



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Transport Policy - Cycling Issues
Date:	10 February 2010
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Relevant Background Information

In October 2009, Andrew McMurray, the Co-ordinator of Belfast Friends of the Earth, together Steven Patterson, Sustrans, and Roy White, Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative, made a presentation to the Committee on the 2020 Belfast Cycle City Vision.

The Belfast Cycle City vision for 2020 has three objectives:

- to set a target of 10% of all journeys in the City to be made by bike by 2020
- for £15 per person per year investment in cycling by DRD
- to create a 10 year cycle strategy to be delivered by 2020.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

A Notice of Motion regarding the introduction of a cycle rental scheme in Belfast was also outlined at the October Committee and Officers were requested to discuss the matter with the Department for Regional Development (DRD) with a view to providing a future update. The recent introduction of the Dublin Bike Scheme, which seeks to encourage cycling through the hire of bicycles for public use at a small rent, was cited as an example.

Key Issues

A key objective outlined in the Council's Transport Policy is to support and lobby key delivery agencies for "the implementation of an integrated quality walking network and quality cycle network for Belfast".

Council officers met with representatives from the DRD Transportation Unit on 7 January 2010 in relation to a Cycling Strategy and a bike hire scheme for Belfast similar to that in Dublin.

DRD stated that they had updated their Cycling Strategy in 2007 and now plan to set up 'An Active Travel Forum' which will include representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors and community groups. This Forum will look at opportunities to improve walking and cycling in the City. Once established the Forum will contribute to the proposed 'Active Travel Strategy' that DRD has committed to developing as part of the broader transportation approach. DRD propose to invite Council representatives to participate in the Forum and the first meeting is expected to take place in February 2010.

As the Council does not have statutory responsibility or resources relating to cycle provision, it is proposed that participation in partnership work with DRD offers the greatest opportunity to influence the development of policy and facilities. Approval is therefore sought for formal participation in the Active Travel Forum, to promote the move towards the improved cycle provision and sustainable travel for Belfast.

With regard to the bike hire scheme committee may wish to note that DRD are waiting the outcome of independent research being carried out on the bike hire schemes across Europe, by the British Council. DRD intend to use this research as a baseline study from which to explore the possibility of introducing the scheme in Belfast. DRD has agreed to share the findings with the Council and engage with the Committee in the steps towards developing the scheme for the City.

Committee may also wish to note that the Council is actively supporting cycling events in Belfast and has secured a new event for the City called the 'Tour Series' which will take place in May/June 2010. Belfast will be one of sixteen UK and Irish cities hosting this international city centre cycling event, which is organised by a UK based sports events company in conjunction with British Cycling and Cycling Ireland. The event is free to attend and based normally in the main city centre area and the races are sixty minutes in duration, with the option to run amateur, youth and fun based cycling 'races' during the evening.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee endorse the proposed approach to work with DRD to improve cycle provision in Belfast through participation by officers in the Active Travel Forum and note the updates in relation to the bike hire schemes and proposed events.

Decision Tracking

There is no decision tracking attached to this report as it is for notation only.

Key Abbreviations

DRD - Department for Regional Development