



Belfast City Council

Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme

Date: 19 March 2013

Reporting Officer: John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

Contact Officer: Keith Sutherland, Urban Development Manager, ext 3478

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>The Council secured £698,700 funding in August 2011, towards the provision of a Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme as part of the Department for Regional Development (DRD) Active Travel Demonstration Projects fund. The development of a Public Bike Hire scheme is identified as a partnership project in Belfast City Council's Investment Programme 2012-2015. The Council proposes to work in partnership to develop a public bike hire scheme that encourages increased use and facilitates active travel in Belfast.</p>
1.2	<p>An Outline Business Case (OBC) for a Belfast Public Bike Hire scheme was commissioned by the Strategic Investment Board in conjunction with the Department for Regional Development and Belfast City Council and completed in July 2011. The OBC suggests that a public bike hire scheme would be viable for Belfast based on experiences and evidence from other cities. The Outline Business Case estimated the funding will cover the costs of the physical infrastructure for a mid-sized scheme providing up to 300 bikes and up to 30 docking stations in city centre locations.</p>
1.3	<p>The Council aims to develop a 3rd generation public bike hire scheme characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– public access bikes situated on public spaces with a standard robust design;– a network of docking stations and bikes throughout city centre locations;– a self service model;– flexible rental periods with tariffs to encourage short term rentals; and– a scheme with the potential to expand to other parts of the city.
<p>Further details relating to the public bike hire scheme objectives are outlined in Appendix 2.</p>	

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p><u>Geographical coverage of the Public Bike Hire Scheme</u></p> <p>Based on the approved funding bid, the first phase of the Belfast Public bike hire scheme will give priority to the core city centre area as designated in the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan as indicated in Appendix 1. Based on experience elsewhere docking stations should be located no more than 300-500 metres apart at key strategic locations. Belfast City Centre boundary covers 3.611 km² and one docking station should cover a buffer area just over 0.1 km². It is recommended that consideration is given to extending the coverage to include parts of Titanic Quarter and up to the Queens Quarter area if it can be accommodated within the current funding arrangement. The Council wish to develop a scheme which has the potential to expand to other parts of the city and to cater for city events.</p>
2.2	<p><u>Siting of Docking stations</u></p> <p>Bike Hire Docking Stations need to be located at frequent intervals and placed at strategic locations. It is essential the docking stations are visible, easy to find and should not impede pedestrian or vehicular movements.</p>
2.3	<p>The process to identify suitable sites in Belfast City Centre for the bike hire docking stations is currently underway. A number of criteria have been identified in order to select the most appropriate sites considering the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Employment clusters / high footfall areas – Cultural / tourism destinations – Educational destinations – Inner city residential areas – Public transport nodes / existing cycle infrastructure – Available space and ability to meet infrastructure requirements – Visibility and accessibility – Compliance with disability legislation requirements – Aesthetics – ability to fit into the built heritage and public realm.
2.4	<p>The Council will work with the statutory bodies and other land owners to obtain public and private commitment and secure agreements and statutory approvals for use of the land for docking stations and other service requirements. A site locations workshop was held on the 24th January 2013 with government departments who own land in the city centre such as DRD Roads Service, DSD, NIHE and also involved Planning Service and the universities.</p>
2.5	<p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>A stakeholder forum will be set up for the duration of the project and community consultation is also planned. The Council aims to meet the needs of the local communities when delivering the public bike hire scheme in Belfast. The Council will promote opportunities such as training schemes and city events to encourage use of the scheme by local communities particularly in disadvantages areas or with disadvantaged groups.</p>
2.6	<p><u>Procurement</u></p> <p>The OBC recommends an integrated Design, Build, Operate and Maintain (DBOM) contracting approach as the preferred form of delivery for bike hire schemes and is likely to deliver the greatest level of risk transfer; generate the greatest level of interest across experienced scheme operators and deliver greatest value for money. Expressions of Interest are currently being drafted to scope the level of interest for the Design, Build, Operate and Maintain element of the scheme. A further Expression of Interest will be issued to seek the level of interest of companies seeking sponsorship/branding associated with the scheme. In line with Council attributes</p>

