

Belfast

green

Transport Policy



Foreword



“ The current review of public administration and the transfer of powers to local government present real opportunities for us to influence and shape the future development of the city region. ”

This updated Transport Policy outlines our vision for a sustainable transport system for Belfast and aims to build on what has been achieved since our original policy was published in 2001. In recent years, we have witnessed many improvements in the city's transportation system, in our roads, bus and train services and in our walking and cycling networks however, continued development and enhancements are still required.

Belfast has continued to grow and evolve, becoming a modern and successful city that we can all be proud of. The city is a competitive tourist destination, a desirable place to live and work and an attractive place to invest. With growth and

prosperity however, there has been a continuing increase in use of the car, which cannot be sustained. We have concerns about how the city will cope with the increasing demands on our transport infrastructure and the impact of unsustainable transport on the environment and our communities.

The current Review of Public Administration and the transfer of powers to local government present real opportunities for us to influence and shape the future development of the city region. Whilst responsibility for transport planning will not be transferred to local councils, as civic leader we recognise the need to be proactive in influencing transportation initiatives in our city.



The publication of our revised Transport Policy is timely and will feed into the current reviews of the DRD Regional Strategy, the Regional Transportation Strategy and other transport plans as well as proposed initiatives for Belfast such as rapid transit and city centre traffic management proposals.

The Transport Policy has been developed as a framework for us to lead by example and help shape transportation in the city in a sustainable, accessible, and cost-effective way for all those who live, work and visit the city. As an organisation, we will look at how we can address our own transport implications through this policy and future proposals. We will continue to pursue the development

of transport related initiatives addressing the utilisation of our assets; the encouragement of public transport; promotion of more sustainable transport options and a review of business travel as direct contributions to our broader transport objectives.

We hope this policy will support and promote the development of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system to enhance the connectivity for Belfast and its wider regions, which benefits the environment, supports sustainable development; and enhances the quality of life of all those who live, work, visit and do business in the city.



Councillor William Humphrey
Chairman of Development Committee
Belfast City Council

Introduction



1.1

Our Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011 expresses a number of key messages, which underpin our vision for the city:

- ❑ Better together – working with others to create a shared vision and delivering together;
- ❑ Today's action, tomorrow's legacy – city investment that improves quality of life now and in the future;
- ❑ Value for money – minimising the rates burden, freeing up resources for more delivery on the ground; and
- ❑ Better services – continuing to enhance the level of service offered to the citizen.

We have identified six strategic themes in our Corporate Plan which guide our key objectives and priorities:

- ❑ City leadership – strong, fair, together;
- ❑ Better opportunities for success across the city;
- ❑ Better care for Belfast's environment – a clean, green city now and for the future;
- ❑ Better support for people and communities;
- ❑ Better services – listening and delivering; and
- ❑ Better value for money – a can do, accountable, efficient council.



“ An improved transport system for Belfast, based on sustainable principles, is a key priority for us and forms the basis for a number of our corporate plan strategic themes, in particular “better care for Belfast's environment – a clean, green city now and for the future”.

1.2

It is widely recognised that a safe, efficient and effective transport system is needed to support and strengthen the economy, tackle social deprivation, and improve the quality of peoples' lives in many ways. The consequences of excessive car use and dependency are evident, in terms of congestion, community severance and poor air quality. Therefore, an improved transport system for Belfast, based on sustainable principles, is a key priority for us and forms the basis for a number of our corporate plan strategic themes, in particular “better care for Belfast's environment – a clean, green city now and for the future”.

1.3

This report articulates our second Transport Policy to support our civic leadership role and it provides us with a coherent view in relation to sustainable transport options for the city. Currently, we do not have statutory responsibility for transport planning and provision. The Review of Public Administration has proposed the transfer of a number of planning functions but no responsibility for transport. We will however, adopt a strong civic and political leadership role in the promotion of sustainable development for the city of Belfast to ensure a consistent and integrated approach to land use and transportation planning.

