



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Update on Transport issues
Date:	19 August 2014
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Keith Sutherland, Urban Development Manager, ext 3578

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>DRD Transport NI (formerly Roads Service) have contacted the Council to seek views on an number of issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of parking and servicing arrangements – Sustainable Transport Enabling Measures introduced as part of Belfast On The Move; - Requests for changes to access to Royal Avenue; - Requests for changes to the Taxi Rank at Donegall Square North; and - A new parking bay adjacent to 23 Short Strand.
1.2	<p>DRD are also seeking the Council's views on the proposed introduction of a 20 mph speed limit within the city centre. Initially, the scheme will operate on a pilot basis and an evaluation will be undertaken at its conclusion. Transport NI have placed a 'Notice of Intention' in local newspapers on 30th July and is seeking responses to its proposal by 21 August.</p>
1.3	<p>Translink have also contacted the Council to provide information to elected members on changes to some of their Metro Services to be introduced from the 1 September 2014.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p><u>Review of parking & servicing arrangements - Belfast On the move</u> DRD carried out road works associated with the 'Belfast on the Move' project starting in 2011 and completed in May 2013. DRD now intend to carry out a review of all the measures and are currently seeking views on the current operation of the parking bays/loading bays/taxi rank and bus stops in the city centre.</p>
2.2	<p>The Belfast On The Move project resulted in the provision of 37 new dedicated disabled bays, 338m of loading bays and 3 coach parking bays to complement</p>

	<p>the existing bus stops/taxi ranks/parking bays. The list of the parking and servicing facilities to be reviewed is outlined in Appendix 1.</p>
2.3	<p>It is suggested that the Council supports the ongoing provision of 37 dedicated disabled bays which improve access to the city centre for those with limited mobility.</p>
2.4	<p>It is suggested that the Council highlights the increase in demand for coach parking in the city in recent years and the view that the current provision is inadequate to cope with the current demand.</p>
2.5	<p>The provision of the coach parking bays on Donegall Square West is supported in the short term, however coach parking provision in the vicinity of the City Hall in the long term should be considered as part of Street Ahead Phase 2 project. It is also suggested that strict enforcement should be in place to ensure that the coach drivers adhere to the 20 minutes waiting time.</p>
2.6	<p>In relation to the loading bays, it is suggested that the Council also supports the provision; however consideration should be given to amending the restriction on All hours (24 hour) All days (Monday to Sunday). It is suggested that in consultation with the businesses that the restriction could be relaxed on Sundays to provide additional parking for visitors to the city centre if the bays are not in use.</p>
2.7	<p><u>Access to Royal Avenue</u> The Department for Regional Development has received a request to consider amending the existing legislation in order to permit taxi access into Royal Avenue, at certain times of the day. Currently Royal Avenue has restrictions on cars and taxis and is bus access only.</p>
2.8	<p>A relaxation is being sought between the hours of 18.00 – 11.00hrs to allow taxi access to venues on Royal Avenue so customers can be picked up and dropped off in the evenings.</p>
2.9	<p>It is suggested that any amendment to the access in this area should be considered by DRD/DSD and the Council as part of the next phase of the Streets Ahead project which is presently being planned and will incorporate Royal Avenue. Streets Ahead Phase 3 should provide an opportunity for a holistic approach to reconsider how the streets are used and accessed in the northern area of the city centre.</p>
2.10	<p><u>Taxi Ranks – Donegall Square North</u> DRD have received a request from the public hire taxi industry that the existing taxi rank in Donegall Square North (at Robinson & Cleavers / M&S) should be extended to operate as a double rank and also serviced by a new feeder rank located within sight of the main rank, possibly sited in Wellington Place, Donegall Square West, or Donegall Square North on the western side of Donegall Place. The taxi association wish to use the rank for pick-up only, with fares to the city centre being dropped off elsewhere. They state that the rank will be self-regulating with drivers picking up fares from the front of the rank, and joining it from the feeder rank only. Drawings have still to be developed in the meantime the Department are seeking views on the request.</p>
2.11	<p>It is suggested that clarification is sought on whether the potential double taxi rank will impact on the adjacent bus lane and proposed Bus Rapid Transit lane.</p>

