



## Belfast City Council

Report to: Special Development Committee

Subject: Belfast City Council's Transport Policy Review

Date: 13 May 2009

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### Relevant Background Information

In August 2008, Atkins consultants were appointed to review and update the current Council's Transport Policy to help support the Council's civic leadership role for this important City and regional issue. The policy seeks to provide the Council with a basis for facilitating the promotion and introduction of sustainable transport approaches or initiatives in respect of both Council operational activity and transportation generally.

The overall approach to the review was to build on the success of its existing policy, develop a refined understanding of effective current policy and identify best practice. The work sought to provide an effective up to date policy which would begin to integrate internal operational transport initiatives and actions with the broader policy aspirations for more sustainable approaches to transportation.

The Council requires an up to date, coherent transport policy in order to consistently engage in transport policy developments such as the reviews of the Regional Development and Transportation Strategies and influence specific policies or strategic transport infrastructure initiatives planned for the region. In parallel with this engagement there is also increasing recognition that the Council must continue to address and manage the transportation implications of existing operational activity across the organisation. Council has already accepted reducing the City's impact on climate change and improving air quality as a key objective within the 2008-2011 Corporate Plan.

A cross departmental steering group comprising Council officers was set up to oversee the revision of the current Transport Policy and the following stages were carried out in the first phase of the review:

- A review of the current policy and the environmental policy package;
- Background research and consultation with a range of stakeholders including Council officers, Elected Members, private sector, statutory bodies and community/voluntary bodies; and
- A review of existing travel patterns and practices within Belfast City Council

The first phase of the review was completed in December 2008 and a report of the findings submitted to Committee in December. The Committee endorsed the consultant's conclusions from their initial work that the current vision and objectives of the Transport Policy remained broadly valid but would benefit from being updated and more effectively aligned with the Council's emerging approach and objectives within the corporate plan. The second phase involved the following stages:

- The refinement of policy options for a strategic Council Transport Policy
- The initial exploration of the potential options for a draft Workplace Travel Plan to address the organisational transportation implications for the Council.

## **Key Issues**

This report outlines the proposed Draft Transport Policy, see Appendix 1, for the Council which incorporates a recommendation in respect of the proposals for the move towards the development of a Workplace Travel Plan, see Appendix 2, to integrate the actions to address the transport implications of the organisation including the potential operational, efficiency and sustainability benefits arising from a coordinated plan approach.

### Draft Transport Policy

The Draft Transport Policy (Appendix 1) is appended for consideration by Committee as the basis for an adopted revised Transport Policy. The revised and updated vision for the policy is detailed below:

"To support and promote the development of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system to enhance the connectivity for Belfast and its wider regions, which benefits the environment; supports sustainable development; and enhances the quality of life of all those who live, work, visit and do business in the city".

The proposed new strategic objectives for the policy are outlined below aligned with their associated Council corporate themes. It should be noted that, for the purposes of the Transportation Policy, the additional theme in relation to the City centre has been introduced in recognition of the pivotal role the centre has for transportation infrastructure, services and interchange at a city and regional level.

- Key Theme: City Leadership - Proposed Strategic Objective 1

"To provide a strong civic leadership role for the promotion of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system for the City of Belfast and its wider regions"

- Key Theme: Regeneration Growth and Prosperity - Proposed Strategic Objective 2  
“To support the sustainable economic development of Belfast to ensure the future prosperity of Belfast City and its wider regions and to facilitate the continued development of its economic and physical regeneration through achievement of economic, tourism, leisure, good relations, environmental, educational and health objectives for the city”
- Key theme: Environmental Responsibility - Proposed Strategic Objective 3  
“To secure the long term viability of Belfast City and its environment by seeking to ensure that all transportation arising from the wider proposals take into account, and mitigate against, their adverse impact on the environmental and the quality of life of local neighbourhoods”
- Key Theme: People and Place - Proposed Strategic Objective 4  
“To support local people and communities by ensuring a community plan approach that integrates transportation to enhance connectivity for local neighbourhoods by making them safer, healthier and more inclusive”.
- Key Theme: Value for money customer focused services - Proposed Strategic Objective 5  
“To seek to ensure that Belfast City Council services and facilities are accessible by sustainable modes of travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport”
- Key Theme: An organisation fit to lead and serve - Proposed Strategic Objective 6  
“To promote the positive effects of sustainable travel and to lead by example by implementing sustainable travel initiatives within its own organisation”.
- Key Theme: Belfast City Centre - Proposed Strategic Objective 7  
“To support the sustainable economic development of Belfast City centre, as a key Regional asset – to seek to provide an urban environment that supports a more dynamic and competitive centre and to improve its presentation and environmental quality as befits a first class European city.”