Background



“ The policy was established to provide us with an inclusive and consistent approach to transport development and to allow us to take a proactive role in ensuring that the city continues to grow and prosper in a sustainable manner. ”

1.4

We published our first Transport Policy for Belfast in 2001 following wide ranging consultation and an extensive research exercise. The Policy was established to provide us with an inclusive and consistent approach to transport development and to allow us to take a proactive role in ensuring that the city continues to grow and prosper in a sustainable manner.

1.5

In 2008, a review was carried out of the 2001 Transport Policy and its supporting environmental policy package with the main purpose of providing us with an up to date transport vision for the city. The scope of the Policy was also extended to take account of our revised strategic themes including a commitment to a detailed review of our internal transport activities with the objective of formulating a range of sustainable transport options for both employees and fleet vehicles.

Role of the Transport Policy



1.6

The overall role of the revised Transport Policy is to provide us with an inclusive and consistent transport vision that can be promoted both internally and externally. Accordingly, it will allow us to take a proactive role to help ensure that the city continues to grow and prosper in a sustainable manner and that any regional and local transportation policies are developed in line with our wider objectives on sustainable economic development, environmental responsibility, tourism, leisure, good relations, education and health.



1.7

The Transport Policy is the key communication document for us, setting out our transportation vision and strategic objectives for the city. It outlines our position on key transportation issues to external delivery agencies and as such, will be used as part of a consultation and lobbying tool to influence the development of external policy and proposals, including the Department for Regional Development's review of the Regional Development and Transportation Strategies.

1.8

The Policy is also our main instrument for informing internal activities and our capital programme. There is a need to ensure that 'sustainable transport' is considered as part of other wider council programmes such as sustainable development, social inclusion, tourism, parks and leisure, older people, children and young people, environment and arterial routes and that appropriate resources are allocated for the implementation of the Transport Policy where appropriate.



“ The overall role of the revised Transport Policy is to provide us with a transport vision that can be promoted both internally and externally. ”

The key messages of the revised Transport Policy



“ The transportation vision will be supported by a number of underlying strategic objectives. ”



1.9

The key message of the revised Transport Policy is:

To support and promote the development of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system to enhance the connectivity for Belfast and its wider regions, which benefits the environment, supports sustainable development; and enhances the quality of life of all those who live, work, visit and do business in the city.

1.10

The transportation vision will be supported by a number of underlying strategic objectives, which are based on the six strategic themes outlined within our Corporate Plan 2008 - 2011, including:

- ▣ City leadership;
- ▣ Better opportunities for success across the city;
- ▣ Better care for Belfast's environment;
- ▣ Better support for people and communities;
- ▣ Better services; and
- ▣ Better value for money.

An additional strategic objective relating to Belfast city centre is also included:

- ▣ Belfast city centre, as a key connected and accessible regional asset.

Key objectives are set out under each of the above seven strategic objectives and have been split into external policies (those outside our control) and internal policies (those within our current activities).



Strategic objectives and policies

City leadership

Strategic Objective:

To provide a strong civic leadership role for the promotion of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system for the city of Belfast and its wider regions.



1.11 Key objectives

Key **external policy objectives** for the city leadership theme include:

- To adopt a strong and public city leadership role in the promotion of sustainable transport initiatives for the city of Belfast;
- To use our influence as civic leader to engage and influence key delivery agencies for the development of a wider Transport Policy framework for Belfast, including the city centre area as well as the wider regions, which is aligned with our wider objectives on sustainable development; environmental responsibility; tourism; leisure; good relations; education and health;
- To seek to influence the development of transportation policies and proposals which improve connectivity and encourage a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport;
- To seek to ensure a higher level of emphasis of capital expenditure on sustainable transportation schemes, ensuring that the priority is allocated to sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport schemes; and
- To seek to develop effective working relationships with appropriate delivery agencies for the delivery of local transportation schemes to support local communities and which integrate with a community planning approach.

