Titanic Quarter) and 4.4 times (for non guided buses) meaning that the bus based options are economically viable. In contrast, the costs of the LRT scheme are likely to outweigh any benefits and so the LRT scheme is not likely to be

economically viable;

- The qualitative assessment demonstrated that the scheme will have significant positive environmental and safety benefits along with wider economic benefits in terms of regeneration, development and job creation, especially with regard to the Titanic Quarter development;
- The extension of the scheme eastwards to Belfast City Airport / Tillysburn was found not to be economically viable, however the extension to Queens University/Belfast City Hospital was found to have sufficient potential in principle to justify being considered further but there is a number of issues surrounding road space reallocations that will need to be resolved; and
- There is potential for developer contributions towards the cost of the CITI rapid transit scheme as full planning permission has not yet been granted for all phases of the development. Therefore, it is envisaged that developer contributions can be leveraged through planning in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 13.

The findings highlighted above demonstrate that the CITI core rapid transit scheme is a potentially worthwhile scheme and should be progressed to preliminary / detailed design and Outline Business Case Stages.

Key findings for EWAY

EWAY Key Findings

The analysis carried out over the EWAY rapid transit scheme has shown that it has the potential to be an economically viable scheme if bus-based technology is utilised. It has a good economic case with positive social and economic benefits for the wider Belfast City Centre area and East Belfast.

The **Key Findings** from this assessment are:

- A total of four route options were assessed, each of which utilised the disused Belfast to Comber railway corridor as the middle section of the route. Alternatives for the inner section include Albertbridge Road / East Bridge Street or Dee Street Bridge / Sydenham Road. Alternatives for the outer section include East Link Road / Upper Newtownards Road or construction of a new link road which bypasses Dundonald to the south.

- Patronage forecasts for a new bus-based scheme for the morning peak period in 2015 are between 1,150 and 1,290 passengers.
- The initial capital cost estimate for a bus-based scheme is between £60million and £107million (including optimism bias), depending on the final route choice
- The initial capital cost estimate for an LRT scheme is between £262million and £345million (including optimism bias), depending on the final route choice
- The initial economic assessment has identified that benefits of the bus-based options outweigh the costs by between 1.2 and 2.5 times meaning that the bus based options are economically viable. In contrast, the costs of the LRT scheme are likely to outweigh any benefits and so the LRT scheme is not likely to be economically viable.
- The routes that return the greatest benefits in comparison to costs are those that connect into Titanic Quarter and the CITI rapid transit scheme across Dee Street Bridge.
- The qualitative assessment demonstrated positive environmental, safety and integration benefits as well as wider economic benefits in terms of regeneration, development and job creation.
- The potential for developer contributions is slightly less for the EWAY scheme than for the CITI scheme as there is less leverage available through the planning authorities. However, there are a number of developers that own land within the vicinity of the route options that stand to gain significantly from the development of a rapid transit scheme in the area. This includes lands at Millmount in Dundonald.

The findings highlighted above demonstrate that the EWAY rapid transit scheme is a potentially worthwhile scheme and should be progressed to preliminary / detailed design and Outline Business Case Stages.



Key findings for WWAY

WWAY Key Findings

The analysis carried out over the WWAY rapid transit scheme has found that there is the potential to be an economically viable scheme if bus-based technology is utilised and the optimum route option is selected. Under these assumptions it has a good economic case with positive social and economic benefits for the wider Belfast City Centre area and West Belfast.



The **Key Findings** from this assessment are:

- A total of three route options were assessed. This included one route option along Falls Road, Andersonstown Road and Stewartstown Road terminating either at the Dairy Farm Shopping Centre or a new park & ride site near McKinstry Road. The second route option included Falls Road, Glen Road and Monagh Bypass, terminating at the proposed Glenmona development site. The third option also terminated at Glenmona but the route was via Springfield Road.
- Patronage forecasts for a new bus-based scheme for the morning peak period in 2015 are between 500 and 1,288 passengers.
- The initial cost estimate for a bus-based scheme is between £36million and £61million (including optimism bias), depending on the final route choice.
- The initial cost estimate for an LRT scheme is between £204million and £460million (including optimism bias), depending on the final route choice.
- The initial economic assessment has identified that benefits of the scheme outweigh the costs for only two route options under the bus based technology. The costs of the LRT scheme are likely to outweigh any benefits under all route options and so the LRT scheme is not likely

to be economically viable.

- The two route options that are forecast to be economically viable are those that connect into the proposed development at Glenmona via Falls Road / Glen Road or via Springfield Road. The most expensive option included the longer route along Falls Road, Andersonstown Road and Stewartstown Road.
- The qualitative assessment demonstrated positive environmental, safety and integration benefits along with economic benefits in terms of regeneration, development and job creation.
- The possibility of developer contributions for the WWAY scheme is limited due to the fact that the majority of development sites identified alongside the routes are publicly owned. Nevertheless, there has been some interest from developers seeking to build private residential housing in the area. This creates a potential opportunity for developer contributions should the land be transferred into private ownership prior to the WWAY route arrangements being finalised.

The findings highlighted above demonstrate that the CITI core rapid transit scheme is a potentially worthwhile scheme and should be progressed to preliminary / detailed design and Outline Business Case Stages

Recommendations and next steps

Key recommendations in relation to CITI, EWAY and WWAY

- The CITI, EWAY and WWAY rapid transit schemes are potentially worthwhile schemes and each one should be progressed to preliminary / detailed design and Outline Business Case Stages;
- In accordance with the findings of the SOC, each scheme should be a bus-based rapid transit scheme, with further consideration given to the type of vehicle and guidance technology (if any) to be adopted;
- The routes that have been identified as economically viable for each scheme should be progressed to preliminary design stage to determine in more detail their viability in engineering terms;
- The design of the schemes should consider potential migration of the system to light rail in the future;
- The design of the scheme should consider the integration of planned / committed developments in each of the development areas;
- There should be resolution of the infrastructure requirements for the rapid transit scheme being proposed and consideration of planning conditions and developer contributions;
- There should be resolution of the final format & timescales for implementation of the city centre traffic management proposals, including bus priority and the City Centre Ring Road / Bankmore Link proposals; and
- There should be resolution of the final route of the rapid transit scheme through the city centre – including location of stops, level of segregation and integration with other sustainable modes of transport.

