

APPENDIX 1

Transport Policy

Foreword

Introduction

- 1.1 Belfast City Council's corporate plan expresses a number of key messages which underlines Council's aspirations and vision for the city:
- Better together – working with others to create a shared vision and delivering together;
 - Today's action, tomorrows legacy – city investment that improves quality of life now and in the future
 - Value for money – minimising the rates burden, freeing up resources for more delivery on the ground
 - Better services – continuing to enhance the level of service offered to the citizen

There are 6 strategic themes which guide the key objectives and priorities of the Council:

- City Leadership – strong, fair, together
 - Better opportunities for success across the city
 - Better care for Belfast's environment – a clean, green city now and for the future
 - Better support for people and communities
 - Better services – listening and delivering
 - Better value for money – a can do, accountable, efficient Council
- 1.2 It is widely recognised that a safe, efficient and effective transport system is needed to support and strengthen the economy, tackle social deprivation, and can improve the quality of people's lives in many ways. The consequences of excessive car use and dependency are well known, in terms of congestion, community severance and deteriorating air quality. Therefore an improved transport system for Belfast based on sustainable options is a high priority for the Council and underpins a number of the Strategic themes in particular "Better care for Belfast's environment – a clean, green city now and for the future".
- 1.3 This report outlines Belfast City Council second Transport Policy to support the Council's civic leadership role and provide the Council with a coherent view in relation to sustainable transport options for the city. Currently Belfast City Council does not have any statutory responsibility for transport planning and provision. The review of public administration has proposed the transfer of a number of planning functions but limited responsibility for transport. However the Council will adopt a strong and public city leadership role in the promotion of sustainable development for the City of Belfast to ensure a consistent and integrated approach to land use and transportation planning

Background

- 1.4 The Council published its first Transport Policy for Belfast in 2001 following wide ranging consultation and an extensive research exercise. The policy was established at the time to provide Belfast City Council with an inclusive and consistent policy to be promoted and to allow it to take a proactive role to help ensure that the city continued to grow and prosper in a sustainable manner.
- 1.5 In 2008 a review was carried out of the 2001 Transport Policy and its Environmental Policy Package with the main purpose of providing the Council with an up to date transport vision for the city. The scope of the policy was also extended to take account of the Council's revised Corporate Objectives and include a detailed review of Belfast City Council's internal transport activities with the objective of formulating a range of more sustainable transport options for employees and fleet vehicles.

Role of the Transport Policy

- 1.6 The overall role of the revised Transport Policy 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.
- 1.7 The transport policy is the key communication document for the Council – setting out its transportation vision and strategic objectives for the city. It outlines 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.
- 1.8 The transport policy is also the Council's main instrument for transportation policy for internal activities and capital programmes. The 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.

The Key Messages of the revised Transport Policy?

- 1.9 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.

- 1.10 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
 - Better opportunities for success across the city
 - Better care for Belfast's environment
 - Better support for people and communities
 - Better services – listening and delivering
 - Belfast City Centre.

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:

1.11 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.**
- 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.

Better opportunities across the city - 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:

- 1.12 The key objectives / priorities for the 'Better opportunities across the city' 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
- The introduction of **sustainable transport corridor plans** that take account of the need to prioritise access to sustainable modes of travel, 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,
- 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
- The introduction of a **sustainable freight management strategy** for Belfast
- 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;
 - High level of protection from general traffic congestion;
 - High quality passenger facilities;
 - Integration with existing public transport services; and
 - Supports sustainable development and the principles of sustainable transport corridors.
 - 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**
- 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.**

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, to take account of the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users are fully considered as part of the design and assessment process;

Better Care for Belfast's environment

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:

- 1.13 The key objectives / priorities for the 'Better care for Belfast's environment' 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, implement a fleet replacement programme, investigate options into the use of emerging technology solutions;
- 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.

Better Support for people and communities

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:

- 1.14 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**.
- The **effective integration of taxis into the public transport network**.
- 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.

Better value for money

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:

- 1.15 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 and Quality Cycle Network for Belfast**, including the establishment of safe and continuous walking 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 including the continued implementation of **Quality Bus Corridors**, the introduction of **new bus services** including routes serving new developments, orbital services, cross-city services; and night-time services, and the introduction of an integrated ticketing system that allows travel between different modes i.e. bus, rail and rapid transit.
- The **introduction (and review) of parking controls that support the delivery of key Council services**

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,
- 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, the **provision of public transport information at Council owned sites**.

Better Services

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:

- 1.16 The key objectives / priorities for 'better 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:

- 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** 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:

- 1.17 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,
- The implementation of a **new public transport interchange at Gamble Street;**
- The introduction of a **sustainable parking strategy** in Belfast 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.