The key objectives / priorities for each Key Theme have been differentiated within the appended Draft Transport Policy between external policies (those outside the control of the council) and internal policies (those within current council activities). The Committee is requested to consider the Draft Transport Policy set out in Appendix 1 and if appropriate agree the revised vision alongside the vision and strategic objectives detailed above.

#### Workplace Travel Plan

The implications of the Council’s organisational transport impacts arising from operational and fleet activities were considered as part of the review and the Draft Transport Policy. The work highlighted the range of activities with direct and indirect transport impacts and the necessity for a coordinated approach to guide the process of aligning this activity with corporate and strategic transportation policy objective for the Council.

The recommendation arising from the work was that the Council should move towards the adoption of a formal Workplace Travel Plan to encourage travel by more sustainable modes and address the potential for operational and efficiency improvements. This approach would also align with the with the Council’s corporate objectives of ‘better leadership’ and ‘better care for Belfast’s environment’.

The appended draft Workplace Travel Plan (Appendix 2) provides a basis for the exploration of a formal Workplace Travel Plan for the Council. The Committee is requested to consider the approval of the principle of a Workplace Travel Plan approach as an integral element of a Council Transportation Policy.

The development of a Workplace Travel Plan will have operational and resource implications. The approval of the Travel Plan approach is sought on the basis that the future resource implications are brought before the appropriate Committee for approval in the context of an integrated plan, including the evaluation of whether or not the Council may seek to appoint a full-time Travel Plan Co-ordinator with responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring the Council's travel plan policy.

### **Resource Implications**

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. The future potential resource implications arising from the revised Transport Policy implementation including the Workplace Travel Plan will be brought before the appropriate Committee for future consideration in parallel with the relevant specific implementation activities.

### **Recommendations**

Members are requested to:

1. consider the Draft Transport Policy set out in Appendix 1 and if appropriate agree the revised policy in line with the vision and strategic objectives detailed in the body of the report.
2. endorse the principle of a Workplace Travel Plan approach for the Council and the refinement of the implications arising from the integration of this element within the Transportation Policy.

### **Decision Tracking**

1. Following ratification the draft Transport Policy will be formalised into a policy document for the Council.  
Time frame: August 2009. Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay
2. Following ratification work will be initiated on the Workplace Travel Plan concept to further refine the potential operational and resource implications with a report brought back to the appropriate Committee.  
Timeframe: October 2009. Reporting: Shirley McCay.

### **Documents Attached**

**Appendix 1** – Draft Transport Policy  
**Appendix 2** – Outline Workplace Travel Plan

# Appendix 1

# 1. Draft Transport Policy

## Introduction

- 1.1 A draft Transport Policy is outlined in the following sections. The content of this draft Transport Policy will be reported to a special meeting of the Council's Development Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2009. This draft report will be updated following the outcomes of this meeting.

## What is the role of the revised Transport Policy?

- 1.2 The overall role of the revised Transport Policy remains unchanged as it seeks to provide the Council with an inclusive and consistent transport policy to be promoted both internally and externally to the Council. It will allow the Council to take a proactive role to help ensure that the city continues to grow and prosper in a sustainable manner and that any regional and local transportation policies are developed in line with the Council's wider objectives on sustainable economic development; environmental responsibility; tourism; leisure; good relations; and education and health.
- 1.3 The transport policy will be a key communication document for the Council – setting out its transportation vision and strategic objectives for the city. It will outline the Council's position on key transportation issues to external delivery agencies and as such will be used as part of a consultation and lobbying tool to influence the development of external policy and proposals, including the review of the Regional Development Strategy and the Regional Transportation Strategy.
- 1.4 The transport policy should also act as the Council's main instrument for transportation policy for internal activities and capital programmes. There will be a need to ensure that 'sustainable transport' is considered as part of other wider programmes such as sustainable development, social inclusion, tourism, parks & leisure, older people, children and young people, environment and arterial routes and that appropriate resources are allocated for the implementation of the transport policy where appropriate.
- 1.5 It is recommended that ownership of the Council's Transport Policy should lie with the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and that regular update and progress reports (i.e. on annual basis) should be presented to the Committee on the success (or otherwise) of the policy. To this end, it will be necessary to develop a number of targets to enable effective monitoring of the policy.