Other matters

- There may be financial and commercial benefits to DRD in combining the rapid transit schemes and procuring the infrastructure for all schemes within one package depending on the method chosen to procure the necessary infrastructure. The procurement route and value for money need further consideration in this regard.
- The indicative economic assessment on delivering the full network returns a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for the bus-based options of 2.8. Current government guidance states that any transport scheme with a BCR of greater than 2.0 is a worthwhile scheme in economic terms
- In terms of procurement options, it is recommended that a market sounding exercise is carried out on the preferred technical solution to determine the appetite of the private sector for taking the risk on the design, construction, finance, operations and maintenance of the infrastructure. The potential for transferring services to the private sector will be influenced by the recommendations of the Public Transport Reform Change Programme. It is unlikely that a PPP/PFI will demonstrate the necessary Value for Money over conventional procurement if a bus based scheme is the preferred option.
- It is recommended that the Department takes the necessary steps to ensure that developer contributions towards the costs of the CITI rapid transit scheme are a condition of any planning permission granted for the remaining phases of Titanic Quarter.
- It is recommended that the DRD, once the preferred technical solution has been selected for each scheme, should consult with developers of land in the vicinity of the proposed routes and Planning Service to ascertain the potential level of contributions that could be obtained through the introduction of the Rapid Transit infrastructure.

Appendix 2

Belfast Rapid Transit Study: Draft Belfast City Council Response

The Council welcomes the announcement from the Minister for Regional Development and the publication of the Belfast Rapid Transit Study. The Council has supported the initiation of work to progress the development of a rapid public transport system for the city and would welcome the proposals as the first step towards a city-wide integrated network.

Notwithstanding the general support for the development of public transport this Council response is based on the consideration of the published documents by the Department for Regional Development and the presentation to the Development Committee in April 2008. The response covers both general and specific issues in relation to the study and the wider context of public transport for Belfast.

General

- The final form of technology (guided bus or light rail), capacity and the longer term potential in relation to the continued development of the city. The significant difference in Capital Cost Estimates, between Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT), set out in the Study is an important element of the Consultant's recommendation of a bus based system. However, the basis for these cost comparisons are not clear in terms of whether the comparison is like for like and whether or not the system, as suggested can be upgraded at a later stage to tram or light rail. An important difference in the comparative costs for the systems relate to the degree of segregation from other traffic along the route with other variations for infrastructure or vehicle costs. The Council would request clarification on the basis on the costs and whether or not the bus based system will receive the equivalent degree of priority and separation to that anticipated for a LRT form of provision. Clarification is also requested in relation to the viability for the proposed BRT to be upgraded at a later stage, in terms of the potential additional costs and required space to achieve the required physical separation.
- The quality offered by bus based rapid transit can vary considerably depending on both the specification of the vehicles and the associated travel time, infrastructure (stops, interchanges, ticketing and real time information systems). The specification in terms of level of quality for the service is not clear from the study. The Council would request for a benchmark to be set to ensure the system selected for Belfast provides a viable attractive alternative to the car both in terms of service quality and journey time. The quality of provision including targets must be clearly articulated and ensure that the provision includes high quality infrastructure incorporating real time information and full integration with re-aligned public transport provision in the form of an integrated system. The Council would request further details of the specification on the level of service which is sought, including integration with other modes of public transport, and reassurance that a high quality of service is applied to any Rapid Transit System for Belfast.
- The proposals do not consider provision for the north and south of the city or address the potential relationships to existing provision within the corridors associated with the study options. The Council have reservations in relation to

the absence of proposals for the wider city or detailed consideration of the potential for an expanded system that builds on the initial proposals.

- It is the Council's view that the provision should be set within the longer term context of city wide transport and the objectives of securing a modal shift towards public transport. The Council as part of the BMAP inquiry processes advocated the development of clear transport corridor plans that provided the context for longer term planning on the basis of an integrated approach (See Attachment 1). The Study should clearly consider the integration of proposed development, in particular housing and employment, with the proposed transport network and provide an indication of the relationship between the implementation of improvements to public transport infrastructure and other transport services or proposals such as the provision of new highway infrastructure such as the proposed A2 widening or Connsbank Link.
- The BMTP and RTS outlined timetables for the progression of the different transport options and their implementation. The BMTP stated that commencement of a bus rapid transit network with the implementation of the Eway scheme in the Newtownards Corridor within the 2015 plan. Detailed planning of rapid transit schemes in three other corridors not served by rail infrastructure and/or to support major development was also outlined. As the progression of the EWAY, CITI Route and part of WWAY is now proposed the Council would request clarification of the implications of the proposed implementation on the development of the other transport initiatives identified for consideration, including the proposed timescales.
- The proposed routes suggest that the Rapid Transit scheme will not be segregated from other traffic in major sections of the route particularly close to the city centre. It is not clear how the system will perform or deliver a modal shift if in these circumstances. The Council is concerned that in the absence of route segregation and priority over other city centre traffic it is not clear what frequency or speed can be achieved and how this will relate to the existing bus based public transport provision.
- Significant development proposals such as those for Titanic Quarter offer the opportunity for both private sector contributions and the integration of provision into the design. Previous rapid transit schemes have indicated the potential for attracting private sector investment is stronger in relation to light rail schemes rather than bus based. Whilst the contextual documentation makes reference to the issue the Council would require clarification of the anticipated value or contribution from the private sector contributions or investment in relation to existing and proposed developments.
- The Council request clarification in relation to the anticipated or projected affordability and integration of the schemes with existing transport.

Specific

There are a number of route options presented in the Executive Summary for the study and the Council has a number of issues in relation to the detail of the proposed or potential alignments.

