



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Council Transport Policy Review
Date:	10 December 2008
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Relevant Background Information

Consultants were commissioned in August 2008 to update the current Belfast City Council Transport Policy. The purpose of the commission is to:

- Carry out a review the existing Transport Policy and “Environmental Policy Package” in order to provide the Council with an up to date transport vision for the city and to support the Council’s civic leadership role of facilitating the development of sustainable transport options for the City.
- modify the existing “Environmental Policy Package” in order to take account of the Council’s workplace and fleet transport requirements and to identify linkages with other corporate objectives. The review will include a detailed overview of Belfast City Council’s transport activities with the objective of establishing the potential for a range of more sustainable transport options for operational activity, staff and fleet vehicles.

Continued engagement in the processes that shape the growth and development of the city requires the Council to be fully informed of current best practice in transport policy in order to participate in the proposed consultations and influence transport initiatives planned for the city. The ability to effectively participate in the proposed review of the Regional Transport Strategy will be an essential element of the approach to ensuring the sustainable development of the city and region. In addition the proposals for the Review of Public Administration with the proposed transfer of responsibility for local planning functions reinforces the need for the Council to have a consistent and coherent transport policy to ensure integration of land use and transportation issues within Belfast.

Key Issues

The initial work on the review of the transport policy has completed 3 Stages covering the following activities:

Stage 1

- A technical review of the current transport policy.

Stage 2

- Identification of effective approaches to sustainable transport in comparable cities;
- A review of current and proposed transport initiatives for Belfast; and
- Consultation workshops with elected members, internal officers and external representatives.

Stage 3

- A review of Belfast City Council staff and fleet transport activities;
- Internal Staff travel survey; and
- Identification of initiatives from workplace travel planning in comparable local authorities.

The main findings from Stage 1 to 3 were that:

- The technical review showed that the current policy provided the Council with a coherent approach to lobby on sustainable transport issues, input into the formulation of the BMTP, BMAP and the development of the Belfast City Council Air Quality Action plan.
- The revised transport policy should set out a clear transport vision for Belfast feeding into the current review of the RDS and the proposed review of the RTS and BMTP.
- A review of best practice highlighted the potential for consideration of new initiatives such as 'Shared spaces' and 'low emission zones' which are being implemented in a number of European cities.
- The Review of Public Administration and the transfer of functions will have significant implications as the transfer of road functions is relatively limited as the main statutory responsibility will remain largely with central government although through local planning the Council will have the opportunity to influence the development of more sustainable transport system in Belfast
- Consultation with elected members and other bodies indicated the following:
 - The need for a strong and aspirational transportation vision for the city
 - The need for the integration of transport planning and land use planning to support sustainable development and to provide clearer guidelines on the issue of developer contributions
 - Continued support for a rapid transit scheme with some stakeholders strongly supporting the light rail option
 - Integrated ticketing for the city and night time services to assist the evening economy
 - The need to include transportation policies that address issues with the elderly, school children, areas of high unemployment and low income, community severance and connectivity
- The initial internal staff and fleet review indicated that:
 - a significant portion of employees currently have a high level of accessibility to public transport;
 - the private car remained the dominant mode for travel to work for staff;
 - the necessity for access to transport for business purposes during their working day and the fact it was currently more efficient to use the car than public transport;
 - the potential exists for discount travel cards/ season tickets as well as the availability of more frequent and direct bus services to increase public transport use;

- concerted effort has been made to reduce the environmental impact associated with fleet activities and in this regard the Council is seen as an leader and proponent of best practice;
- initiatives such as the replacement and upgrade of vehicles to meet Euro emissions standards, the promotion of the use of cleaner vehicle technology, the cycle to work initiative and membership of Travelwise NI Car sharing scheme have made positive contributions; and
- the development of a formal Council Travel plan would enable the initial activity to be embedded in the work of the Council.

A full summary of the Stage 1, 2 and 3 reports is included in **Appendix 1**. The consultants will now consider as part of Stage 4 the potential for the “Environmental Policy Package” to be refined and developed as to provide the Council with an up to date transport vision for the city.

Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report although the review will consider the issue of potential future resource requirements in respect of the internal transport policy implementation, review and monitoring.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note:

1. the findings of Stage 1, 2 & 3 of the Belfast City Council Transport Policy review; and
2. the opportunity for further consultation with the different parties in respect of the draft proposals prior to a further report to the Committee on the final approach and recommendations.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Transport Policy Review Findings from Stages 1 to 3

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Appendix 1

Transport Policy Review Findings from Stages 1 to 3

Stage 1 Transport Policy Review

4. Summary and Conclusions

Summary and Conclusions

- 4.1 This report forms the draft report for Stage 1 of the study. It provides an overview of the existing transport policy and reports on the findings of the review of the impacts and outcomes of the policy since its publication in 2001.
- 4.2 Chapter 1 provided an overview of Belfast's existing transport policy, which was published in 2001 following a wide ranging consultation exercise and extensive research of experience and best practice from across the UK and Europe. The policy was established at that time to provide Belfast City Council with an inclusive and consistent policy to be promoted and to allow them to take a proactive role to help ensure that the city continued to grow and prosper in a sustainable manner.
- 4.3 Underpinning the transportation vision for the city is five key strategic objectives relating to prosperity; social inclusion; safety & security; sustainability; and health. The transportation policy also included three secondary strategic objectives relating to fundability; practicality and complementarity.
- 4.4 The transportation policies and proposals identified to help achieve the strategic objectives outlined previously have been packaged into an "*Environmental Policy Package*". This Environmental Policy Package (EPP) contains the transportation initiatives which Belfast City Council committed to pursuing at that time. The EPP contained ten showcase proposals, which included proposals such as road user charging, rapid transit, improved walking and cycling, sustainable land use planning and promotional campaigns.
- 4.5 Belfast City Council does not have a formal mechanism in place that monitors or evaluates the effectiveness of their existing transportation policy. A high level review has therefore been undertaken as part of this study to determine the impacts and outcomes of the policy documents since its formal adoption by the Council in 2001. This review is based on the Council's formal responses to policy documents such as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan; the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan; the Air Quality Action Plan; and the Belfast City Council's Masterplan.

Road User Charges

- 4.6 The Council responded to DRD's consultation on the draft BMTP in 2003 on road user charges – commenting that a more detailed investigation of the impacts of congestion charging in Belfast city centre would be required to determine the impacts on inner city communities. However, despite the inclusion of a statement within the final BMTP to review this area of demand management within the plan period, neither DRD nor Belfast City Council have actively pursued this transportation policy initiative. This would suggest that this initiative is no longer a priority for either parties and its' continued inclusion in a new transportation policy for Belfast City Council should be reviewed.