	<p>Whilst the Council recognise the valuable contribution that the public hire taxis make to the city centre accessibility there should be a balance between all road users.</p>
2.12	<p>It is also suggested that the Council would also have concerns from an operational point of view that an increase of capacity of taxis waiting in this section of Donegall Square North could potentially cause problems for access to street cleansing in this area.</p>
2.13	<p><u>Short Strand – New loading Bay</u> DRD Transport NI through an improvement scheme funded by DSD Belfast Regeneration office (BRO) has been asked to consider limited waiting to a new parking bay adjacent to 23 Short Strand. This request has come from local businesses along this stretch of the road and local elected representatives. The proposed restrictions will be - Monday to Saturday, 8.00am – 6.00pm. Waiting will be limited to 1 hour with no return within 1 hour. It is considered this proposal will provide a turnover of parking spaces for customers to access businesses.</p>
2.14	<p>It is suggested that the Council would support the introduction of the parking bays to provide better access for customers to the local businesses in the area.</p>
2.15	<p><u>20 mph proposal for Belfast City Centre</u> It is suggested that the Council would, in principle, support the proposal to introduce a 20 mph speed limit in the city centre of Belfast. It is considered that the introduction of a reduced speed limit could help to make the city centre a more pedestrian-friendly and pleasant environment thereby supporting the uptake of more sustainable modes of transport including, for example, walking and cycling. Moreover, the introduction of a reduced city centre speed limit has the potential to coincide with and support the introduction of the Council led Belfast Public Bike Share Scheme.</p>
2.16	<p>As part of the initial stage of the speed restriction scheme, it is suggested that the Council would request that the impact of the proposal upon ambient air quality is evaluated and, in particular, that the Council is kept informed regarding how the proposal is anticipated to impact on levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter in both the proposed city centre area and its environs.</p>
2.17	<p>The Council would request clarification of how the speed limit will be enforced in the city centre. A proposed response and map is attached in Appendix 2.</p>
2.18	<p><u>Translink proposals</u> Translink wish to inform elected members of the following changes they are planning from 1 September to the bus system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New fleet - Translink are currently taking delivery of 52 new buses (42 double Decker and 10 single Decker), representing around 20% of the Metro fleet. It is proposed that these new vehicles will replace older vehicles within the fleet on the following routes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ormeau Road – Metro 7; - Malone Road Metro 8; - Newtownards Road – Metro 4; - City Express 13/14; and - P&R Services. - The following timetable changes within East and North Belfast will

2.19	<p>commence from the 1 September 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service 18 & Service 19 – increased frequency - Metro 5 Castlereagh Road: Metro 5 Services – adjusted to every 15 minutes off peak in line with demand (from 10 minutes) - Metro 3, Holywood Road: enhanced links between east Belfast and Holywood Exchange / Airport Road (orbital route) - Service 26 City Centre to Odyssey and Belfast Met will be every 15 minutes (from every 20 minutes) - Metro 27 and Metro 28 services have also been retimed to offer better connections between services 26, 27 and 28 at Ikea - Newtownabbey Town Service 367 - to be extended <p>More detail on the changes is outlined in Appendix 3. The changes are to reflect the changes in passenger usage and the potential growth in demand. In addition, they will also help to prepare for the introduction of the Park & Ride at Dundonald in line with the new Bus Rapid Transit. Translink have made the information available to the public from the Metro Kiosk, visit Belfast and on the Translink website www.translink.co.uk.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	No resource implications have been identified.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider the assessment of BOTM measures and agree any comments as part of the Councils response; - To consider the proposals on access to Royal Ave, extension to taxi rank, introduction of parking bays at Short Strand and the 20mph speed limit and agree response to by submitted to Transport NI; and - Note the information provided by Translink on changes to bus services.

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

7	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>DRD Department for Regional Development BOTM – Belfast on the Move DSD – Department of Social Development</p>

8	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – List of parking & servicing arrangements - Belfast On the move Appendix 2 – Draft Response to 20 mph proposal for Belfast City Centre and map Appendix 3 – List of Translink changes</p>

Appendix 1

List of parking & servicing arrangements - Belfast On The Move

Disabled Bays

Unlimited waiting

- Chichester Street – 9 bays, 4 locations
- College Square East – 3 bays
- Great Victoria Street – 3 bays
- Montgomery Street – 2 bays
- Queen Street – 5 bays, 2 locations
- Upper Arthur Street – 1 bay
- Upper Queen Street – 2 bays
- Wellington Place – 5 bays

Waiting limited to 3 hours Monday – Saturday between 9am and 6pm

- Bedford Street – 2 bays
- Chichester Street – 2 bays
- Wellington Place – 7 bays

Waiting limited to 3 hours on all days (Monday to Sunday) between 11am and 6 pm

- Castle Place – 8 bays in locations

Loading Bays

All hours (24 hour) All days (Monday to Sunday)

- Bedford Street – 1 bay – 13m in length
- Chichester Street – 3 bays – 13m, 18m and 21m in length
- Castle Street – 2 bays – 15m and 11m in length
- College Square East – 1 bay – 24m in length
- Great Victoria Street – 1 bay – 20m in length
- Linenhall Street – 1 bay – 12m in length
- Queen Street – 3 bays – 12m, 12m and 19m in length
- Upper Queen Street – 1 bay – 23m in length
- Wellington Place – 2 bays – 21m, 22m and 23m in length

Loading limited to between 6pm to 11am – all days (Monday to Sunday)

- Castle Place – 2 bays – 36m and 12m in length

Coach parking

All days (Monday to Sunday) waiting limited to 20 minutes

- Donegall Square West – 1 bay – 72 m in length

Waiting only between 9.30am to 7pm Monday to Saturday limited to 4 hours

- College Square North – 2 bays – 55m and 56m in length

Waiting only between 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday limited to 20 minutes

- High Street – 1 bay – 30 m in length

Appendix 2

Draft Response to 20 mph Speed limit proposal for Belfast City Centre

The Council would, in principle, support the proposal to introduce a 20 mph speed limit in the city centre of Belfast. It is considered that the introduction of a reduced speed limit could help to make the city centre a more pedestrian-friendly and pleasant environment thereby supporting the uptake of more sustainable modes of transport including, for example, walking and cycling. Moreover, successful introduction of a reduced city centre speed limit has the potential to coincide with and support the introduction of the Council led Belfast Public Bike Share Scheme.