- The WWAY Rapid Transit scheme beyond the Royal Victoria Hospital has a number of options identified with the alignment of along Falls Rd, Glen Rd and

Springfield Rd with a range of terminus options including the routes recommended by the consultants with an endpoint of Glenmona. The further assessment of this connection and routing should in addition to the economic be evaluated in relation to the potential regenerative benefits the proposal could bring to the neighbourhood renewal areas through which it would pass.

- The recommended proposal for EWAY is via a diversion into Titanic Quarter (Odyssey) and a shared link for both EWAY and the Titanic Quarter connection into the city centre. The alignment would follow the Ballymacarrett Walkway, Dee Street and Sydenham Road before joining the Titanic Quarter proposed link at the Odyssey. This represents a significant departure from the proposals in BMAP and does not serve or provide a significant proportion of the inner east population with a new connection to the centre, Titanic Quarter or the wider city. This proposal appears to utilise the existing Dee Street Bridge and would therefore be dependant on the construction of the Sydenham Interchange, Connsbank Link and potentially the Holywood Arches by-pass. As a counterpoint or balance to this significant departure from the previous alignment there does not appear to have been any consideration of the potential for other alignments that could have reduced the impact on the Holywood Rd / Newtownards Rd /Albertbrigde Rd junction, such as an alignment directly linking Connswater as a link to Albertbridge Road. Clarification is required in relation to the relationship of the proposal to the development of new road infrastructure in the vicinity as the potentially causal relationship reflected in the study. The clarification should also include any funding interrelationships proposed between these potential projects.
- The Council have received representations in relation to the potential conflict between the EWAY proposal and the Comber Greenway. Whilst the walkway and cycleway were introduced as temporary resources along the protected alignment they have become well utilised. The Council would request the development of the route seeks to ensure the minimisation of impacts on the existing environment to integrate the provision or retention of the existing facilities.
- The continued retention of the Bankmore link as part of the city centre transport solutions by DRD could affect the existing proposals and their future enhancement. The Council has highlighted serious concerns over the impact of the proposed road link from Cromac St to Sandy Row in relation to community severance, air quality and the adverse implications on the potential for the rapid transit connectivity to the South of the City and the university area.
- The Council is concerned that the report fails to identify detailed options in relation to the potential routes through the city centre and the level of priority that can be afforded to public transport initiatives. The connection through the city and the ability of the system to provide integrated through routes are critical both in relation to the existing proposal and any potential for a future upgrading of the system. The relationship with the city bus re-routing study and the potential to remove lay-over facilities from the City Hall/ Donegal Square area is a critical element of the study that is not clarified.

Appendix 3

The Council submitted the following proposed policy in relation to the BMA Transportation Strategy in the BMAP Public Inquiry for Strategic Transport Issues:

Policy Tran 6

Preparation and Application of Transport Corridor Plans

A Transport Corridor Plan (as required by SPG-BMA 3) will be prepared for each of the Metropolitan Transport Corridors (shown in RDS Diagram 5). Each Transport Corridor Plan will integrate sites for development, in particular housing and employment, with the proposed transport network and will provide a phased programme for the implementation of improvements to transport infrastructure and services.

All development proposals within the Metropolitan Corridors must be compatible with the relevant Transport Corridor Plan. Transport Assessments prepared in support of such development proposals will be required to contribute appropriately towards the implementation of the detailed transport infrastructure and services.

Appendix 4

SP4500

Mr Conor Murphy MP
Minister for Regional Development
Department for Regional Development
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8GB

sustrans

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

3rd Floor
Marquis Building
22-31 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8TE
T: 028 2643 4555
F: 028 2643 4556
Information: 0845 113 0055
www.sustrans.org.uk

14 April 2008

Dear Mr Murphy

RAPID BUS ROUTE ON THE COMBER GREENWAY

We welcome the report you recently launched when you committed to significant improvements in bus transport in Belfast. In addition to our obvious support for walking and cycling Sustrans fully supports the need for a high quality bus network within the city. We note with enthusiasm the recent improvements Translink have made in the provision of the Metro service despite a lack of quality bus lanes.

The lack of continuous bus lanes, added to the fact that most cars on the road in congested times have only one person in them, results in inefficient use of road space. We very much welcome the sections of routes within the report where road space is reallocated to buses.

We are however alarmed that all four routes proposed for the EWAY route propose to build a bus route and in parts a new road, on the Comber Greenway.

The report produced by your consultants refers to this area between Ballybeen and Dee Street as a "disused railway line". As anyone who has visited the corridor in the last year will know, it is far from that. The greenway is a very busy, popular and valued green corridor running through East Belfast and Castlereagh and onto Comber. It has a range of uses – mainly walking and cycling for many journey types, as well as providing a green area for play and socialising. It is a biodiversity corridor with sections designated as a SLINCI. I enclose some photographs to outline these uses for your interest.

Recent funding from DARD, Roads Service and Environment and Heritage Service, totalling circa £1,000,000, is supporting the final completion of the greenway to Comber.



Local Councillors and MLA's have been instrumental in supporting the development of the project over the last few years.

We have plans for further developments to link this greenway to local facilities such as schools, Dundonald hospital, Dundonald House, Ice Bowl etc to make the network even more useful for local people. We also have a community based officer working with schools and the local community to encourage greater use and high levels of maintenance.

We would very much like to meet with you or your team at the earliest opportunity to clarify some issues resulting from their work, such as:

1. Have you given any thought to the provision of walking and cycling along the EWAY corridor?
2. Did the economic appraisal carried out under WebTAG factor in the loss of the greenway, taking into account losses in physical activity etc – we would be grateful if the Department could send us a full copy of the economic appraisal asap please.
3. Why was the Upper Newtownards Road not considered as one of the 4 options carried out under the WebTAG process?
4. Why was a road, rather than a segregated bus way, not considered between East Link Road and Millmount Park and Ride in Dundonald?
6. During this 6 week window who is your team consulting and what are the plans to engage with the community to seek their views?