Key **internal policy objectives** for the city leadership theme include:

- In line with the proposed transfer of local planning functions to local councils, we will adopt a strong and public city leadership role in the promotion of sustainable development for the city of Belfast and will ensure a consistent and integrated approach to land use and transport planning; and
- To ensure that we have sufficient resources and skills to enable us to fully address the capacity building requirements associated with the transfer of local planning functions.

“ In line with the proposed transfer of local planning functions to local councils, we will adopt a strong and public city leadership role in the promotion of sustainable development for the city of Belfast and will ensure a consistent and integrated approach to land use and transport planning. ”

Strategic objectives and policies

Better opportunities across the city - regeneration, growth and prosperity

Strategic objective:

To support the sustainable economic development of Belfast to ensure the future prosperity of Belfast city and its wider regions, and to facilitate the continued development of its economic and physical regeneration through achievement of sustainable transportation, economic, tourism, leisure, good relations, environmental, educational and health objectives for the city.

1.12 Key objectives

Key **external** policy objectives for the 'better opportunities across the city' theme include:

We will support and lobby key delivery agencies for:

- The introduction of a sustainable parking strategy in Belfast city centre, at key commercial and retail district centres and along arterial routes and nodes to help manage travel demand and help reduce the level of commuter-related parking;
- The introduction of sustainable transport corridor plans that take account of the need to prioritise access to sustainable modes of travel, in advance of the provision of new or additional highway capacity;

- The sustainable development of Belfast's airports to ensure continued connectivity to Belfast city centre and a high level of accessibility by sustainable modes of travel;
- The implementation of a new public transport interchange at George Best Belfast City Airport;
- The sustainable development of Belfast port to ensure continued connectivity to Belfast city centre and the strategic road network; and to ensure a high level of accessibility by sustainable modes of travel;

- The introduction of a sustainable freight management strategy for Belfast;
- Implementation of a high quality and high profile rapid transit system for Belfast and its wider regions;
- To support and lobby key delivery agencies for the introduction of bus, rail and rapid transit based park and ride proposals, in appropriate locations throughout Belfast and its wider regions.

Key **internal** policy objectives for the 'better opportunities across the city' theme include:

- In line with the proposed transfer of local planning functions to local authorities, we will ensure that all new developments comply with the relevant regional and local planning guidance in relation to sustainable transport. In particular, to ensure the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users are fully considered as part of the design and assessment process.

Additional specific policies and proposals for Belfast city centre are included in Section 1.17.

“ In line with the proposed transfer of local planning functions to local authorities, we will ensure that all new developments comply with the relevant regional and local planning guidance in relation to sustainable transport. ”

Strategic objectives and policies

Better care for Belfast's environment

Strategic objective:

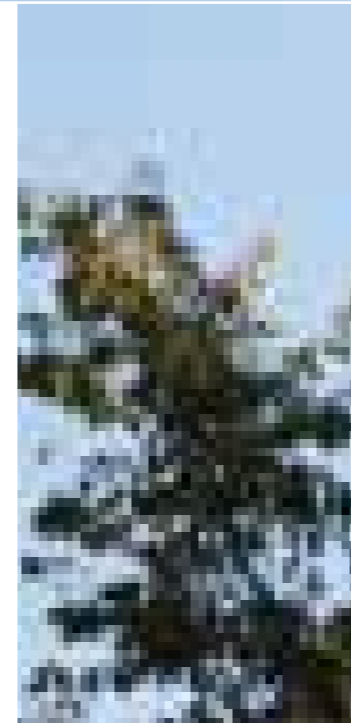
To secure the long term viability of Belfast city and its environment by seeking to ensure that all transportation arising from wider proposals takes into account, and mitigates against, adverse impacts on the environment and the quality of life of local neighbourhoods.