Sustainable Land Use Planning

- 4.7 The Council has undertaken a proactive and continued lobbying role for the inclusion of a much more sustainable approach to the integration of land use and transportation planning in Belfast. This is reflected in its submissions to the public consultation and public inquiry for the draft BMAP and its commitment to sustainable development in its published Masterplan document and Air Quality Action Plan. With the transfer of local planning functions from central government to Belfast City Council likely to occur by 2011, the issue of sustainable land use planning is likely to remain high on the political agenda. Therefore, this transport policy initiative should remain a strategic objective for the Council.

Step Change Improvement in Provision for Cycling

- 4.8 The Council continues to lobby central government and support cycling forums, such as Sustrans, for a step change in the provision for cycling. This has included promotional campaigns such as Belfast Week of Cycling; lobbying through responses to BMTP and draft BMAP; and funding of projects such as the Comber Community Greenway Project. However, more can be done to lobby for an improved level of cycle infrastructure 'on the ground' as well as the promotion of cycling as a method of travel to work by Council employees. The opportunities to influence the provision of cycling infrastructure as part of new developments will increase with the transfer of local planning functions to the Council. As a result, this transport policy initiative should remain a strategic objective for the Council.

Identify Clear Zones

- 4.9 The existing transportation policy includes a specific proposal on clear zones. However, neither the Council's Air Quality Action Plan nor its Belfast Masterplan contains a reference to the implementation of 'clear zones'. However, the Council has declared a number of Air Quality Management Areas in the city (which are key components of clear zones) and it is heavily involved with DSD and other partners in the development of a city centre traffic management proposal that will reduce the level of traffic in the city centre and reallocate road space to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Taking this into consideration, it is recommended that the wording of this policy is changed to reflect current initiatives to improve air quality and manage traffic flow in the city centre area.

Establish Safe, Continuous Walk Corridor(s) into the Central Area

- 4.10 The Council continues to lobby central government for the establishment of safe and continuous walk corridors into the central area. This has included promotional campaigns such as Belfast Week of Walking; lobbying through responses to BMTP and draft BMAP; and support of projects such as the 'Belfast Streets Ahead' Project. However, more can be done to lobby for an improved level of pedestrian infrastructure 'on the ground' as well as the promotion of walking as a method of travel to work by Council employees. The opportunities to influence the provision of pedestrian infrastructure as part of new developments will increase with the transfer of local planning functions to the Council. As a result, this transport policy initiative should remain a strategic objective for the Council.

50% of Spend to be on Sustainable Transport

- 4.11 The Council continues to lobby central government for 50% of capital expenditure to be on sustainable transport and this has been reflected in the Council's consultation responses to draft BMAP and BMTP. The indicative spend profile contained within the BMTP would appear initially to support the Council's aspirations for a more balanced spread. However, the reality is somewhat different. Monitoring data is only available at the regional scale (i.e. RTS) and this indicates that approximately 69% of spend between 2001/02 and 2007/08 was on highway schemes – with 31% on walking, cycling, bus and rail schemes.
- 4.12 The ISNI document also indicates that total spend over the 2008-2018 could be heavily based on highway infrastructure for the province – this investment strategy indicates that the spend profile is more likely to be in the region of 25% on public transport versus 75% on roads in the period 2008 to 2011; and approximately 17.5% on public transport versus 82.5% on roads during the period 2012-2018.
- 4.13 It will therefore be important for Belfast City Council to continue to lobby central government agencies on this issue and to ensure that spend on sustainable transport issued is given a much higher priority.

Pursue / Promote High Profile Public Transport Scheme

- 4.14 The Council has undertaken a proactive and continued lobbying role for the implementation of a high profile rapid transit system for the City. This is reflected in its submissions to the public consultation and public inquiry for the draft BMAP, the BMTP document and the subsequent

feasibility study undertaken by DRD Regional Planning & Transportation Division. The Council's Masterplan document contains a statement for a much more innovative 'Ultra Light Rail' system for the city centre area. With this project likely to gain more momentum in the near future, it is important that the Council's position on the type of system to be promoted is clarified in more detail.

Reduction in Car Use Environmental Benefits Campaign

- 4.15 The Council continues to be actively involved in a number of promotional campaigns aimed at sustainable travel. This has included promotional campaigns such as Belfast's Week of Cycling and Week of Walking. The Air Quality Action Plan also identifies a comprehensive list of marketing and education initiatives that not only promote more sustainable travel but also raises the issue of air pollution amongst the public. As the civic leader for the City, Belfast City Council should ensure that it continues to take a proactive role in the promotional of sustainable travel into Belfast, including those areas outside of its direct control i.e. travel planning, safer routes to school, use of public transport etc. As a result, this transport policy initiative should remain a strategic objective for the Council.

Promote Development of Travel Plans

- 4.16 At the time of this review, Belfast City Council has not adopted a formal Travel Plan and a significant amount of travel – both commuter and business – within the Council's own activities is still undertaken by the private car. However, this review does include a review of the Council's internal travel patterns and it will include recommendations for change. Stage 3 of this study will investigate this in more detail. However, it is worth noting at this stage that although the Council does not have a formal transport plan, the Council has implemented a number of initiatives which would be considered integral to any travel plan policy. This includes a car share scheme; cycle parking & changing facilities at offices; cycle mileage and the adoption of cleaner fuels for their fleet.

Introduce Pilot Home Zone Scheme(s) / Residents Parking Schemes

- 4.17 This is the only policy initiative contained within the transport policy that does not contain a specific statement or commitment for Belfast City Council. Recognising the fact that Belfast City Council does not have specific responsibilities for the implementation of transportation policy, there is still a role that the Council can offer here in the promotion of such schemes – particularly as they are often localised schemes relating to specific areas. In particular, the elected members can undertake a more proactive role to manage expectations / conflicts between local residents and the highway authority implementing the schemes. The proposed amendments to the pilot residents parking schemes (with free residents' permits) are a good example of this. The issue relating to this policy is whether the Council should include a much stronger commitment to undertake this role.

Stage 2 Transport Policy Review

6. Summary and Conclusions

Overview

- 6.1 This report forms the draft report for Stage 2 of the study. It provides an overview of the existing local transportation policy in Belfast and reviews best practice across the UK and Europe. This report also reviews the potential implications of RPA on the transport strategy and summarises the key issues raised during consultation with a number of key stakeholders (as part of this study).

Existing Transportation Policies in Belfast

- 6.2 Chapter 2 provided an overview of current transport policies, guidance and initiatives on a local basis in Belfast. This review sought to identify the current transportation policies and proposals which would have a material impact on the development of Belfast City Council's Transport Policy.

Regional Development Strategy

- 6.3 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) was published in December 2001 by the Department for Regional Development (DRD). It sets out the dynamic strategic planning framework for Northern Ireland up to 2025 and sets the scene for integrating land use planning and transportation. Work has now commenced on a fundamental review in 2010 when all aspects of the RDS strategy will be re-assessed.