Once again we would like to reiterate our support for BRT if provided to a high quality and not to the detriment of local bus services. However this should not compete for space on the key walking and cycling greenway corridor in East Belfast.

We would ask that Sustrans be considered a key stakeholder with regard to BRT and EWAY. Following us receiving the information requested we would be glad to give a more detailed response to the proposals, however would comment that 6 weeks is a very short time period.

I would be delighted if you would like join us for a short bike ride on the greenway so you can get a personal feel for the Comber Greenway.

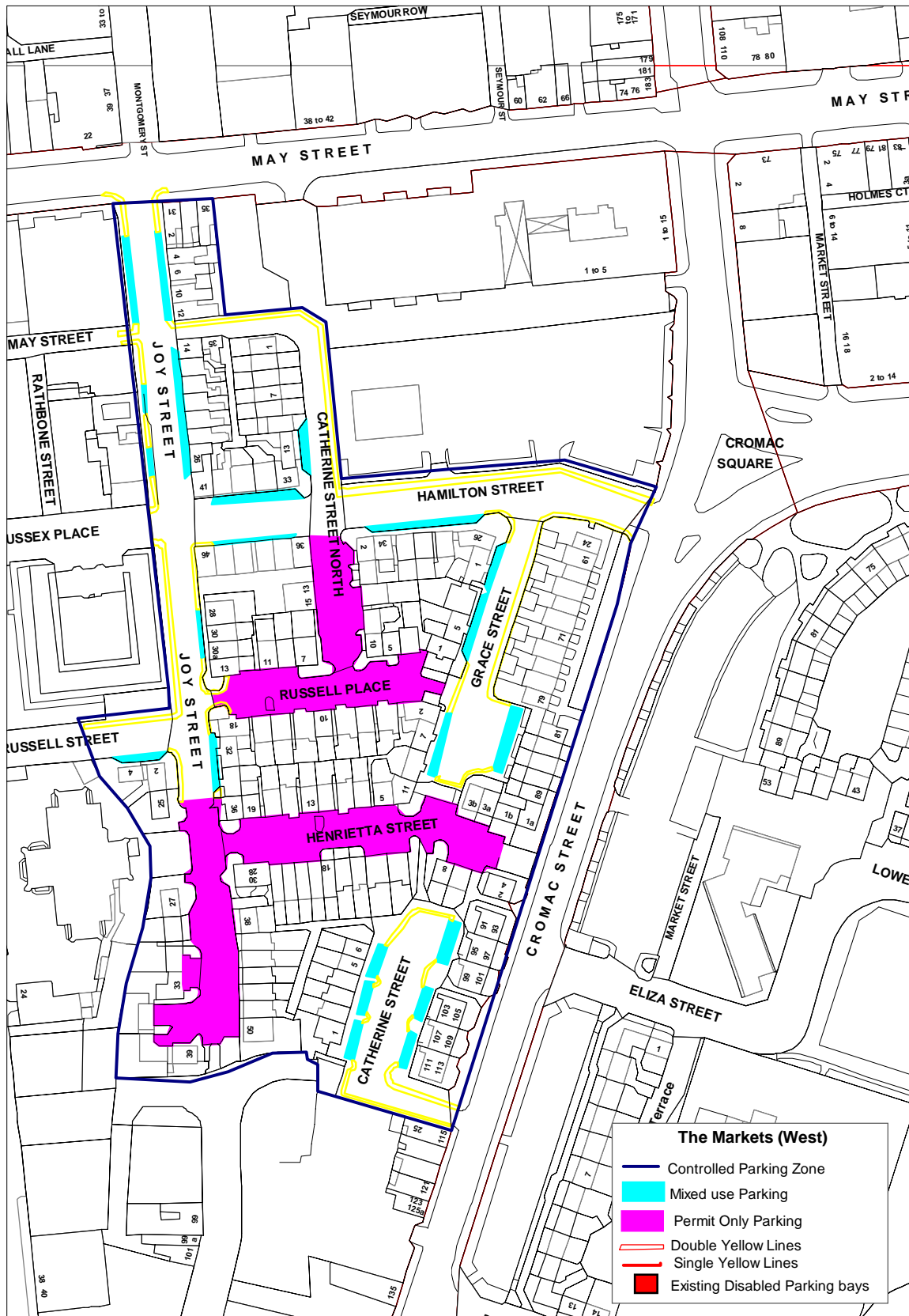
Yours sincerely

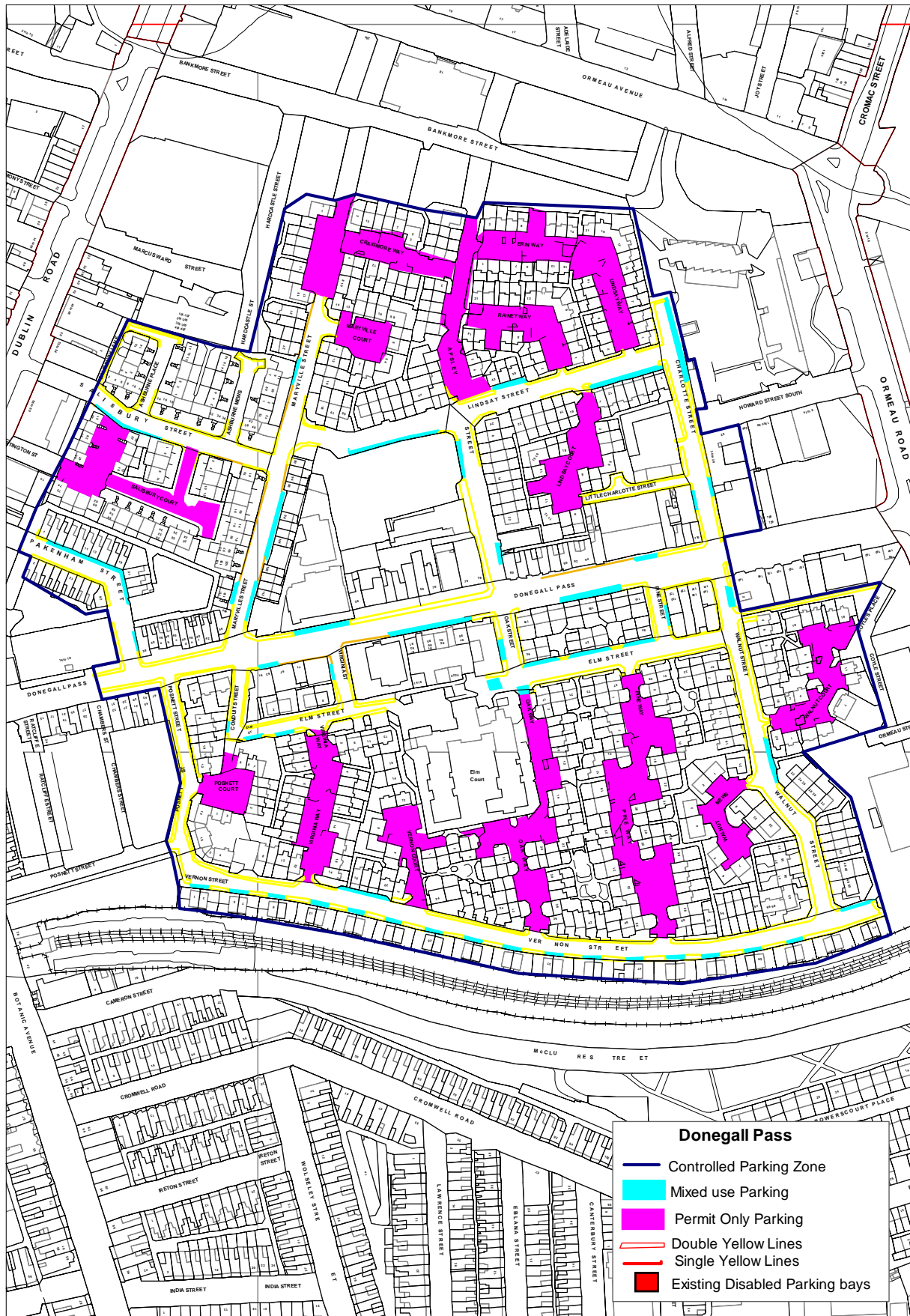
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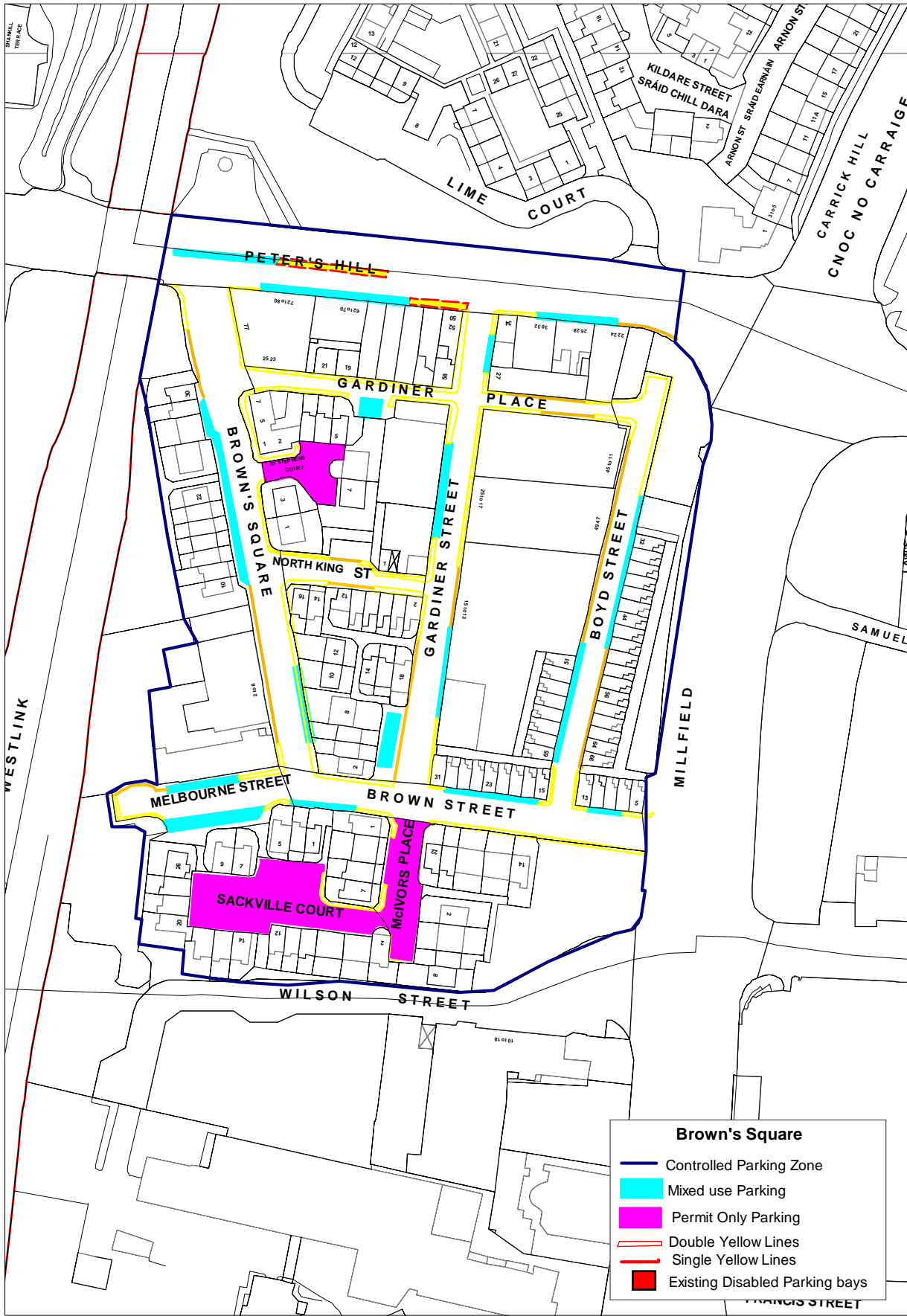
Steven Patterson
Director for Northern Ireland

