



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Updated - 'Belfast On The Move' Response and Strategic Planning Policy Consultations
Date:	6 December 2010
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	'Belfast on the Move' was launched by the Minister for Regional Development in City Hall on the 30 th September 2010 and a public consultation process was initiated, requesting for comments to be submitted by the 30 November 2010. Representatives from the Department attended a Special Committee on the 24 th November 2010 and outlined the proposed changes to the traffic management in the city centre.
1.2	Proposals for Strategic Planning Policy Guidance in the form of the draft review of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and guidance in respect of the weight of economic issues in the consideration of planning applications were recently announced.
1.3	This report provides an update of the draft response to "Belfast on the Move" taking account of the consideration and comments from the Special Development Committee and seeks approval for the appointment of technical support to develop responses to forthcoming strategic planning policy consultations.

2	Key Issues
2.1	'Belfast on the Move' During the Special Development Committee on the 24 th November 2010, Members had the opportunity to explore the detail of the proposals with the Department for Regional Development staff.

2.2 The Draft Response attached in **Appendix 1** takes account of the issues and comments raised during the consideration by Committee along with responses from internal consultation with Council departments.

In response to the queries and comments from the Committee, the members of the DRD deputation provided clarification in relation to an number of elements including:

- The proportion of through traffic using the city centre;
- enforcement in relation to the use of junctions and moving traffic offences;
- the strategic approach to traffic management in the city;
- the use of bus lanes by cleansing vehicles;
- improving access to Donegall Square East and West and the relocation of bus stops from Donegall Square West to Queen Street;
- funding bids for these proposals and the Rapid Transport project;
- car parking for persons with disabilities;
- the relationship between Rapid Transit Lanes and public taxi hire ranks;
- potential transport proposals for the north of the city centre;
- parking of tour buses and coach parking bays; and
- the objective of reducing longer-stay car parking.

The draft response to the consultation has been updated to reflect the comments made by the Members. The final draft response is appended to this report for consideration by the Committee.

2.3 The Potential for new **Strategic Planning Policy Guidance** was highlighted in the Departmental Plan approved by Committee in 2010. The development of corporate responses on strategic planning policies, including Planning Policy Statements, and the Regional Development Strategy with external specialist support were highlighted as specific actions within the Departmental Plan.

2.4 The draft review of the Regional Development Strategy is being considered by the Regional Development Committee and is likely to be issued for formal consultation in December 2010.

2.5 The RDS should play a critical role in setting the context for the continued development of the city as the driver of growth for the region. It is essential that the RDS maintains the balance of future growth in favour of the city as the driver of growth and provides formal linkages to any linked Investment Strategy proposals such as the transportation plan, infrastructure proposals and the emphasis on public transport provision / connectivity.

	<p>Focussed work is required to support the translation of the work on the city region into the strategy and influence the final RDS and ensure the potential for the continued development of Belfast.</p>
2.5	<p>The Minister for the Environment recently announced proposals for the development of new PPS guidance to address the issue of the weight to be attached to economic considerations in the consideration of planning applications.</p>
2.6	<p>The introduction of economic considerations to the decision making process through PPS guidance could have significant implications for the assessment of development proposals both within the city and the wider region. The consideration at the High Court of earlier attempts to introduce these provisions suggested that the proposals amounted to a material change in the way planning applications were to be determined and could directly influence the outcome.</p>
2.7	<p>The development of the responses would necessarily draw on previous research and responses to both development plan proposals and Planning Policy Statements. Due to the differences in the proposed consultations subjects it is proposed that the technical support is provided by two separate focussed consultancy commissions with budgets of £7,000 for the RDS Review and £5,000 for the proposed PPS.</p>

3	Resource Implications
	<p>Amounts were included in the approved Departmental Plan subject to further clarification through a proposal paper.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	<p>There are no equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report</p>

5	Recommendations
	<p>Members are requested to:</p>
5.1	<p>Consider and if appropriate endorse the content of the suggested response to the proposed 'Belfast On The Move' consultation as set out in Appendix 1</p>
5.2	<p>Agree the commission of external consultancy support with budgets of £7,000 for the RDS Review and £5,000 for the proposed PPS.</p>

6	Decision Tracking
	<p>Further to agreement, that if appropriate, a response be submitted to the Department for Regional Development Timeline: December 2010 Reporting Officer: John McGrillen</p> <p>Draft responses to the RDS Review and the PPS to be brought back to the Committee for consideration. Timeline: March 2011 Reporting Officer: John McGrillen</p>

7	Key to Abbreviations
DRD – Department for Regional Development PSNI – Police Service Northern Ireland RDS – Regional Development Strategy PPS- Planning Policy Statement	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Draft Response	