- 6.4 The review of the RDS will set the scene for the review of the Regional Transportation Strategy and ultimately the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. Belfast City Council's Transport Strategy should set out a clear transportation vision for Belfast (along with supporting strategic objectives) that will form the basis of the Council's formal consultation response on the review of this important document. In particular, there will be a need to ensure the continued promotion of a high level of integration between land use planning and transportation planning.

Regional Transportation Strategy

- 6.5 The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) developed the transportation policy of RDS at a strategic level. Similarly to the RDS, it is likely that the RTS will undergo a formal 5 year review in the next year or so. Belfast City Council's Transport Strategy should set the agenda for the transportation vision for the city and identify a clear spend profile for the provision of high levels of sustainable transport modes i.e. public transport (bus, rail, rapid transit, taxi); walking and cycling.

Accessible Transport Strategy

- 6.6 The Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) for Northern Ireland was published by DRD in March 2005. The ATS sets the high level policy context for the consideration of transportation needs for disabled, elderly and other vulnerable users. The Council's Transport Strategy should ensure that its policies and proposals take into account the needs of such users, and that activities undertaken by other parties are actively promoted to members of the public through the Council. In particular any strategies developed by the Council for 'older people' as part of their Corporate Plan should take into account transportation and accessibility.

Planning Policy Statements

- 6.7 A number of Planning Policy Statements (PPS) have been prepared by the Department for Regional Development (DRD) and the Department of the Environment. These PPS provide guidance on strategic planning policy and are applicable to the whole of Northern Ireland – they form a material consideration for Planning Service in dealing with individual planning applications and appeals.
- 6.8 With the proposed transfer of local planning functions from central government to Belfast City Council with RPA, it will be essential that the Council's Transport Strategy sets out their agenda for sustainable development. In particular, the transport strategy should clear out a clear

framework for the consideration of transportation issues in relation to new developments, which is in line with wider government policy and guidance.

Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan

- 6.9 The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) is the blueprint for the delivery of the RTS in the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA). Similarly to the RTS, it is likely that the BMTP will undergo a formal 5 year review in the next year or so. There is therefore an opportunity for Belfast City Council, through their Transport Strategy, to engage with DRD to voice their transportation vision for the city as well as their priorities for expenditure.
- 6.10 In particular, there is the opportunity to provide support (or not) for those policies and proposals which the Council feels should continue to be implemented; or should be implemented at a faster rate e.g. implementation of bus priority measures. In addition, there is also an opportunity for the Council to proactively lobby for the inclusion (or otherwise) of new transportation policies or proposals which are not included in the BMTP at present.

Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan & Plan Amendment No. 1

- 6.11 The draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) was published for public consultation in November 2004. Following the completion of the public inquiry into the draft BMAP, it is estimated that the Public Appeals Commission will report its findings in early 2010. This means that the formal adoption of the final version of the BMAP is likely to be several years away. Therefore the opportunity for Belfast City Council in the short-term (going forward) to influence planning policy is limited.
- 6.12 Nevertheless, the public inquiry process provided a significant opportunity for Belfast City Council to present its views on the development of sustainable transportation policies and initiatives in the City and these views will form a material consideration in the development of the new Transport Strategy for the Council.

Belfast City Masterplan

- 6.13 The "*Belfast City Masterplan*" document, published by Belfast City Council in March 2004, outlines the Council's framework for the regeneration and revival of the city in the period to 2020. A significant amount of transportation analysis was undertaken as part of the development of the City's Masterplan document and this is outlined in a detailed commentary in an Appendix.
- 6.14 The comments included in the Masterplan document will form a material consideration in the development of the new Transport Strategy for the Council, although there will be a need to ensure consistency with more recent consultation responses e.g. draft BMAP. In particular, the addition of a statement that Ultra Light Rail should be introduced into Belfast City Centre is not articulated in any of the Council's other responses and there will be a need to provide clarity in this respect.

Belfast City Council Corporate Plan 2008-2011

- 6.15 Belfast City Council's Corporate Plan sets the Council's vision and strategic objectives for the city and provides information about the way the Council works and the services it provides. The Council's Corporate Plan 2008-2011 includes a specific action for the Council to develop a sustainable Transport Strategy for the Council (which underpins this review). In addition there is also a need to ensure that the Transport Strategy integrates and is consistent with wider policies on sustainable development, social inclusion, tourism, parks and leisure, older people, children and young people; environment and arterial routes.
- 6.16 The six overarching themes provide a useful and recognised context for each type of transportation initiative and as such could be used as the basis for the layout of the new Transport Strategy, for example the 'City Leadership' theme would recognise an objective to work with central government agencies to promote sustainable transport initiatives and fast-track implementation of preferred schemes.

Belfast City Council's Sustainable Development Action Plan 2006-2009

- 6.17 The Council's Sustainable Development Action Plan was prepared by the Sustainable Development Steering Group in May 2006. The document contains specific policies and proposals which are directly related to transportation and therefore should be considered as an integral element of any Transport Strategy. For example, raising the profile of sustainable development by attempting to influence the level of integration between land use and transportation planning. In addition, the inclusion of green transport activities to reduce travel demand and reduce environmental implications will form the core of a sustainable travel plan policy for the Council.

Air Quality Action Plan

- 6.18 The Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast City was prepared by the Air Quality Forum Action Planning Steering Group and published in May 2006. The Air Quality Action Plan contains specific policies and proposals which are directly related to transportation and therefore should be considered as an integral element of any Transport Strategy. This includes the inclusion of initiatives to increase levels of walking, cycling and public transport use; greener vehicles initiatives to reduce environmental impacts; and marketing and educational initiatives to increase public awareness.

Review of EU, National & Local Policies

- 6.19 Chapter three of this report provided an overview current local transport policies, guidance and initiatives on a wider national and European level. This review seeks to identify appropriate and effective practice in comparable cities which will inform the development of appropriate measures for Belfast City Council's Transport Policy. The review included the following:

- Sustainable transport corridors, integrated transport systems and integrated land use and transport planning;
- Reducing and preventing community severance, promoting pedestrian priority – otherwise known as the 'Shared Space' concept;
- Walking and cycling initiatives;
- Rapid transit;
- Parking policy;
- Congestion charging / road pricing;
- Low Emission Zones;
- Park & Ride; and
- Freight.