Cc: Peter Robinson MP MLA
Iris Robinson MP MLA
East Belfast MLAs
Dept for Regional Development Committee
Peter McNaney, Belfast City Council
Adrian Donaldson, Castlereagh Borough Council
Ashley Boreland, Ards Borough Council

Appendix 5 Proposed Residents Parking Areas in Belfast

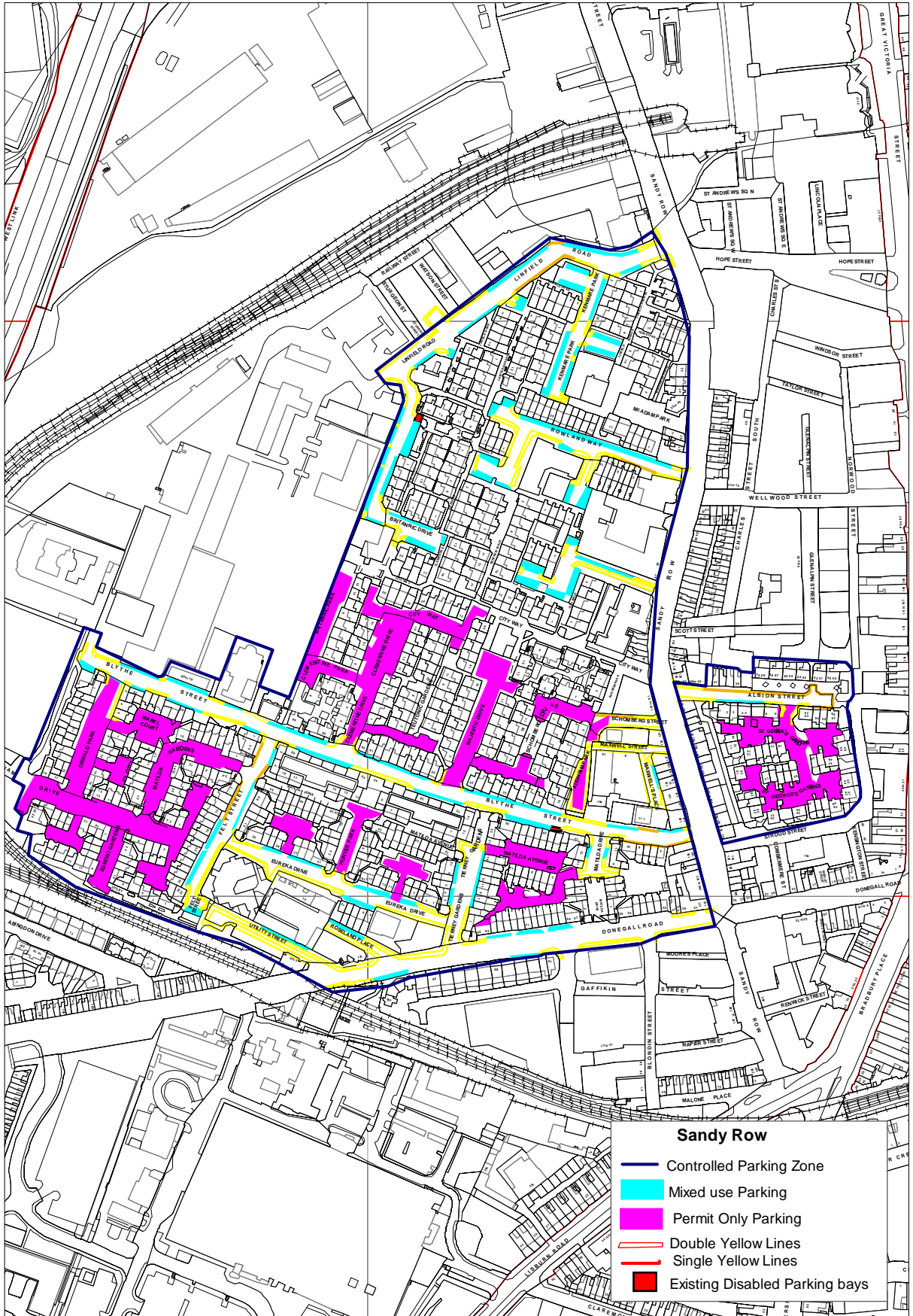






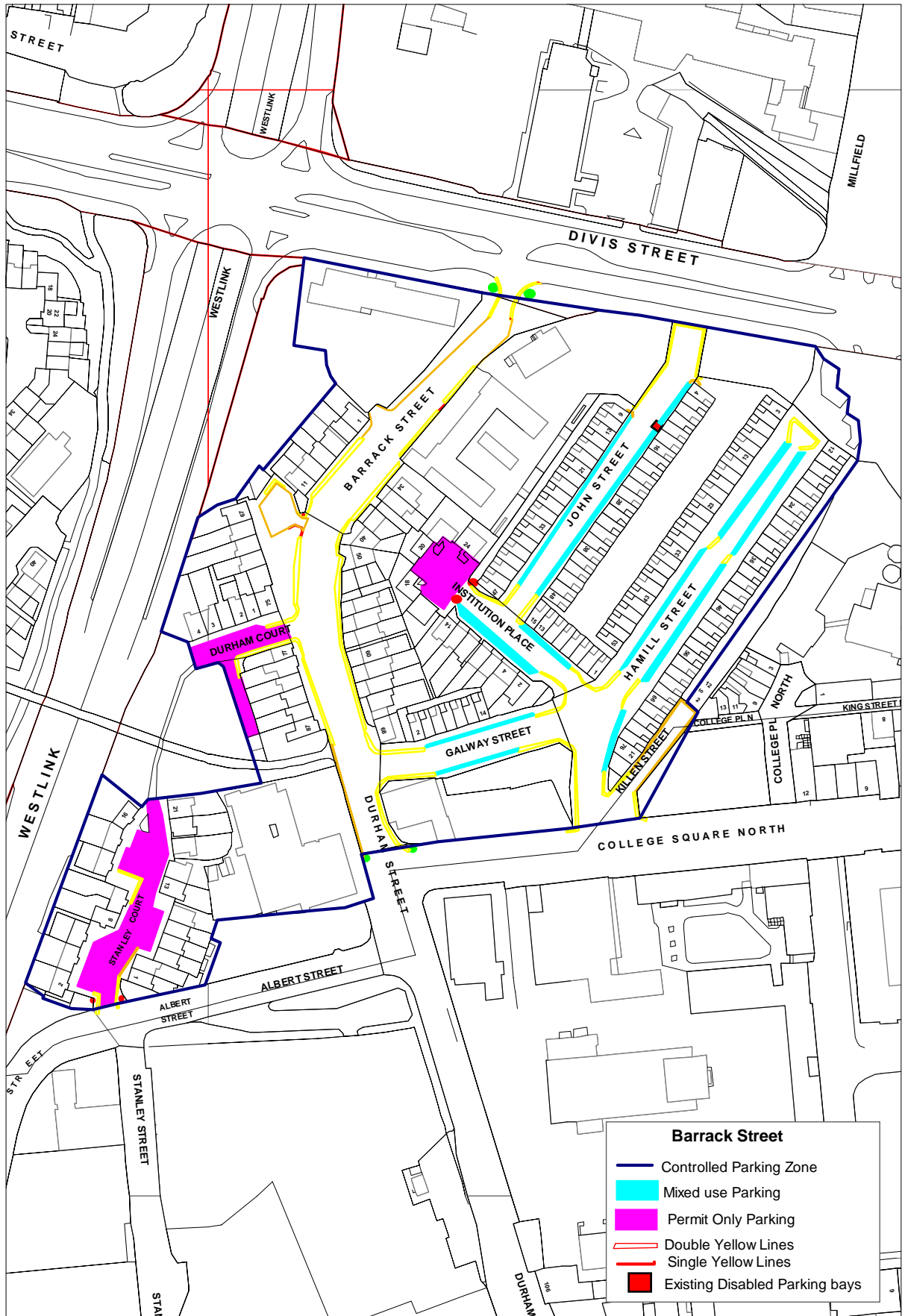
Brown's Square

- Controlled Parking Zone
- Mixed use Parking
- Permit Only Parking
- Double Yellow Lines
- Single Yellow Lines
- Existing Disabled Parking bays



Sandy Row

- Controlled Parking Zone
- Mixed use Parking
- Permit Only Parking
- Double Yellow Lines
- Single Yellow Lines
- Existing Disabled Parking bays



Ports and Public Transport Division



Public Consultation

Free Travel for People Aged 60 to 64

April 2008

HOW TO GIVE US YOUR VIEWS

You are invited to send your views on the Free Travel Scheme for People Aged 60 to 64 to DRD by 5pm on 9 June 2008. Late comments cannot be accepted. Please note that your response may be made publicly available (see appendix 1).

Please send your response to:

Concessionary Fares Team
Department for Regional Development
Room 3-09
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8GB

Telephone: (028) 9054 0609

Fax: (028) 9054 0598

E-mail: Transport.Policy@drdni.gov.uk

Textphone: (028) 9054 0642

This document is available on the internet at
<http://consultations.drdni.gov.uk>.

Should you require this document in an alternative format please contact the above address.

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1.0 Introduction to the Concessionary Fares Scheme

1.1 At present, the Department for Regional Development (DRD) administers the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme provides a mixture of free and half price travel on most public transport services within Northern Ireland.

1.2 Free travel is currently available to:

- Older people aged 65 and over;
- Those who are registered as being blind; and
- Those in receipt of a war disablement pension.