## What are the Key Messages of the revised Transport Policy?

- 1.6 The key message of the revised Transport Policy is:

**To support and promote the development of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system to enhance the connectivity for Belfast and its wider regions, which benefits the environment, supports sustainable development; and enhances the quality of life of all those who live, work, visit and do business in the City.**

- 1.7 The transportation vision will be supported by a number of underlying strategic objectives, which are based on the Council's Corporate Objectives, including:
- City Leadership;
  - Regeneration, Growth and Prosperity;
  - Environmental Responsibility;
  - People and Place;
  - Value for money customer focused services;
  - An organisation fit to lead and service; and
  - Belfast City Centre.
- 1.8 These are outlined in more detailed in the following section.

## Strategic Objectives & Policies

### City Leadership

#### Strategic Objective:

**To provide a strong civic leadership role for the promotion of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system for the City of Belfast and its wider regions.**

#### Key Objectives / Priorities:

- 1.9 The key objectives / priorities for the 'City Leadership' have been split into external policies (those outside the control of the council) and internal policies (those within current council activities).

#### The key **external policy objectives** include:

- To adopt a strong and public city leadership role in the **promotion of sustainable transport initiatives** for the City of Belfast.
- To use the Council's influence as Civic Leader to engage and influence key delivery agencies for the **development of a wider transport policy framework for Belfast, including the city centre area as well as the wider regions, which is aligned with the Council's wider objectives on sustainable development; environmental responsibility; tourism; leisure; good relations; education and health** – in particular in relation to the review of key regional and local transport policy and planning documents in line with statutory procedures. In this respect, the Council will seek to ensure meaningful consultation is undertaken with key delivery agencies on the review of key policy documents such as the Regional Development Strategy, the Regional Transportation Strategy and the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan.
- To seek to influence the **development of transportation policies and proposals which improve connectivity and encourage a shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of travel**, such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- To seek to ensure a **higher level of emphasis of capital expenditure on sustainable transportation schemes**, ensuring that the priority is allocated to sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport schemes.
- To seek to **develop effective working relationships with appropriate delivery agencies** for the delivery of local transportation schemes to support local people and communities and which integrate with a community planning approach.

The key **internal policy objectives** include:

- In line with the proposed transfer of local planning functions to the Council, the Council will **adopt a strong and public city leadership role in the promotion of sustainable development for the City of Belfast** and will ensure a consistent and integrated approach to land use and transportation planning.
- To ensure that the Council has **sufficient resources and skills to enable them to fully address the capacity building requirements associated with the transfer of local planning functions**, in line with the requirements outlined above.

## Regeneration, Growth and Prosperity

### Definition:

**To support the sustainable economic development of Belfast to ensure the future prosperity of Belfast City and its wider regions, and to facilitate the continued development of its economic and physical regeneration through achievement of sustainable transportation, economic, tourism, leisure, good relations, environmental, educational and health objectives for the City.**

### Key Objectives / Priorities:

- 1.10 The key objectives / priorities for the 'Regeneration, Growth and Prosperity' have been split into external policies (those outside the control of the council) and internal policies (those within current council activities). Please note that specific policies and proposals for Belfast City Centre are included within the additional City Centre strategic objective (see later).

The key **external policy objectives** include:

Belfast City Council will support and lobby key delivery agencies for:

- The introduction of a **sustainable parking strategy in Belfast City Centre, at key commercial/retail District Centres and along arterial routes / nodes** to help manage travel demand and help reduce the level of commuter-related parking in key retail / commercial areas where short-staying parking is prioritised. To ensure that such a parking strategy is integrated with improvements to park and ride and public transport services serving these areas.
- The introduction of **sustainable transport corridor plans** that take account of the need to prioritise access to sustainable modes of travel, such as public transport, walking and cycling, in advance of the provision of new highway capacity.
- The **sustainable development of Belfast's airports** – to ensure continued connectivity to Belfast City Centre and a high level of accessibility by sustainable modes of travel, including public transport.
- The implementation of a **new public transport interchange at Belfast City Airport**;
- The **sustainable development of Belfast's ports** – to ensure continued connectivity to Belfast City Centre and the strategic road network; and to ensure a high level of accessibility by sustainable modes of travel, including public transport.
- The introduction of a **sustainable freight management strategy** for Belfast and its wider regions. Consideration should be given to the provision of priority measures to improve the efficiency of road freight distribution and accessibility to the Gateways; a service management plan for the City Centre and District Centres; and an investigation into alternative forms of freight travel, including rail.
- The implementation of a **high quality and high profile Rapid Transit system for Belfast and its wider regions**:



- To ensure that such a rapid transit system will have the **following attributes**:
  - High frequency and reliable services which are “turn up and go”;
  - High level of protection from general traffic congestion which includes off-road running, segregated running paths, and priority at traffic junctions – particularly in the city centre area;
  - High quality passenger facilities, including integrated and off-board ticketing, real time passenger information, high quality stops/stations, accessible, modern and clean vehicles;
  - Clearly ‘branded’ system which represents a modern and dynamic city and is visibly a ‘step change’ from existing public transport services;
  - Integration with existing public transport services so that they are complementary; and
  - Supports sustainable development and the principles of sustainable transport corridors.
- To lobby key delivery agencies for a **detailed review of the rapid transit technology options** available to support a rapid transit system, including light rail and ultra light rail, and the requirements to ensure “future proofing” of the system should the preferred technology be required to be upgraded in the future.
- To lobby key delivery agencies for a **detailed review of the economic assessment** of the rapid transit system to ensure that it takes into account the wider regeneration and economic impacts.
- To support and lobby key delivery agencies for the development of a **rapid transit network which connects south, east, west and north Belfast and its wider regions with the City Centre and each other** – connecting local neighbourhoods with major areas of employment, education and welfare facilities across the city.
- To support and lobby key delivery agencies for the **introduction of bus, rail and rapid-transit based park & ride proposals, in appropriate locations throughout Belfast and its wider regions**, to promote a shift to more sustainable modes of travel. In considering ‘appropriate’ locations, there will be a need to consider the potentially adverse environmental and traffic impacts on local neighbourhoods.

The key **internal policy objectives** include:

- In line with the proposed transfer of local planning functions to the Council, the Council will ensure that **all new developments comply with the relevant regional and local planning guidance in relation to sustainable development**. In particular, the Council will ensure:
  - That the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users are fully considered as part of the design and assessment process;
  - That all new developments are fully accessible by sustainable modes of travel, including public transport;
  - That all new developments provide an appropriate level of parking commensurate with the type and size of development (in line with current planning guidance) and that innovative measures, such as car free developments, are considered;
  - That all new developments comply with the appropriate transport assessment guidelines for the provision of new highway infrastructure and to ensure that developers continue to contribute towards the costs of such infrastructure.

## Environmental Responsibility

### Definition:

**To secure the long term viability of Belfast City and its environment by seeking to ensure that all transportation arising from wider proposals take into account, and mitigate against, their adverse impact on the environment and the quality of life of local neighbourhoods.**

### Key Objectives / Priorities:

- 1.11 The key objectives / priorities for the 'Environmental Responsibility' are mainly concerned with internal policies (those within council activities). With regard to external policies, there is significant overlap with 'people and place' and 'value for money customer focused services' (see next sections).

#### The key **internal policy objectives** include:

- To support, where appropriate, innovative initiatives to reduce car / vehicle ownership;
- To continue to **implement green transport initiatives** to minimise the adverse environmental impact of the Council's vehicle fleet – and to roll out successful initiatives to other companies. This could include initiatives to:
  - Reduce levels of carbon and other air pollutant emissions from existing and new Council fleet vehicles, through the use of alternative fuels or by ensuring that all applicable fleet vehicles comply with the prevailing Euro vehicle emission standard;
  - Continue to implement a fleet replacement programme to ensure continued compliance with Euro standards;
  - Investigate options into the use of emerging technology solutions;
  - Improve procedures for recording and monitoring fleet mileage and fuel consumptions; and
  - Promote better fleet management to improve fuel efficiency and reduce vehicle usage.
- In line with the transfer of functions to the Council (as part of the Review of Public Administration), to identify and implement, where appropriate, **a programme of environmental and streetscape improvement schemes** as a means of improving connectivity, mobility and the quality of life between neighbourhoods within Belfast.

## People and Place

### Definition:

**To support local people and communities by ensuring a community plan approach that integrates transportation to enhance connectivity for local neighbourhoods by making them safer, healthier and more inclusive.**

### Key Objectives / Priorities:

- 1.12 The key objectives / priorities for the 'People and Place' are mainly concerned with external policies (those outside the control of the council). With regard to internal policies, there is significant overlap with 'value for money customer focused services' (see next section).