Sustainable Development / Transport

- 6.20 The definition of sustainable development (and sustainable transport) varies considerably but it is generally recognised as "*about meeting the needs of people today and providing them with a good quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations*". The UK published its national strategy on sustainable development in March 2005 and this has been reflected in Northern Ireland at both the regional ("*First Steps Towards Sustainability*") and local levels (*Belfast City Council's Sustainable Development Action Plan*).
- 6.21 A study undertaken by the Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) in 2006 compared UK transport to that in other European states. In 2006, the study was updated and a more detailed analysis was undertaken to determine how travel patterns in the UK compared to those of our European neighbours.
- 6.22 The study indicated that there was a narrow range of performance between the UK and other European nations. In some aspects the UK leads the way – the UK has some of the safest roads in Europe, and, while there is more to do, the UK has been more successful than many other nations in reducing ground transport emissions. The UK also tends to make more efficient use of

cars and lorries and its aviation sector is the most highly developed in Europe – though this also raises some important environmental challenges.

- 6.23 However, on the negative side, there are a number of areas where the UK could look to examples being set by other European States. Despite the UK's healthy overall record on road safety, pedestrians are more than twice as likely to be killed in the UK as in the Netherlands or Norway. The UK also travels less by public transport, foot and bike than many other nations. For example, each year, cyclists in Denmark and the Netherlands cycle more than ten times as far as cyclists in the UK. Closing the gap could bring significant health and environmental benefits to the UK.

Shared Spaces

- 6.24 "Shared Space" is a relatively new name for a concept that is emerging across Europe. The concept implies a new and innovative approach to the planning and design of public spaces, where the motorist, pedestrian and cyclist becomes an integral part of the design and layout of the highway. This design approach offers a basis for addressing safety issues, for overcoming community severance, for tackling congestion and for enhancing economic vitality in streets and public spaces. In essence, the 'shared space' concept is renewing the concept of a 'home zone' which has been around for sometime.

- 6.25 Shared space projects are evident in most European cities. Currently seven European partners from five countries (the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, and UK) are sharing knowledge through the European 'Shared Space' project. The concept is also widely acknowledged in the UK and the new "Manual for Streets" guidance document issued by the Department for Transport reflects a broader change in thinking about streets and public spaces. The concept is also not new in Belfast and it is already evident in a number of schemes around the city such as Custom House Square and the current Belfast Streets Ahead project for the city centre.

Walking and Cycling initiatives

- 6.26 The implementation of walking and cycling initiatives has been a fundamental part of integrated transport planning for many years now. It is therefore difficult to articulate examples of best practice in this regard as most European cities and towns have made significant steps to improve the urban environment to cater for pedestrians and cyclists. Some case study examples included the Darlington Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town project; the 50% Cycle Club in York; the Bicycle Detectives project in Germany; the Vélib bicycle rental service in Paris; and the Wayfinding study for pedestrians in London.

Rapid Transit

- 6.27 Rapid transit is a general term for a quality public transport service offering improved speed, reliability, comfort and access features over conventional public transport services. In order to achieve the speed and reliability improvements, services operate (for at least part) on an exclusive or segregated routes, unaffected by highway congestion. There are two main types of rapid transit – light rail or bus-based systems.

- 6.28 Light Rail Transit (LRT) is a public transport system that uses rail-based technology and which typically operates in urban settings. The most common type of LRT system is the electric LRT which runs primarily on street-level tracks. Around the world, LRT has enjoyed a period of growth with reinvestment in existing systems and development of new services, particularly in China and India where a tram renaissance is underway. Over the past decade, the UK has also seen some reinvestment in rail and new systems being put in place in Birmingham, Nottingham, Manchester, Croydon, Sheffield and the Docklands in London. Most recently, however, LRT in the UK has lost some momentum as government is increasingly expressing concerns about costs and risk profiles. In the Dublin, a substantial investment has been made in the LUAS.

- 6.29 Ultra light rail (and other such products as the Parry People mover) is a concept that has been promoted for many years but as yet there has been no significant take-up of such system in the UK. The concept is similar to light rail except that the system would use self-powered trams with some form of energy storage. The main advantage of such systems is that they are a lower cost

option of light rail but the disadvantage is that they still incur the major infrastructure costs of rail installation and the inflexibility of operation restricted to areas where rails have been provided. There are also operational difficulties such as vehicles not being able to overtake.

- 6.30 Bus rapid transit (BRT) is a rubber-tired rapid transit service that transcends conventional bus services by providing a high quality and rapid transit service that is on par with other rapid transit options. It combines stations, vehicles, running ways, a flexible operating plan, and technology into a high quality, customer focused service that is frequent, fast, reliable, comfortable, and cost efficient. BRT can provide a similar user experience to LRT including the use of high quality design for stations, a 'branded' and highly visible service, and attractive vehicles. The frequency and speed of service is also higher than conventional bus and similar to LRT.
- 6.31 How BRT systems have been developed varies considerably – some systems use standard buses while others use higher-order BRT vehicles; some use relatively modest levels of on-street priority whilst others use busways that are fully segregated from other traffic.
- 6.32 BRT has enjoyed increasing popularity throughout the world due to growing traffic congestion, increasing pressure on budgets, and a trend to lower density and decentralised development in all countries. In the UK, a true high order BRT system does not yet exist, although a number of projects have been developed in recent years that integrate elements of BRT, e.g. the Crawley Fastway in Kent.

Parking policy

- 6.33 Parking is no longer a stand-alone issue, but has become a key aspect of both transport and land use planning. Control over the availability of parking spaces is a key policy instrument in limiting car trips, and for the time being is the most widely available and readily accepted method of doing so. Even without control over private parking, strict control over public parking could have a major impact on travel choices. In most circumstances parking control is regarded as easier to implement and more appropriate than other measures such as road user charging.
- 6.34 As policy has moved from a "predict and provide" approach to one based on the achievement of wider objectives, the management of parking has become a more important part of national policy. Accordingly, a new policy framework has emerged in a range of Government documents (see Chapter 2 for further information). Of particular importance is the Planning Policy Statements (PPS 13 and PPS 3) which place strong emphasis on parking. These documents take a broad view of implementing parking policy in order to promote sustainable transport choices. Parking related to development should not be considered in isolation, but must be considered as an integral part of development, along with location, scale, design and access by other modes.
- 6.35 In the UK, the Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) have issued guidelines for the development of parking strategies and the management of parking. This document recognises that a good parking strategy needs to meet a number of requirements – its may need to resolve difficult and potentially controversial choices and so must be both technically and procedurally robust. This document provides guidance on the necessary elements of a parking strategy as well as specific parking policies and proposals.

Congestion Charging / Road Pricing

- 6.36 The number of locations where some form of road pricing scheme has recently or is currently being considered is large. It would appear that a very wide range of locations, including towns and cities in nearly every continent and of different sizes of urban area, now have road pricing on the agenda as a tool for addressing transport issues. There are no new emerging schemes which are expected to be implemented imminently anywhere in the world. Short-term expansion of road pricing is limited to changes to those schemes already implemented such as London, Singapore, Stockholm and Norway as well as a new one-year trial scheme in Milan, which started in January 2008.
- 6.37 Schemes identified in all other locations appear to be some way off implementation with their status ranging from very outline concept – the vast majority of emerging schemes identified – through to a broadly defined implementation plan even though, in some instances, aspirational

implementation timescales seem bold. Additionally, none of these emerging proposals appear to have the necessary legislative frameworks in place to enable them to be implemented imminently.