	certain products/services will be excluded such as alcohol and tobacco branding The income generated from sponsorship will contribute to the annual running cost of the scheme.
2.7	<u>Delegated Authority</u> It is recommended that the Planning and Transport Unit work in liaison with the Project Management Unit of the Property and Project Department who will manage the procurement of design, build, operate and maintain services required to implement the public bike hire scheme and the procurement of potential sponsorship/branding associated with the scheme and the subsequent administration of the contracts..
2.8	The award of funding for the physical infrastructure of the project is time bound and must be drawn down before March 2015. The Council should proceed with the procurement process and appoint the most appropriate operator in Autumn 2013. The Council would envisage that the construction process should proceed in 2014 in order for the scheme to go live by March 2015.
2.9	Committee is therefore requested to approve, from a service perspective, the invitation of tenders, the award of contracts and the implementation of the Belfast Public Bike Scheme.
2.10	As this project is included in the capital programme and the Investment Programme the decision of the Development Committee will be commended to the SP&R Committee for their consideration and decision from a corporate financial perspective.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are resource implications in relation to the future operation and maintenance of the implemented Bike Hire scheme.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no specific Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

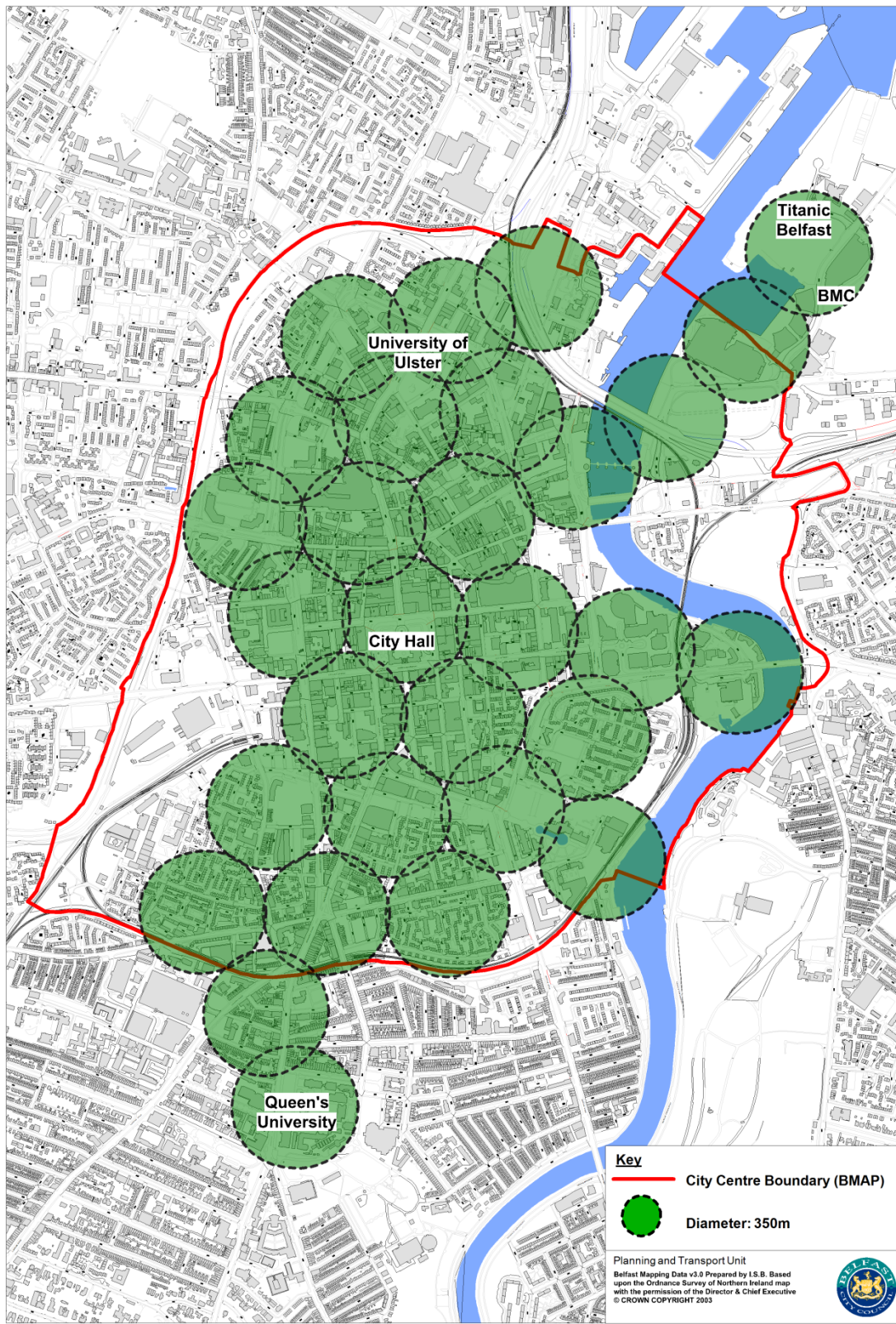
5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - note the update of progress for the Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme and the proposed coverage of Phase 1; and - approve the advancement of the project to tender, award of contracts and implementation and to commend this decision to the SP&R Committee for their consideration and decision from a corporate financial perspective.