“ This could include initiatives to help reduce levels of greenhouse gas emissions, implementation of a fleet replacement programme, investigation of options to introduce emerging vehicle technology solutions ”



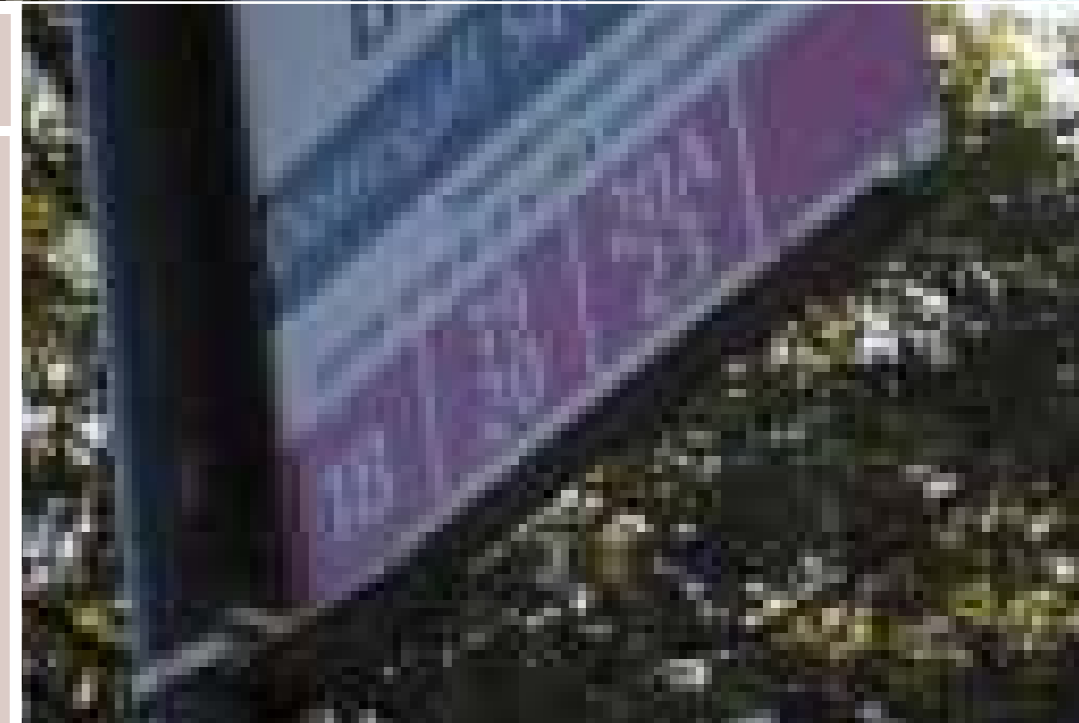
1.13 Key objectives



Key **internal policy objectives** for the 'better care for Belfast's environment' theme include:

- To support, where appropriate, innovative initiatives to reduce car and vehicle ownership;
- To continue to implement green transport initiatives to minimise the adverse environmental impact of our vehicle fleet and to promote and help roll out successful initiatives to other organisations. This could include initiatives to help reduce levels of greenhouse gas emissions, implementation of a fleet replacement programme, investigation of options to introduce emerging vehicle technology solutions; and
- In line with the proposed transfer of functions to local authorities (as part of the Review of Public Administration), to identify and implement, where appropriate, a programme of environmental and streetscape improvement schemes as a means of improving connectivity, mobility and the quality of life between neighbourhoods across Belfast.

The key objectives for 'better care for Belfast's environment' are mainly concerned with internal policies. With regard to external policies, there is significant overlap with 'people and communities' (Section 1.14) and 'better value for money' (Section 1.15).