- 6.38 There is therefore a substantial gap between the status of existing operational road pricing schemes and the sizeable pack of emerging schemes. This gap is also evident in the development of road pricing schemes in the UK where local schemes being developed under the Department of Transport's Transport Innovation Fund are currently only at an outline planning stage. While the UK has clear advantages over many other locations in developing road pricing schemes, there is no evidence to suggest that the UK is forging ahead with road pricing schemes compared with the rest of the world. Equally, there is no evidence to suggest that other countries and locations are themselves forging ahead with road pricing at a pace faster than in the UK.
- 6.39 The evidence from the Commission for Integrated Transport's world review of road pricing suggests that the majority of the emerging schemes have multiple objectives with 'tackling congestion' cited as the primary objective. Secondary objectives include tackling poor air quality; addressing climate change; improve economy and improve the urban environment. A number of the emerging schemes also explicitly state that the scheme would be used to raise funds to invest in transport.

Low Emission Zones

- 6.40 Over 70 cities and towns in eight countries around Europe now operate or are preparing Low Emission Zones (LEZs) to help meet the EU health-based air quality limit values, where the most polluting vehicles are regulated. All LEZs affect heavy duty goods vehicles (usually over 3.5 tonnes) and most buses and coaches (usually defined as over 5 tonnes). Some LEZs also affect vans and cars and in Italy, motorcycles and three-wheelers are also included. Most of the LEZs operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with the Italian LEZs currently the only exception to this rule.
- 6.41 Countries currently operating (or planning) LEZs include Germany (22 cities); the Netherlands (7 cities); Norway (planned for Bergen, Oslo and Trondheim); UK (Greater London); Austria (motorway LEZ); Denmark (Copenhagen and Frederiksberg); Italy (four northern Italian provinces; and Sweden (4 cities).

Park and Ride provision

- 6.42 Recent UK government policy has encouraged the development of car to bus/rail park-and-ride as a practical and achievable means of reducing car use, avoiding critical pollution levels in urban areas, and enabling traditional commercial centres to compete with car-orientated out-of-town retail developments. In May 2000 the English Historic Towns Forum published a second edition of its good practice guide to bus-based park-and-ride.
- 6.43 Dedicated park-and-ride can only be successful when implemented as part of an overall demand management strategy. For park-and-ride to be attractive and thus successful it must be comparable, and preferably better, to a trip made entirely by private car in terms of cost, convenience and journey time. In designing a park-and-ride package a decision has to be made as to whom the schemes are to be designed to attract and what is going to be offered so that the systems can be designed accordingly to attract them. The target market will comprise existing car users who would otherwise drive into the city centre. Those who have free parking spaces or those who need their vehicles during the course of the day will be unlikely to use park-and-ride. Commuters, however, who have to pay for their parking during the day or who have to walk a long way between where they park and their place of work could possibly be tempted to switch to park-and-ride under the right conditions.
- 6.44 In order to encourage a shift in travel patterns the facilities and services provided need to be of the highest standard. Sites need to be well laid out with high quality buses, visible staff and a fare structure that makes the experience of park-and-ride worth repeating by newly attracted users. One of the most important elements in attracting and retaining customers to park-and-ride is public image. Ideally, a park-and-ride scheme should, with appropriate marketing, have its own image.

Freight

- 6.45 Most imported goods, including food, are trucked from ports by road. However, the UK's roads are experiencing unprecedented levels of congestion, and the lack of reliable and cheaper alternative forms of transport, such as rail and inland waterways, could mean more vans and lorries will be adding to this problem. With the lack of investment in rail and inland waterways in Northern Ireland, road freight will remain the main form of freight travel for the foreseeable future.
- 6.46 Transport for London claims that road congestion costs businesses in and around London £1.6 billion per annum²³. Congestion is currently estimated to cost UK businesses between £15 and £30 billion per year and could double over the next decade²⁴. The Department of Transport's Freight Best Practice website (www.freightbestpractice.org.uk) provides information on freight projects that have attempted to reduce the industry's environmental and transportation impact, for example, the use of Freight Consolidation Centres.
- 6.47 The drive to reduce goods transported by road and transfer them onto railways is seen as an important step in developing a more sustainable distribution system. In the UK, the volume of freight moved by rail has increased while levels have remained relatively static on the road. However, the UK has been slow in making the most of opportunities provided by the support of the EU for the development of inter-modal freight traffic e.g. transfers to sea / inland waterways. Germany, for example, has limited use of heavy road vehicles at weekends, leading to a transfer of unladen freight to waterways. No initiatives involving transfer to water transport have been put in place in this country. The UK still has no national policy for freight and the roads lobby continues to dominate government transport thinking.

Review of Public Administration

- 6.48 The Review of Public Administration (RPA) was set up by the Northern Ireland Executive in 2002 with the aim of modernising and reforming the public sector. As well as the transfer of some responsibilities and powers from central government to councils, it is also intended to rationalise the existing 26 District Councils to a total of 11 new council areas. Belfast City Council will remain as one of the 11 new Council areas although it is proposed to extend the geographical areas to include some electoral wards currently within Castlereagh, Lisburn and North Down District Councils. The proposed changes will increase Belfast City's population by approximately 20%.
- 6.49 In terms of transportation impacts, an increase in the size of the Council (both in geographical and staff terms) is likely to impact on the travel patterns of its staff and availability of car parking; it will resource implications for its fleet servicing a larger area and additional council leisure facilities; and there may be an increased responsibility for regeneration / multiple deprivation areas within the Council area which could have implications for the provision of community transport.
- 6.50 In addition to the revision of Belfast City Council's boundary, it is also expected that a number of responsibilities will move from central government to councils, including planning and some limited road functions.
- 6.51 From a transport policy point of view, the transfer of local planning functions to Belfast City Council will be beneficial. Not only will it allow planning to be devolved to a local level, but it will transfer the responsibility for planning approval to Belfast City Council which will strengthen their position in relation to the integration of land use planning and transportation. The benefits are likely to include the following:
- It will enable the Council to take a coherent and long term approach to planning in Belfast;
 - Elected Councillors will take local decisions for which they are accountable to the local electorate;
 - Public participation will be more effective;

²³ Transport for London, 2006, "*Transport 2025: Transport vision for a growing world city*".

²⁴ Road Users Alliance, 2006, "*Road File 2006-07*", RAC Foundation.