1.3 Half fare travel is currently available to:

- Young people up to age 16;
- Those who are partially sighted;
- Those who are eligible for the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance at both the higher and lower rates;
- Those people with a learning disability who feature on the records of Health and Social Services Trusts; and
- Those people who have been refused a driving licence in Northern Ireland on medical grounds.

1.4 These concessions are available on most bus and rail services, including those operated by Translink, within Northern Ireland.

1.5 In addition to this, since April 2007 older people (aged 65 and over) who live in Northern Ireland and older people (aged 66 and over) who live in the Republic of Ireland have

been afforded free travel on public transport services across the island.

2.0 Proposal to Extend Concessionary Fares

2.1 The Scheme has undergone significant changes in recent years (see Figure 1 below). These changes have ensured continuing public interest in the policy and DRD has received regular requests both to extend concessionary travel to further groups of people and transport services and to increase the level of concession where groups of people are not entitled to free travel. As part of the Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015, published in 2005, DRD confirmed that it would carry out a review of the Scheme within two years.

Figure 1: Concessions available to residents of Northern Ireland, by year of introduction.

YEAR	Half Fare	Free
1978	Senor citizens War disabled pensioners Children	Registered blind
1995		Cross-border travel for senior citizens; war disabled pensioners; registered blind and children
2001		Senior citizens
2002		War disabled pensioners
2004	Registered partially sighted; Refused a driving licence; Learning disability; or either mobility component of Disability Living Allowance	

2007		All Ireland travel for senior citizens*

*Concessionary travel within the Republic of Ireland does not form part of the Scheme.