#### The key **external policy objectives** include:

Belfast City Council will support and lobby key delivery agencies for:

- The implementation of **local road safety, traffic calming and safer routes to schools schemes** which provide improvements for vulnerable road users such as schoolchildren, pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users.
- The introduction of **new public transport initiatives that include community transport initiatives** that support local communities and neighbourhoods, reducing social severance and providing improved access to Council facilities, particularly those who are mobility impaired; the elderly; or who live in areas of low income / employment.
- The **effective integration of taxis into the public transport network**, particularly where they provide for a local need which is not otherwise met by existing public transport services.
- The **introduction of residents-only parking schemes** in areas where it receives local support to help reduce the negative impacts of commuter-related parking on local neighbourhoods.
- The **review and improvement of the traffic network in areas where current traffic operations result in severance of local neighbourhoods** e.g. Middlepath Street / Bridge End gyratory; Yorkgate area; and Shaftesbury Square.
- The provision of adequate carriage facilities for bicycles on public transport vehicles (buses and trains) at all times of the day;
- The implementation of high quality public realm projects for Belfast, ensuring that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are fully met within planned streetscape improvements.

## Value for money customer focused services

### Definition:

**To seek to ensure that Belfast City Council services and facilities are accessible by sustainable modes of travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport.**

### Key Objectives / Priorities:

- 1.13 The key objectives / priorities for the 'value for money customer focused services' have been split into external policies (those outside the control of the council) and internal policies (those within current council activities).

The key **external policy objectives** include:

Belfast City Council will support and lobby key delivery agencies for:

- The implementation of an integrated **Quality Walking Network for Belfast**, including the establishment of safe and continuous walking corridors into the City Centre area, District Centres and between Council facilities.
- The implementation of an integrated **Quality Cycle Network for Belfast**, including the establishment of safe and continuous cycle corridors into the City Centre area, District Centres and between Council facilities.
- Improvements to and integrated **direction (and destination) signage in Belfast to support the Cycle and Walking Network**.
- The implementation of **improved public transport services** into the City Centre and wider areas, between District Centres and between Council facilities.
  - The continued implementation of **Quality Bus Corridors**, including effective and continuous bus priority and enforcement measures as well as service timetable enhancements.
  - The introduction of **new bus services** including routes serving new developments, orbital services, cross-city services; and night-time services.
  - The introduction of an integrated ticketing system that allows travel between different

modes i.e. bus, rail and rapid transit.

- The introduction of **rail infrastructural and service improvements** to provide a high quality service to passengers.
- The **introduction (and review) of parking controls that support the delivery of key Council services** i.e. that ensure accessibility to new and existing developments for Council fleet vehicles.

The key **internal policy objectives** include:

- To continue to develop a programme of **improved and integrated direction (and destination) signage in Belfast to support the Quality Walking Network**, particularly for visitors and tourists to the City.
- To identify and implement, where appropriate, **a programme of high quality and safe walking routes through Council owned sites** including open spaces, parks, leisure and community facilities, which connect into the wider Quality Walking Network and Greenways programme for Belfast.
- To identify and implement, where appropriate, **a programme of high quality cycle routes through Council owned sites** including open spaces, parks, leisure and community facilities, which connect into the wider Cycle Network and Greenways programme for Belfast.
- To identify and implement, where appropriate, high quality **secure cycle parking facilities at key Council facilities**.
- To identify and implement, where appropriate, the **provision of public transport information at Council owned sites**.

## An organisation fit to lead and serve

**Definition:**

**To promote the positive effects of sustainable travel and to lead by example by implementing sustainable travel initiatives within its own organisation.**

**Key Objectives / Priorities:**

- 1.14 The key objectives / priorities for ‘an organisation fit to lead and serve’ have been split into external policies (those outside the control of the council) and internal policies (those within current council activities).

The key **external policy objectives** include:

- To continue to **support the Northern Ireland Travelwise Campaign** to promote sustainable travel and a shift away from the private car.
- To **continue to promote, in association with Translink, the positive benefits of travel by public transport in Belfast** – and to ensure that all Council events promote and facilitate travel by public transport.

The key **internal policy objectives** include:

- To continue to promote the **annual “Belfast Week of Walking” and “Belfast Week of Cycling”** and other initiatives in association with key stakeholders.
- The Council will implement a **Corporate Travel Plan Strategy** (see *Chapter nine for more detail*) which will bring together policies and proposals for a Workplace Travel Plan for staff travel activities as well as an Operational Travel Plan for fleet activities. These initiatives are

likely to include the following policies and proposals:

- Development of **specific objectives and targets** to promote a modal shift towards more sustainable travel;
- Establishment of a new staff role of **Staff Travel Plan Co-ordinator**, who will be responsible for the development, implementation, marketing and monitoring of the staff travel plan;
- Identification of **specific policies and proposals** which many include:
  - *Walking initiatives* – promotional & information events; provision of on-site facilities; maps of walking routes etc.
  - *Cycling initiatives* – promotional & information events; provision of on-site facilities, including cycle parking; cycle maps; training & support; cycle purchase schemes; pool bike schemes; establishment of Bike-User Group etc.
  - *Public Transport* – promotional & information events; travel information; personalised journey planners; ticket discount deals etc.
  - *Car Sharing* – re-launch of car sharing scheme; dedicated car sharing spaces; promotional & information events, etc.
  - *Car Parking* – reduction in no. of staff car parking spaces; parking permit or charging schemes; etc.
  - *Business Travel* – review of Staff Travel Policy, Corporate membership of Car Clubs, promotion of existing shuttle bus, removal of car-based employee perks for new staff, etc.
  - *Travel Plan Promotion* – marketing & communication plan; adequate resources allocated; promotional and information events; monitoring & publishing of annual results; etc.
  - *Green vehicle initiatives* – use of alternative fuels, fleet replacement programme to ensure compliance with Euro standards; fleet management to reduce usage and fuel consumption; emissions testing etc.

## Belfast City Centre

### Definition:

**To support the sustainable economic development of Belfast City Centre, as a key connected and accessible Regional Asset – to seek to provide an urban environment that supports a more dynamic and competitive centre and to improve its presentation and environmental quality as befits a first class European city.**

### Key Objectives / Priorities:

- 1.15 The key objectives / priorities for 'Belfast City Centre' have been split into external policies (those outside the control of the council) and internal policies (those within current council activities).

The key **external policy objectives** include:

Belfast City Council will support and lobby key delivery agencies for:

- To **develop a cohesive and integrated traffic management and public realm strategy for the city centre** which improves the urban environment and road safety for pedestrians and cyclists; increases connectivity and accessibility to public transport services; and improves the quality of life for all those who live in, work in and visit the City Centre.
- In line with the aspirations outlined above, the Council will support and lobby key delivery agencies for the **reallocation of existing roadspace in Belfast City Centre for use for environmental improvement schemes as well as use by pedestrians, cyclists, buses and**

**rapid transit** – including the provision of cross-city public transport routes to minimise the need for bus layover at Donegall Square and City Hall.

- The development of traffic management and highway proposals which adequately mitigate against any potential adverse environmental or community severance impacts, in line with the principles of sustainable development.
- The provision of a '**step change**' in the level of public transport provision in the City Centre including the introduction of a **high quality rapid transit scheme**, and **enhancements to existing Metro bus services** and **rail services** serving Belfast City Centre, which improve public transport journey time reliability and connectivity across the central area.
- Implementation of planned **improvements to the main bus and rail stations in Belfast City Centre** to enhance integration, accessibility and connectivity, including Central Station, Great Victoria Street bus/rail station and Laganside bus station. To include improvements to the passenger environment.
- The implementation of a **new public transport interchange at Gamble Street**;
- The introduction of a **sustainable parking strategy** in Belfast City Centre to help manage travel demand and help reduce the level of commuter-related parking in key retail / commercial areas where short-stay parking is prioritised. To ensure that such a parking strategy is integrated with improvements to park and ride and public transport services serving the City Centre.
- An increased level of **cycle parking facilities in Belfast City Centre**, which are secure and weather protected.

The key **internal policy objectives** include:

- To investigate options for the introduction of a **bicycle rental service in Belfast City Centre** to facilitate short-term use of bicycles, particularly for tourists and visitors.

# Appendix 2

## 2. Workplace Travel Plan

### Introduction

- 2.1 As part of the review of the Transport Policy for Belfast City Council and of its internal staff and fleet travel activities, it was recommended that the Council should adopt a formal Workplace Travel Plan to encourage a greater uptake of travel by more sustainable modes of travel.
- 2.2 This section of the report outlines our recommendations for the detailed policies and proposals to be considered for inclusion within the Council's Workplace Travel Plan. They are subject to detailed review by the Council and approval by the relevant Council Committee.

### Travel Plan Policy

#### Travel Plan Document

- 2.3 As part of the development of sustainable travel initiatives for Belfast City Council's internal travel activities, it is recommended that these are articulated in a formal "Travel Plan" document which is endorsed by Belfast City Council elected members and senior officers.

**Recommendation:** 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.

#### 'Buy-in at the top'

- 2.4 Senior management and elected members' support will be important to ensure that necessary resources are allocated to the Council's travel plan. Perhaps even more important is for elected members and senior officers to lead the way by travelling by sustainable means whenever they can. Travel plan success depends ultimately on whether staff will change their behaviour and they'll be reluctant to make much effort to change if, for example, senior directors think that it is acceptable to drive a few hundred metres between different council offices.