6	Decision Tracking
There is no decision tracking attached to this report.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
DRD – Department for Regional Development OBC – Outline business case DBOM – Design Build Operate Maintain DSD – Department for Social Development NIHE – Northern Ireland Housing Executive	

8	Documents attached
Appendix 1 - Proposed Belfast Public Bike Hire coverage – Phase 1 Appendix 2 - Scheme Objectives	

Proposed Belfast Public Bike Hire coverage – Phase 1



Y:\GIS\Workspace\Planning & Transport\Bike_Stations_EOI_Map_Feb13

Public bike Hire Scheme Objectives

The primary objective of Belfast Public Bike Hire is to achieve a sustainable low cost transport system to service key locations in Belfast City Centre. The aim of the public bike hire scheme is to increase the modal share for cycling in Belfast and establish bike hire as a viable mode of transport across the Belfast Metropolitan urban area. The bike hire scheme should reduce dependency on car trips particularly for short trips in the city centre locations reducing traffic congestion, vehicles emissions and demand for parking. The scheme should enhance the public transport system by adding the capacity to use a public bicycle to complete the first or last leg of a trip (i.e. from a train station to the workplace) and enable bus and rail commuters to make short trips from the workplace without a car.

The specific objectives of the scheme include:

- The provision of up to 30 docking stations, 300 metres to 500 metres apart on average serving key city centre locations (See Figure 1). There should be between 10 to 20 bikes per docking station
- The provision of at least a 3rd generation scheme in nature (characterised by 'secure-by-design' principles, smart card access technology, electronically operated docking stations and locks, telecommunications systems and online account management)
- The scheme should allow users to either pay an annual membership fee or pay for short-term use (1-3 days). In a majority of schemes there is no charge for use of the bikes under 30 minutes; a small charge is applied for rental period over 30 minutes.
- The scheme will be affordable for users with a low cost subscription fee
- The scheme should have the flexibility to service temporary events or cater for varying seasonal capacity
- the public bike hire scheme needs to integrate with Belfast's existing and future public transport network
- The scheme should be open for use by tourists, designed to accommodate short term membership and serve key tourist destinations
- Integration of the scheme with workplace travel plans of major employers in the city and schools, colleges and universities.
- Production of information of how to subscribe / use the public bike hire scheme and on the cycle routes in the city linked to key destinations.
- Employment of staff to operate and maintain the scheme

- Information sessions and a website on the public hire scheme to ensure it is accessible to all residents and visitors to Belfast and to publicise the scheme.
- The capacity to convey safety information and laws affecting cyclist

It is proposed the Bike Hire scheme will be used for:

Residents - Travel to work, go shopping, go somewhere different for lunch or visit friends

Tourists - Register for short term use and visit attractions around the city

Business trips - Get to meetings across the city on time

Commuting - Cycle from the nearest bus stop, car park or rail station to your workplace

Students - A cheap and easy way to travel

Get Active - Healthier way to travel and an opportunity to integrate exercise into transport

Sustainability - reduce your carbon footprint by reducing car usage and thereby carbon emissions and congestion

Economic viability – save money on fuel, cycling is a cheap and efficient means of travel for work, education, business, shopping or leisure reasons

Inclusivity - The scheme will be equally available to all age and socio- economic groups