Strategic objectives and policies

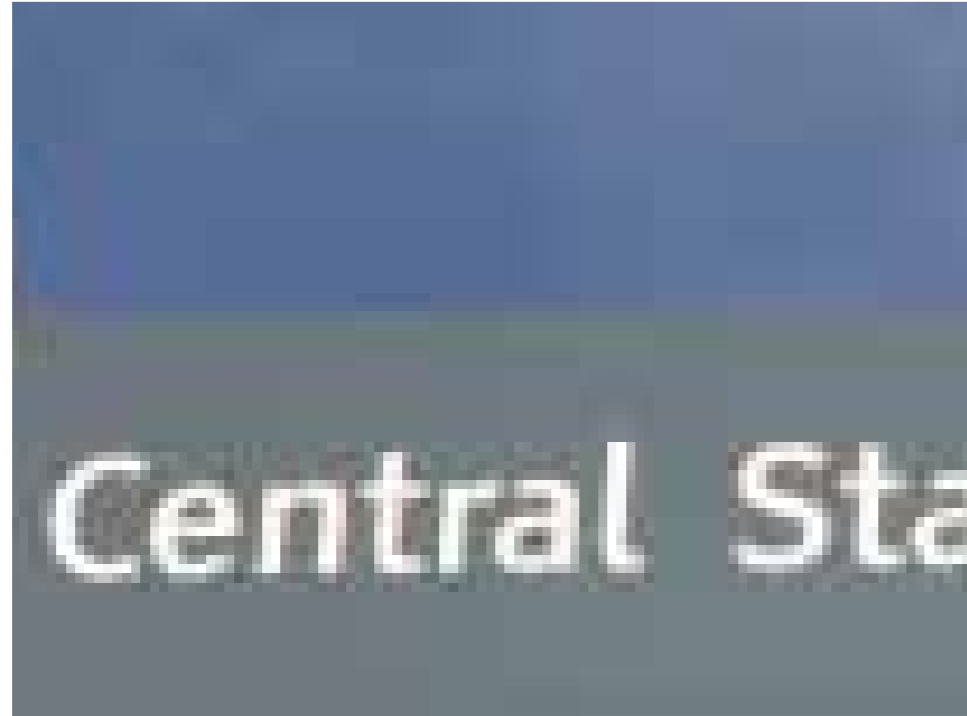
Better support for people and communities

Strategic objective:

To support local people and communities by ensuring a community plan approach that integrates transportation to enhance connectivity for local neighbourhoods by making them safer, healthier and more inclusive.



1.14 Key objectives



“ The implementation of high quality public realm projects for Belfast, ensuring that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are fully met within planned streetscape improvements. ”

Key **external policy objectives** for the 'better support for people and communities' theme include:

We will support and lobby key delivery agencies for:

- The implementation of local road safety, traffic calming and safer routes to schools schemes which provide improvements for vulnerable road users such as schoolchildren, pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users;
- The introduction of new public transport initiatives that include community transport initiatives;
- The effective integration of taxis into the public transport network;
- The introduction of residents-only parking schemes in areas where it receives local support to help reduce the negative

- impacts of commuter-related parking on local neighbourhoods;
- The review and improvement of the traffic network in areas where current traffic operations result in severance of local neighbourhoods e.g. Middlepath Street / Bridge End gyratory, Yorkgate area and Shaftesbury Square;
- The provision of adequate carriage facilities for bicycles on public transport vehicles (buses and trains) at all times of the day; and
- The implementation of high quality public realm projects for Belfast, ensuring that the needs of disabled users,

pedestrians and cyclists are fully met within planned streetscape improvements.

Key objectives for 'people and communities' are mainly concerned with external policies. With regard to internal policies, there is significant overlap with 'better value for money' (Section 1.15).



Strategic objectives and policies

Better value for money

Strategic objective:

To seek to ensure that our services and facilities are accessible by sustainable modes of travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport.



1.15 Key objectives

Key **external policy objectives** for the 'better value for money' theme include:

We will support and lobby key delivery agencies for:

- ▶ The implementation of an integrated quality walking network and quality cycle network for Belfast, including the establishment of safe and continuous walking corridors into the city centre area, district centres and between our facilities;
- ▶ Improvements to and integrated direction (and destination) signage in Belfast to support cycling and walking networks;
- ▶ The implementation of improved public transport services into the city centre and wider areas,

between district centres and between our facilities including the continued implementation of quality bus corridors, the introduction of new bus services including routes serving new developments, orbital services, cross-city services; and night-time services; and the introduction of an integrated ticketing system that allows travel between different modes i.e. bus, rail and rapid transit; and

- ▶ The introduction (and review) of parking controls that support the delivery of our key services.