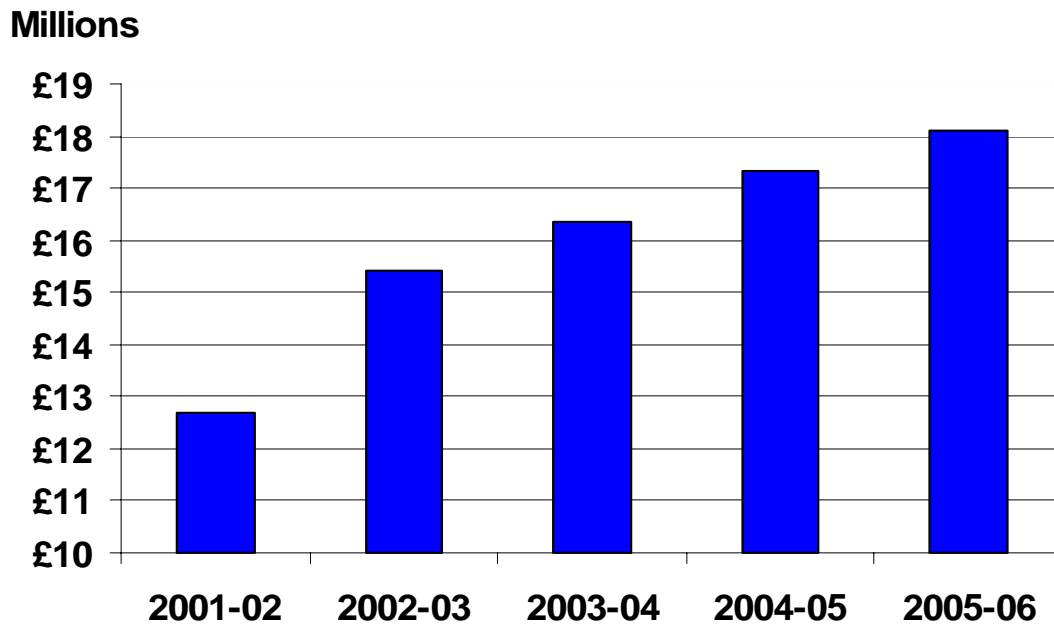
2.2 Figure 2 below shows the number of SmartPasses currently in circulation.

Figure 2: Number of SmartPasses Issued Per Category

Group	Approximate Number of Passes
Senior SmartPass (for persons aged 65 and over)	200,000
Half Fare Disabled SmartPass	12,000
Blind SmartPass	1,500
War Disabled SmartPass	1,400

2.3 Figure 3 below shows the cost of operating the Scheme in recent years. It is estimated that, in the last financial year, this will have amounted to about £21 million. The Department also assumes that the cost of operating the Scheme as it currently stands will increase in real terms by £1,230,000 per annum by 2015.

Figure 3: Total actual expenditure 2001-02 to 2005-06.



Source: Departmental accounts

2.4 During 2006 DRD undertook a review of the Scheme. As part of this review pre-consultation contacts were made with a number of stakeholder groups, including the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee, Age Concern, the Community Transport Association and the General Consumer Council.

2.5 The review identified 10 possible options for the future of the Scheme. These are set out in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Options for extending concessionary fares

OPTION NUMBER	OPTION
1	Do Nothing.
2	Reduce provision.
3	Introduce free fares for persons aged 60 to 64.
4	Introduce half fares to persons aged 16/17.
5	Introduce half fares to people in full-time education.
6	Introduce free fares to people with disabilities.
7	Introduce free travel to carers.
8	Introduce concessionary travel on community transport.
9	Introduce half fare travel for those on low incomes.
10	Introduce free fares to people returning to work from long-term unemployment.

2.6 The review was considered by the Minister for Regional Development, Conor Murphy MP MLA. As a result of this, DRD made bids (under Budget 2007) totalling £11m annually to extend the Scheme. These bids would have allowed the Scheme to be extended in a number of ways, including:

- Providing free fares to persons aged 60-64 inclusive (This could potentially benefit about 87,000 people here at a cost of about £4.1m per year);
- Providing half fares to all young people up to age 18 (This could benefit 53,000 more people at a cost of about £1.2m per year);

- Providing free – rather than half – fares to people with disabilities (This could benefit about 150,000 people at a cost of about £4.1m per year);
- Providing concessionary travel arrangements on rural community transport and on urban door-to-door services (This could provide over 500,000 trips at a cost of about £1m per year); as well as
- Providing 12 months' free travel to persons returning to work from long-term unemployment. (This could benefit about 3,200 people at a cost of about £0.5m per year)

2.7 The Executive decided to make available the resources to allow free public transport to be extended to persons aged 60 and over during 2008 (Option 3 above). Resources are not currently available to allow concessionary fares to be extended to any of the other groups.

2.8 As well as reflecting the Executive's priority, this choice also takes account of the fact that this is the single most important concessionary fares issue raised by members of the public and their elected representatives.

2.9 In light of the resources available and the pressures on DRD's existing programmes, the Department is unable, at this time, to extend the Concessionary Fares Scheme further. However, the Department will continue to seek resources in future Budget Rounds to extend the Concessionary Fares Scheme.

3.0 Scope of travel for persons aged 60-64 inclusive

3.1 There are no plans to reduce the qualifying age for the free travel scheme in the South, so it would not be feasible to reduce the age for cross-border travel for Northern Ireland residents. The proposed extension will, therefore, only cover journeys taken within Northern Ireland by Northern Ireland residents.

4.0 Implementation Timetable

4.1 It is anticipated that the first journeys under the extended Scheme will be made on 1 October 2008. It is also anticipated that eligible persons will be able to apply for their 60+ SmartPass during the summer. This is mainly due to the reasons outlined below:

- DRD needs to undertake both an equality impact assessment and this general consultation on the proposal. This is expected to take ten weeks to complete;
- DRD needs to develop the necessary ticketing software and SmartPasses. Previous experience would indicate that writing new software, validating it and rolling it out to ticketing machines takes about six months;
- It is expected that as many as 70,000 people may apply for the 60-64 SmartPass. A system to deal with these new applications is needed. The process will need to be associated with extensive advertising and publicity to

make the public aware of how, when and where to apply.

5.0 Your Views

5.1 The Department is keen to know your views on the proposal above, particularly where you agree or disagree with the proposal.

5.2 You are invited to send your views on Free Travel for People Aged 60 to 64 to DRD by **5pm on 9 June 2008**.

Appendix 1

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Confidentiality of Consultations

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. **Before** you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided.
- The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties 'in confidence' which is not confidential in nature.
- Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see website at: [http:// www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)).