



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Transport Issues Update
Date:	3 December 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Keith Sutherland, Urban Development Manager, ext 3478

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>This report provides an update for the Committee in relation to a number of transport proposals and initiatives for Belfast including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Belfast Rapid Transit;- The Transport Hub proposal; and- The DRD Christmas Transport Measures.
1.2	<p><u>Belfast Rapid Transit</u></p> <p>The Department for Regional Development completed an Outline Business Case for Belfast Rapid Transit in May 2012. The recommendations of the Outline Business Case were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The introduction of a high quality, bus-based rapid transit system operating on the following routes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- CITI Route - from Queen Elizabeth Bridge along Queen's Quay and Queen's Road to Titanic Quarter and returning to the city centre via Queen's Road, Queen's Quay, Station Street, Bridge End and Queen's Bridge;- EWAY route from the city centre along Albertbridge Road and Upper Newtownards Road and terminating at a park and ride site in Dundonald; and- WWAY route from the city centre along Divis Street, Falls Road, Andersonstown Road, Stewartstown Road and terminating at a park and ride site near Dairy Farm or McKinsty Road Roundabout.- The Belfast Rapid Transit route in the city centre has been facilitated by the Department's Belfast on the Move Transport Masterplan.- The delivery of the majority of the design and infrastructure works for Belfast Rapid Transit through the existing expertise within the Department's Roads Service.- The award of the contract to operate Belfast Rapid Transit to Translink, subject to clarification on performance and contractual issues.

1.3	In November 2012, the Executive supported progression to the detailed design and implementation of the pilot Belfast Rapid Transit system based on the recommendations from the Outline Business Case.
1.4	<u>The Transport Hub</u> DRD propose to create a new integrated Transport Hub for Belfast, taking in the current Europa Bus centre and Great Victoria Street Train Station and part of the surrounding area. The site covers 22 acre and is considered a prime location just west of Belfast's commercial district.
1.5	<u>Christmas Transport Measures</u> In recent years, the Department for Regional Development have introduced transport measures to help residents, shoppers and traders access the city centre during the Christmas period.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<u>Belfast Bus Rapid Transit</u> The Department is currently developing the detailed designs for the new Belfast Rapid Transit system which will link East Belfast, West Belfast and the Titanic Quarter via the city centre. As the detailed designs for individual sections of the routes are completed, it is intention of the DRD to undertake local information events at a number of locations along the routes. This will provide an opportunity for local residents and traders to view the detailed proposals and speak to DRD officials.
2.2	The DRD anticipate that the initial implementation works will commence in 2014, subject to the completion of the necessary statutory processes. These works will include the provision of new Park & Ride facilities and work to the roads on which Belfast Rapid Transit will operate. The works will be of benefit to existing public transport services in advance of the Belfast Rapid Transit system becoming operational.
2.3	The specification of the Belfast Rapid Transit vehicles and the design of the Belfast Rapid Transit halts are due to be completed in 2014. Between 2015 and 2017, DRD aim to complete the infrastructure works, procure the vehicles, finalise the operations plan and formally award the operating contract.
2.4	The pilot Belfast Rapid Transit network is scheduled to come into operation in 2017, subject to the availability of funding in the next budget period and the successful completion of the statutory processes.
2.5	The first of the public information events for sections of the EWAY route is due to take place in Ballyhackamore Library on Thursday 28 th November 2013 between 9.30am and 8.00pm and on Friday 29 th November between 9.30am and 3.00 pm. The notification letter is attached in Appendix 1.
2.6	<u>Transport Hub</u> The proposed Transport Hub will be located on the site of the existing Europa Buscentre and Great Victoria Street Station. DRD propose to develop a signature transport facility that will bring benefits to passengers across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and beyond into central Europe.

2.7	Translink hope to operate the majority of the trains including the cross border Enterprise train services from the new Transport Hub. This will mean passengers will have greater connectivity with train, bus and coach options offering more attractive, integrated and accessible travel choices. There will also be greater opportunity to increase service and capacity as part of the proposal.
2.8	The new transport hub is intended to support economic growth through increased access to the city centre and improved connections across the whole of the region.
2.9	Translink is now in the process of appointing an integrated design team for the new Hub. The aim of the project is to contribute to the regeneration the city quarter by developing the 22 acre site for a range of commercial opportunities which could also encourage investment in the wider neighbouring area.
2.10	<u>DRD Christmas Transport Measures</u> Transport Minister Danny Kennedy announced on the 13 th November, a festive package of public transport measures to help residents, shoppers and traders in the run up to Christmas. The measures will include the expansion of Park and Ride services, free of charge Park and Rides, fare promotions and an embargo on road works over the Christmas period.
2.11	The aim of this package of measures is to make public transport more accessible, low-cost and more attractive for people coming into city centres over the Christmas period.
2.12	The measures aim to make it easier for those who need to use a car to park and drive within the major cities across Northern Ireland. Park and Rides in Belfast, Lisburn, Newry and Derry/Londonderry will be free of charge and will operate for longer hours during late night shopping days and also on Saturdays. Translink will offer a number of fare deals and promotions for bus and rail travel during this period.
2.13	All planned road works on key arterial routes in the Greater Belfast area will cease during the Christmas period. This includes the utility companies, as well as Roads Service. Only emergency works will take place if absolutely needed. The road works embargo will happen in the Greater Belfast area from 25 November 2013 until after Christmas

3	Resource Implications
3.1	None

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

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - note the update on transport proposals and initiatives for Belfast; and - note that DRD will undertake local information events on Belfast Rapid Transit at a number of locations along the proposed routes which elected members will be invited to attend.

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

7	Key to Abbreviations
DRD - Department for Regional Development	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 - Belfast Rapid Transit Notification Letter	

Appendix 1

FOR INFORMATION



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Date: 21 November 2013

Dear Mr Flynn

BELFAST RAPID TRANSIT

The Department for Regional Development is currently developing the detailed designs for the new Belfast Rapid Transit system. As the designs for individual sections of the routes are completed it is our intention to undertake local Public Information Events at a number of locations along the routes. These events will provide an opportunity for local residents and traders to view the proposals and speak to officials.

The first of these Public Information Events is due to take place in Ballyhackamore Library on Thursday 28 November 2013 between 9:30am and 8:00pm and on Friday 29 November between 9:30am and 3:00pm. This event will provide details of the proposals for the section of the Belfast Rapid Transit Route between Sandown Road and Knock Road. The dates of future Public Information Events will be communicated to the Committee as soon as these are available.

Committee members are welcome to attend any, or all, of the Public Information Events.

Work is due to commence on the routes and the provision of Park & Ride facilities in 2014. As always, the Department would be happy to update the Development Committee on the project at any stage.

Yours faithfully



ROBIN TOTTEN
Project Manager