- There is the opportunity to provide a more streamlined, efficient and simple planning process which is easier to understand for the public than the present system; and
- The community planning approach will strengthen the Council's civic leadership role and will allow a greater integration of interrelated policy areas – housing, employment, transport, health and education – into a coherent local strategy which is beneficial for local communities.

6.52 The transfer of road functions is relatively limited and the statutory responsibility for transport in Belfast will largely remain with central government and its executive agency, Road Service. Nevertheless, some limited functions associated with local public realm; town and city centre environmental improvements; street lighting; and off-street parking will be transferred. The benefits of this are likely to include:

- The transfer of local public realm and town and city centre environmental improvement schemes provides Belfast City Council with the opportunity to influence the layout and design of local roads which have no wider strategic function. As such, these roads can be designed and planned in relation to land use planning, regeneration and the quality and character of the place.
- Environmental improvement schemes, which include streetscape, can offer the opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cycle environment in busy city centre areas and offer wider opportunities to improve public places to influence tourism and economic regeneration;
- The transfer of off-street parking provision to Belfast City Council may provide a useful source of revenue – however, this will need to be managed carefully to ensure it is managed in line with a wider parking policy (particularly in Belfast city centre); and
- Through the planning functions, Belfast City Council will have the opportunity to influence the level of parking and public transport provision provided as part of new developments to meet higher strategic needs for the development of a sustainable transport system in Belfast.

Consultation with Key Stakeholders

6.53 As part of this review, consultation was undertaken with a number of key stakeholders. The consultation was undertaken through a total of five small and relatively informal workshops, where organisations with similar interests were invited to attend. The workshops commenced with a brief presentation outlining the background to the study and an overview of the existing transportation policy followed by an open discussion on the transportation issues currently facing the city and the potential solutions.

6.54 The workshops were held on 6th, 9th and 10th October 2008 in Belfast City Council's offices. A total of five workshops were held, all of which were attended by Belfast City Council and Atkins' staff.

6.55 The key issues raised in the consultation workshops are summarised below:

On the transportation vision and strategic objectives

- The need for a strong and aspirational transportation vision for the city, and in particular the city centre; which is forward-thinking and progressive and linked to the Council's Corporate Plan and Masterplan;
- The need for Belfast City Council to strengthen its position as civic leader and to continue to influence and lobby central government agencies – there was a recognition that more needs to be done to be proactive rather than reactive;
- The need for the integration of transport planning and land use planning to support sustainable development and to provide clearer guidance on the issue of developer contributions (once RPA comes into force) and partnership working with the private sector;

- To continue to lobby for a significant level of government spending to be on sustainable transport measures and to ensure a balanced spend between road-building and public transport, walking and cycling measures;
- The need to link specific transportation objectives to wider Council objectives on social inclusion; environment; air quality; good relations; etc. and recognise some of the beneficial work that the Council is involved in through waste management, recycling, fleet management and air quality management;
- The need for continued partnership working with key government agencies; community and regeneration groups; private sector

On specific policies and proposals

- Continued support for a rapid transit scheme in Belfast – with some stakeholders specifically supporting the concept of a light rail system; need to include North Belfast in any planned network; concerns about loss of on-street parking and the impact on businesses;
- Continued support for the introduction of comprehensive, modern and well-designed pedestrian and cycle routes in the city which addressed signage, road safety, connectivity, accessibility and severance issues;
- Continued support for the introduction of improved public transport measures including the implementation of continuous (and enforced) bus lanes; improved evening and night-time services; and integrated ticketing;
- Need to ensure that the Council leads by example and includes policies and initiatives to encourage sustainable travel within its own organisation;
- Need to ensure integration with West Belfast taxis in the west of the city;
- Road pricing was no longer considered to be a priority and this policy should not be continued into the new transport strategy;
- Need to include an Action Plan, with targets, and identify required resources needed to implement and monitor the strategy;
- Need to support a sustainable parking policy for the city as part of a wider demand management strategy and to tackle issues of commuter (& student) parking pressures in residential & commercial areas (outside of the city centre);
- Need to include transportation policies that address issues with the elderly; school children; areas of high unemployment & local income; community severance and connectivity;
- Need to include policies which provide better information on travel choices – public information, campaigns, marketing, etc.
- Orbital public transport routes (around the city) was cited by most stakeholders as being important but which is not been addressed at present – in particular there is need to access major employment areas outside of the city centre (International Airport; Boucher Road; Mallusk; Titanic Quarter etc);
- Need to ensure that the city centre is 'family safe' and that buses are removed from the City Hall – need to reallocate this road space for pedestrians and cyclists and to generate a new 'civic square';

Stage 3 Transport Policy Review

6. Summary

Analysis of staff postcode data

- 6.1 Chapter 2 of this report provided an overview of the home postcodes for all BCC officers. A more detailed review was then undertaken to understand the potential for these staff to use more sustainable modes of transport.
- 6.2 The analysis demonstrated that a significant portion of BCC employees currently live within the Belfast City Council area and the surrounding Belfast Metropolitan Area commuter belt (approximately 86.4% of all employees), which has a high level of accessibility to public transport services. The remaining 13.6% of employees originate from other areas within Northern Ireland.
- 6.3 With regard to accessibility to sustainable modes of travel, it can be seen that over half of all staff currently employed with BCC live within a 400m walking distance (approximately 5 mins walk) of a Metro bus service. It was also noted that approximately 50 staff lived within a 10 min walking distance from Belfast City Hall and approximately 1,048 staff lived within a 15 min cycle ride to the city centre.
- 6.4 Over 80% of all employees live within 4km of a railway station or halt that operated railway services to Belfast city centre, which demonstrated that there is some potential to travel by rail as part of a longer journey by car or bicycle. A smaller number of employees (approximately 90), who live further afield from Belfast, live within a 2km (1.2miles) distance from a bus stop which was served by a Goldline Express service to Belfast city centre and approximately 345 employees live within a 2km distance from a bus stop which is served by an Ulsterbus service. The review also concluded that there were significant clusters of employees who lived in the same area who could potentially car share / pool, if not doing so already.
- 6.5 Although it is recognised that there are much greater factors than accessibility that deter people from using modes of travel other than the private car, this review does indicate that there are significant opportunities for BCC, through the adoption of a Travel Plan policy, to promote a shift away from the private car so that employees have access to a wider choice of travel options.