**Recommendation:** 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.

#### 'Buy-in from the staff'

- 2.5 Wide support from Council staff and elected members will be necessary for the successful implementation of the travel plan. In practice, setting up a steering group with representatives from different departments can be a good way to ensure that the travel plan meets different requirements and viewpoints within the Council and can help achieve cross-departmental support. The Council has already made this step by setting up the cross-departmental steering group for



this study – it is recommended that this steering group continues to meet to deliver the travel plan on an ongoing basis.

**Recommendation:** 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.

#### **‘Allocation of staff time’**

- 2.6 Setting up and running a travel plan will take time and effort. Some of the above tasks may fall under the existing work areas of facilities or fleet managers, but there is no question that a specific member of staff is needed to undertake responsibility for implementing the travel plan and given dedicated time to work on it. For a large organisation, such as Belfast City Council, a full time travel plan co-ordinator post is likely to be justified.
- 2.7 A travel plan co-ordinator must be a good communicator and have sufficient authority to move forward aspects of the travel plan that cross departmental boundaries. A successful travel plan co-ordinator will have a personal understanding of the value of reducing traffic and will be personally proactive in using sustainable modes of travel to or during work.

**Recommendation:** 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.

#### **‘Allocation of money’**

- 2.8 The Council’s travel plan co-ordinator will require a budget to cover items such as travel surveys; publicity materials and activities, installation of cycling facilities, or subsidised travel passes. In some cases a travel plan may pay for itself if, for example, parking charges are introduced which are then ring-fenced for travel plan and sustainable travel initiatives. In order to make the case for funding for the travel plan, it will be necessary to develop a business case for the plan, based on the final initiatives selected for inclusion.

**Recommendation:** 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.

#### **‘A long-term strategic approach’**

- 2.9 A travel plan is an ongoing process – although certain initial improvements can result in higher expenditure early on, the effort to move the Council’s ‘car culture’ towards reduced car use will require long term communication, backed up by suitable encouragement and incentives for staff to leave their cars at home. The plan should be reviewed on a regular basis and targets should be reviewed and renewed to reflect an ambition for continued progress year on year.

- 2.10 A travel plan can make a strong contribution to achieving emissions reductions required under an ISO 14001 standard. Equally, ISO 14001 can be a useful way to help ensure that a travel plan is kept on course. At the present time, the adoption of the ISO 14001 standard has been at the discretion of each individual department or service within the Council depending on the extent of their environmental impact – where appropriate, the Council’s travel plan should be used as part as a longer term strategic tool to achieve ISO 14001 where required.

**Recommendation:** the Council’s travel plan should be developed as part of a longer-term strategic approach to achieve ISO 14001 where required within the Council.

### **‘Local alliances’**

- 2.11 The Council should seek to form or build upon existing alliances with supporting organisations such as Travelwise NI, Translink’s Corporate Commuter Initiative, Roads Service and Sustrans. These organisations can form practical advice and some may provide small grants for specialist consultant advice (Travelwise’s Site Specific Advice Programme). Translink can provide on-site public transport information days. In addition, Travelwise will be able to put the Council in touch with other local companies and government organisations that have introduced travel plans so that they are able to work together to tackle issues which are city-wide.

**Recommendation:** the Council should seek to form alliances with supporting organisations such as Travelwise NI, Translink’s Corporate Commuter Initiative, Roads Service and Sustrans.

### **Objectives and Targets**

- 2.12 Experience from existing travel plans shows that, for a well designed plan, a 15% reduction in car driver trips to site over about three years is a typical result. The overall target for Belfast City Council should be expressed in terms of reducing car driver trips to site, which can usefully be expressed as the number of commuter cars arriving per 100 employees. This measurement will allow the Council to judge their progress over time, even if overall staff numbers go up or down, and it enables direct comparison with the performance of other organisations, whatever their size.
- 2.13 The information collected through staff surveys and other means is normally used to make a judgement about the opportunities for change. These would then normally be assessed against the effort and money that the Council can commit to the Travel Plan. With regard to the staff survey carried out it was shown that approximately 253 people (out of the 600 who responded to the survey) indicated that they would consider using the bus as an alternative mode of transport if improvements were put in place – out of the total number of permanent staff at the Council, this equates to approximately 10% of all staff. An overall target of a reduction of 10% of car driver trips per 100 employees is therefore not an unrealistic starting point for the Council’s Plan.