As part of the initial stage of the speed restriction scheme, it is suggested that the Council would request that the impact of the proposal upon ambient air quality is evaluated and, in particular, that the Council is kept informed regarding how the proposal is anticipated to impact on levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter in both the proposed city centre area and its environs. The Department for Regional Development will be aware that the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 place a duty upon government Departments to ensure that levels of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, benzene, carbon monoxide, lead and particulate matter do not exceed the limit values established by the European Commission. Moreover, the Regulations require that in those locations where levels of the above-mentioned pollutants are below the limit values, government Departments shall ensure that the levels are maintained below the limit values and they shall endeavour to maintain the best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development. The Department for Regional Development will be aware also that the council has already designated four regions of the city as Air Quality Management Areas as a result of transport related nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter concentrations exceeding both national and European air quality standards.

By way of clarity, the most recent Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) vehicle emission factors toolkit indicates an appreciable increase in tailpipe emissions of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter as vehicle speeds are reduced below 30 mph. The Council acknowledges, however, that despite a posted speed limit of 30 mph throughout the city centre region, the present road and junction configurations are likely to result in typical vehicle speeds of around 20 mph. Accordingly, it is considered that the introduction of a reduced speed limit may not have an appreciable adverse impact on city centre air quality. Nonetheless, the Council would request that the impact be quantified as part of any feasibility study into the proposal. In addition, the Council would highlight that it is opposed to the introduction of physical speed reduction measures as these could result in a stop / start nature to traffic movement in the city centre thereby increasing congestion and ambient pollution levels.

Appendix 2



Scale	1:2000
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Roads subject to 30mph speed limit
 Roads subject to a 'Prohibition of Traffic Order'

Name: Belfast City Centre
 Type: 30mph Speed Limit Zone

Author	Designer	Checker	Date
			01

Scale: 1:2000
ROADS Service
 Easton Division
 Hydebank
 4 Hospital Road
 Belfast BT9 6UL
 Telephone: 028 90 230000
 Fax: 028 90 230220

Appendix 3 List of Translink changes

- City Centre to Ballyhackamore (combined 18 and 19 services) – frequency enhanced to every 10 minutes making this a new high frequency corridor in the East of the city. Enhanced service Ballyhackamore to Dundonald via:
 - Service 18 via Clarawood./ Knock Road to Gilnahirk now every 20 minutes (from every 30 minutes) (Enhanced service to Upper Braniel Estate – Farmhouse Green/ Woodview area)
 - Service 19 via Kings Road / Tullycarnet / Ice Bowl now every 20 minutes (from every 30 mins)
- Metro 5 Castlereagh Road: Metro 5 Services – adjusted to every 15 minutes off peak in line with demand (from 10 minutes); peak services maintained at every 10 minutes (peak period extended – up to 0930 and start from 1630) due to low patronage off peak. While there is a small reduction in 5a services off peak, serving lower Braniel, Wincroft Way area, Upper Braniel estate will benefit from an enhanced 18 service.
- Metro 3, Holywood Road: enhanced links between east Belfast and Holywood Exchange / Airport Road (orbital route) Translink have reviewed how best to link the East of the city to the increasingly popular retail, leisure and tourism facilities and employment opportunities in the Titanic Quarter.
- Service 26 City Centre to Odyssey and Belfast Met will be every 15 minutes (from every 20 minutes) Monday to Friday during the day. Metro 27 and Metro 28 services have also been retimed to offer better connections between services 26, 27 and 28 at Ikea. This provides a half hourly connection Monday to Friday between inner East Belfast // Connswater / Holywood Rd and Airport Road / Odyssey / Belfast Met / Titanic Quarter.

The changes are to reflect the changes in passenger usage and the potential growth in demand. In addition, they will also help to prepare for the introduction of the P&R at Dundonald in line with the new BRT.

Newtownabbey Town Service 367

The town Service is to be extended to include Glenvarna Estate, Ballyclare Road and Ballyhenry Road (currently not serviced). This will offer links to Abbeycentre/Northcott/Shore Road/Whiteabbey train station/ Glengormley as well as feed into other regular Metro Services.

Translink will also be operating a special summer Metro timetable during July and August catering for the reduced passenger numbers during the summer months.