Staff Travel Survey

- 6.6 Chapter 3 looked in more detail at current travel patterns of existing BCC employees. A staff travel survey was issued to all staff in October 2008. The aim of the questionnaire was to identify and understand typical travel activities for employees.
- 6.7 The main headline figures from the analysis of the staff survey questionnaire are as follows:
- A total of 597 responses were received giving an overall response rate of 24%;
 - 45% of respondents were male and 55% were female. The age range of respondents was fairly balanced with the majority being between 25 and 54 years of age;
 - 89% of respondents worked on a full-time basis, with the remaining 11% working part-time;
 - 3% of respondents indicated that they have a permanent or temporary disability that impacts upon their method of travel to work;
 - With regard to journey time, the majority of respondents (62%) took between 20mins and 60mins to get to work. For the morning journey, 57% of respondents indicated that they generally travelled to work before 08:00 and in the evening, 61% left work before 17:00;
 - The dominant travel to work, both on a frequent and infrequent basis was via private car – 262 respondents in total travelled by car more than 5 days a week. A further 119 respondents indicated that they travelled by car between 2 and 4 days a week;

- No respondents indicated that they either walked to work or used the bus to get to work on a regular basis. Only 9 respondents indicated that they travelled by train on a frequent basis and only 9 respondents cycled;
- Out of those respondents who travelled to work by car, only 6% indicated that they paid for their parking and only between £18 and £21.35 a week;
- The top two reasons cited by respondents for using a private car to travel to/from work included the need to use their car for business trips during the working day and the fact that it was quicker to use the car than public transport;
- Respondents were asked if they would consider using alternatives to their car for travelling to and from work:
 - 149 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider using the train;
 - 253 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider using the bus and/or park & ride services;
 - 83 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider cycling to work;
 - 39 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider walking to work; and
 - 132 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider car sharing;.
- The top two reasons cited by respondents that would encourage them to use public transport for travel to/from work included the availability of discount travel cards / season tickets as well as the availability of more frequent and direct bus services;
- The top two reasons cited by respondents that would encourage them to walk or cycle to/from work included the provision of safer and better lit pedestrian / cycle routes and improved shower, locker and changing facilities;
- The top two reasons cited by respondents that would encourage them to car share including finding a colleague with similar work patterns and having a meeting point close to home;
- Approximately 60% of respondents indicated that they needed to leave their premises during the day for business purposes. Respondents were then further questioned on how they normally made this journey – approximately 40% of respondents did not answer this question.
- However, of that that did answer, 75% made this journey by private car; 15% made business journeys on foot; 7% by taxi and only 1% by bus or train. At least 22% of respondents made these business journeys on a daily basis, with approximately 52% on a weekly basis.
- Out of 272 respondents, 71% indicated that they would travel less than 1000 business miles per year – with 48% less than 500 miles per year.
- Respondents were asked if they would consider using alternatives to their car for business travel:
 - 269 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider using a council pool car;
 - 152 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider using the bus;
 - 132 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider using the train;
 - 165 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider using a taxi;
 - 99 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider cycling; and
 - 160 respondents indicated that they would or maybe would consider walking.
- With regard to home working, approximately 72% of respondents indicated that they would consider working at home. For the 341 respondents who indicated that their job would let them work at home, approximately 40% indicated that they would be able to work at home for

between 6 to 15 hours a week (approximately 2 days). Only 8.5% of respondents indicated that their job would enable them to work at home for more than 25 hours per week.

- Respondents were also asked if they had access to tele-conferencing or video-conferencing equipment. Out of 586 respondents, approximately 94% indicated that they did not. For the 37 respondents who indicated that they did have access to such facilities, almost all respondents indicated that they never used them or no more often than once a year.

Council Activities

6.8 There are seven Departments within Belfast City Council employing approximately 2,511 permanent staff across numerous locations throughout Belfast City. The main Council offices include the City Hall, Adelaide Exchange, the Cecil Ward Building, and Lanyon Place within the city centre as well as the Duncrue Complex at Duncrue Road in north Belfast.

6.9 Other smaller sites are located throughout the city and include waste management and civic amenity sites; leisure centres; parks and open spaces; playgrounds, cemeteries and sports pitches. Most of these sites provide on-site parking for staff as part of the general provision for members of the public.

Car Parking

6.10 The Council provides a significant amount of car parking at its sites in the city centre – approximately 466 car parking spaces are allocated to over 750 staff free of charge. Within the Duncrue Complex there are approximately 456 parking spaces of various sizes for service vehicles including refuse collection vehicles, with an additional 221 car parking spaces at the front of the complex which are used for both staff and members of the public visiting the site.

6.11 However, despite having only 257 dedicated essential car users designated within the Council as a whole, the Council provides nearly twice this allocation in free parking in the city centre alone. It is therefore clear that the provision of free parking is provided as an additional employee perk rather than on a needs basis.

Current Sustainable Travel Initiatives

6.12 The Council is currently involved in a number of sustainable travel initiatives which would already form elements of a formal travel plan policy. The Council has made a concerted effort to reduce its environmental impact associated with fleet activities and in this regard is seen as an exemplary council. The Council has formed a Greener Vehicles Strategy Group which has progressed initiatives to replacement and upgrade its' fleet to meet Euro emissions standards and promote the use of cleaner vehicle technology.

6.13 In addition, the Council has also started a number of initiatives to introduce improved cycling facilities into Council buildings and has introduced a salary sacrifice scheme to allow staff to purchase a bike and equipment. They are also members of the Travelwise NI car sharing scheme (although more could be done to promote this) and have entered into discussions with Translink to identify ways in which staff could be encouraged to use public transport.

Stage 3 Recommendations

6.14 Taking into consideration the work undertaken above, the following recommendations have been made for the Council's formal Travel Plan policy.

Travel Plan Policy

6.15 **Recommendation 1:** The Council should seek to publish its' Travel Plan initiatives in a formal published document, which is readily available to all staff, elected members and members of the public.

6.16 **Recommendation 2:** the Council should seek senior management and elected members support for the Travel Plan document. As a minimum, the Travel Plan should be endorsed by the relevant Council Committee, the Lord Mayor and the Council's Chief Executive.

- 6.17 **Recommendation 3:** the Council should ensure that any travel plan document receives the necessary cross-departmental support and that effective consultation is undertaken with all staff during its development and implementation. The existing steering group (set up as part of this study) should continue to meet to develop and agree selected initiatives.
- 6.18 **Recommendation 4:** the Council should seek to appoint a full-time travel plan co-ordinator with responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring the Council's travel plan policy.
- 6.19 **Recommendation 5:** the Council should seek adequate funding to ensure delivery of travel plan initiatives. A detailed business case for the preferred travel plan should be developed to assist this process.
- 6.20 **Recommendation 6:** the Council's travel plan should be developed as part of a longer-term strategic approach to achieve ISO 14001 across all departments.
- 6.21 **Recommendation 7:** the Council should seek to form alliances with supporting organisations such as Travelwise NI, Translink's Corporate Commuter Initiative, Roads Service and Sustrans.
- 6.22 **Recommendation 8:** the Council should adopt the following targets for its travel plan:
- An overall target of a reduction of a reduction of 10% of commuter car driver trips per 100 employees over the next three years be adopted for Belfast City Council's Travel Plan;
 - An increase of 3% in the number of cycle trips per 100 employees over the next three years;
 - An increase of 1.5% in the number of walking trips per 100 employees over the next three years;
 - An increase of 5% in the number of car share trips per 100 employees over the next three years;
 - An increase of 10% in the number of public transport (bus and rail) trips per 100 employees over the next three years; and
 - A reduction of 10% in the proportion of private car based business trips per 100 employees over the next three years.