**Recommendation:** An overall target 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.

- 2.14 It is useful to expand the above overall target to include sub-targets to show the increases that the Council is trying to achieve in other ways of travelling to their offices, such as walking, cycling or use of public transport, and a target for reducing the proportion of business travel made by car. Based on the responses to the staff survey questionnaire, a suggested initial list of objectives / targets is outlined in the panel below.

**Recommendation:** Sub-objectives / targets as outlined below should 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** – (83 staff indicated that they would consider cycling to work as part of the staff survey and over 1,000 staff lived within a 15min cycle ride to Belfast city centre);
- **An increase of 1.5% in the number of walking trips per 100 employees over the next three years** – (39 staff indicated that they would consider walking to work as part of the staff survey and approximately 50 staff lived within a 10min walking distance to Belfast city centre);
- **An increase of 5% in the number of car share trips per 100 employees over the next three years** – (132 staff indicated that they would consider car sharing as part of the staff survey and the analysis of staff postcode data indicated that large numbers of staff lived in similar areas);
- **An increase of 10% in the number of public transport (bus and rail) trips per 100 employees over the next three years** – (253 staff and 149 staff indicated that they would consider travelling to work by bus and rail respectively; the analysis of staff postcode data indicated that large numbers of staff lived close to a bus / rail service); and
- **A reduction of 10% in the proportion of private car based business trips per 100 employees over the next three years** – (269 staff indicated that they would consider using a Council pool car for business trips; 152 staff and 132 staff indicated that they would consider using the bus or train respectively

## Travel Plan Proposals

### Walking

- 2.15 Walking is an excellent way to travel for short journeys – a distance of 1km could be covered in approximately 10mins of 'brisk' walk. Promoting walking to work meshes with heightened concern about obesity and awareness of the need to build physical activity into everyday life. The Government recommends about 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five times a week, and specifically highlights the value of walking instead of driving as part of an everyday routine.
- 2.16 It is useful to expand the above overall target to include sub-targets to show the increases that the Council is trying to achieve in other ways of travelling to their offices, such as walking, cycling or use of public transport, and a target for reducing the proportion of business travel made by car. Based on the responses

to the staff survey questionnaire, a suggested initial list of objectives / targets is outlined in the panel below.

**Recommendation:** 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

- 2.17 Cycling to work is an increasing activity. This is partly the result of increased investment in cycle-friendly routes and paths but it is also due to a realisation by commuters that they can actually get to work by bike more quickly and reliably in areas where cars are stuck in jams. There is also the added benefit of lower stress and the opportunity for healthy exercise that is otherwise hard to come by in modern life. Nevertheless cycling to work is still a minority activity. Encouraging employees to come to work by bike involves bringing cycling back into the mainstream by creating a cycling culture.

**Recommendation:** 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

- 2.18 There are quite a number of common barriers to using bus and rail and this includes the cost of travel; the lack of information; the absence (or perceived absence) of appropriate services or routes; safety fears; and a perception that buses are only for those that can't afford better. A lot of these reasons were cited by Belfast City Council staff as their reasons why they chose not to travel by public transport.
- 2.19 In the end, providing a 'better public transport' service and encouraging staff uptake boils down to being better than the car for the journey in question. Removing obstacles to public transport needs to run in tandem with actions to ensure that the Council does not encourage driving to work with cheap company cars, unlimited free parking or by requiring employees to drive to work just in case they have to use their car for work purposes.

**Recommendation:** 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

**Recommendation:** the Council should consider the introduction of the following

car share 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

- 2.20 Management of car parking is a vital part of a travel plan. If plentiful free car parking continues to be provided there will be a built-in incentive to drive to work and indeed a continued cost to the Council. Constraining parking or introducing parking charges will probably be the most contentious aspect of the Council's travel plan and it is often found that leadership from senior managers is a prerequisite for successful implementation of measures to tighten up parking controls.

**Recommendation:** 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

- 2.21 Business travel should be an integral part of a travel plan. Arrangements for business travel can fundamentally affect how people choose to travel to work.

**Recommendation:** 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

2.22 Marketing and promoting your Travel Plan is an essential component of its success. Travel Plan co-ordinators who have run vigorous marketing campaigns have shown that strong promotion translates into greater uptake of sustainable travel. The hallmarks of successful travel plan marketing are lively presentation, persistence and a readiness to use a variety of marketing tools and techniques. This includes branding the travel plan and building brand recognition, promotional events, incentives, special offers and prizes. Maximum visibility can be achieved through electronic media, leaflets, posters, displays, give-away freebies or messages on pay slips.

**Recommendation:** 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**.

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