Travel Plan Proposals

Walking

- 6.23 **Recommendation 9:** the Council should consider the introduction of the following walking initiatives:
- Continued support for Belfast Week of Walking;
 - Provision of pedometers to staff to increase their awareness of how far they normally walk;
 - Provision of personal alarms to staff to improve security of walkers and to initiate a number of staff lunchtime talks on pedestrian safety;
 - Hold lunchtime talks with staff to promote the health benefits of walking;
 - For offices which are close to pleasant surroundings or park facilities consider starting a healthy lunchtime walking club or a lunchtime running club. Consider providing incentives, such as vouchers for local walking / outdoor shops, for staff who regularly participate in walking clubs;
 - Ensure that any on-site facilities such as showers, changing rooms, drying areas for clothes and a seating area with hot drinks are also available for employees arriving on foot;
 - Produce maps of walking routes to (and around) Belfast City Council sites and publish them on the web; and
 - To continue to lobby central government for the provision of safe and direct pedestrian routes between Council's offices.

Cycling

6.24 **Recommendation 10:** the Council should consider the introduction of the following cycling initiatives:

- Continued support for Belfast Week of Cycling;
- Provide training and support to novice cyclists including cycle proficiency training and lunchtime talks on cycle safety;
- Continue to lobby central government for the provision of safe and direct cycle routes between Council's offices. Ensure that all cycle routes on Belfast City Council land / offices are safe, well-lit, signed and offer the most direct route;
- Produce maps of cycling routes to (and around) Belfast City Council sites and publish them on the web or provide them in hard copy;
- Re-launch the existing 'salary sacrifice' initiative which provides a tax exempt loan for employees to purchase cycles and related safety equipment through the Council (up to a value of £1,000). Investigate temporary bike rental or staff discounts at local cycle shops or facilities for bike repair & maintenance;
- Consider providing a pilot pool bike scheme at Belfast City Council offices in the city centre;
- Provide incentives and host promotional events to promote cycling;
- Ensure that facilities such as showers, changing rooms, drying areas for clothes and a seating area with hot drinks are available for employees arriving by bike; and
- Form a Bike-User Group (BUG) amongst existing employees.

Bus and Rail

6.25 **Recommendation 11:** the Council should consider the introduction of the following public transport initiatives:

- Approach Translink to provide a discount ticket deal for Belfast City Council staff. The Council may also wish to consider putting in its own funds to make the deal even more attractive;
- Approach Translink with suggestions from employees for improvements to bus and rail services;
- Continue to lobby central government for the implementation of continuous bus priority measures to improve journey time and reliability.
- Approach Translink to provide on-site travel information through their Corporate Commuter Initiative;
- Provide up-to-date travel information on the Council's intranet and site-specific leaflets for all offices / facilities for staff and visitors;
- Provide a personalised journey planner service for staff;
- Establish a company culture within the Council where it is recognised that public transport should be taken into consideration, for example, by ensuring that a meeting late in the day finishes in time for the bus home or that a meeting starts later to allow travel by bus/rail; and
- Offer a guaranteed ride home (by taxi) for staff, who have to unexpectedly work late and has missed their bus/rail service home.

Car Sharing

6.26 **Recommendation 12:** the Council should consider the introduction of the following car sharing initiatives:

- Re-launch the existing car share scheme, which is based with Travelwise NI;
- Offer a 'guaranteed ride home by taxi scheme' in the unforeseen event that the car share has failed;
- Consider ways in which staff, who have children in the same schools, can be brought together to combine the school run and journey to work (if space is available in one car);
- Provide preferential and dedicated car parking spaces for car sharers;
- Provide incentives to promote the car sharing scheme. Some examples include free car washes; arrangements for on-site car inspections e.g. tyre inspections; eligibility for prize draws; accrual of 'car sharing points' that can be cashed in for shopping vouchers, etc.

Car Parking

6.27 **Recommendation 13:** the Council should consider the introduction of the following car parking initiatives:

- Consider a reduction in the number of city centre staff parking spaces, possibly in association with the possible loss of spaces at the Gasworks Business Park;
- Introduce a new parking permit system to allocate parking based on a "needs" basis which takes into consideration personal mobility difficulties; car sharing; out-of-hours work responsibilities; caring responsibilities that necessitate a car on the journey to or from work; and accessibility to public transport;
- Review car parking allocation to essential car users and consider a pre-book system for regular users; and
- Consider introducing daily parking charges as a means of providing an incentive not to drive but also to ring-fence revenues for other sustainable travel plan initiatives.

Business Travel

6.28 **Recommendation 14:** the Council should consider the introduction of the following business travel initiatives:

- Review existing Staff Travel Policy to ensure that travel by sustainable modes is seen as a priority over personal car travel – rather than an option based on cost. Travel by air should only be considered where it is not possible to use telephone/video-conferencing facilities;
- Remove car-based employee 'perks' for new staff – including company cars; reserved parking spaces; or 'essential car user' allowances and replace with sustainable travel 'perks' such as discounted travel ticket.
- Join Whizzgo Car Club to allow use of pay-by-the-hour cars as part of a pool car system;
- Promote the use of telephone or video conference facilities at the main Council buildings, where appropriate. All staff should have access to a telephone conference system using their individual offices phones and a limited number of reliable and easy-to-use video conference suites should be available in meeting rooms which are bookable;
- Consider using a car sharing database can also be used to link up employees for business travel. Provide a mileage rate for carrying passengers;
- Promote the existing free Belfast City Council shuttle bus between the Gasworks Business Park and other city centre locations for business travel; and
- Provide a pilot pool bike system in city centre office locations.

Travel Plan Promotion

6.29 **Recommendation 15:** the Council should consider the introduction of the following travel plan promotional initiatives:

- Include adequate resources to allow an ongoing and comprehensive marketing plan to be developed and implemented;
- Brand the travel plan to ensure that it will have a strong and recognisable identify;
- Undertake a comprehensive launch of the Travel Plan with all employees and other organisations;
- Arrange individual on-going promotional events to launch particular initiatives within the Travel Plan document;
- Maintain the ongoing "presence" of the Travel Plan by monitoring and publishing annual results and success stories, for example, through a quarterly Travel Plan leaflet or as an item on monthly staff meetings; and
- Include the Travel Plan document and additional site-specific travel information to new staff as part of their normal induction processes.