Key **internal policy objectives** for the 'better value for money' theme include:

- ▶ To continue to develop a programme of improved and integrated direction (and destination) signage in Belfast to support the quality walking network, particularly for visitors and tourists to the city;
- ▶ To identify and implement, where appropriate, a programme of high quality and safe walking routes through our sites including open spaces, parks, leisure and community facilities;

- ▶ To identify and implement, where appropriate, a programme of high quality cycle routes through our sites including open spaces, parks, leisure and community facilities, which connect into the wider National Cycle Network and greenways programme for Belfast; and
- ▶ To identify and implement, where appropriate, the provision of public transport information at our sites.

“ To identify and implement, where appropriate, a programme of high quality cycle routes through our sites including open spaces, parks, leisure and community facilities, which connect into the wider National Cycle Network and greenways programme for Belfast. ”



Strategic objectives and policies

Better services

Strategic objective:

To promote the positive effects of sustainable travel and to lead by example by implementing sustainable travel initiatives within Belfast city.



1.16 Key objectives

Key **external policy objectives** for the 'better services' theme include:

- ▶ To continue to support the Roads Service's Travelwise Northern Ireland Campaign to promote sustainable travel and a shift away from reliance upon the private car; and
- ▶ To continue to promote, in association with Translink, the positive benefits of travel by public transport in Belfast and to ensure that all our events promote and facilitate travel by public transport.

Key **internal policy objectives** the 'better services' theme include:

- ▶ To continue to promote the annual "Belfast Week of Walking" and "Belfast Week of Cycling" and other initiatives in association with key stakeholders;
- ▶ We will implement a corporate travel plan strategy which will bring together policies and proposals for a workplace travel plan for staff travel activities as well as an operational travel plan for fleet activities. These initiatives are likely to include the following policies and proposals;

- ▶ Development of specific objectives and targets to promote a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of travel;
- ▶ Establishment of a new staff role of staff travel plan co-ordinator, who will be responsible for the development, implementation, marketing and monitoring of the staff travel plan;
- ▶ Identification of specific policies and proposals which many include;
- ▶ Walking initiatives – promotional and information events; provision of on-site facilities; maps of walking routes;

- ▶ Cycling initiatives – promotional and information events; provision of on-site facilities, including cycle parking; cycle maps; training and support; cycle purchase schemes; pool bike schemes; establishment of bike user groups;
- ▶ Public transport – promotional and information events; travel information; personalised journey planners; ticket discount deals;
- ▶ Car sharing – continued operation of car share scheme; the provision of dedicated car sharing spaces; promotional and information events;

- ▶ Car parking – reduction in the number of staff car parking spaces potentially augmented by the introduction of parking permit or charging schemes;
- ▶ Business travel – review of the staff travel policy, corporate membership of car clubs, promotion of existing shuttle bus services and the removal of car-based employee perks for new staff;
- ▶ Travel plan promotion – development of a supporting marketing and communication plan; the identification and provision

- of adequate resources; promotional and information events; monitoring and publishing of annual performance data;
- ▶ Green vehicle initiatives – use of alternative fuels, fleet replacement programme to ensure compliance with Euro standards, fleet management practices to improve vehicle utilisation and fuel consumption, exhaust emissions testing.

Strategic objectives and policies

Belfast city centre

Strategic objective:

To support the sustainable economic development of Belfast city centre, as a key connected and accessible regional asset – to seek to provide an urban environment that supports a more dynamic and competitive centre and to improve its presentation and environmental quality as befits a leading European city.



1.17 Key objectives

Key **external policy objectives** for the 'Belfast city centre' theme include:

We will support and lobby key delivery agencies for:

- ▶ The development of a cohesive and integrated traffic management and public realm strategy for the city centre, which improves the urban environment and road safety for pedestrians and cyclists; increases connectivity and accessibility to public transport services; and improves the quality of life for all those who live in, work in and visit the city centre;
- ▶ The reallocation of existing road space in the city centre for use for environmental improvement schemes as well as use by pedestrians, cyclists, buses and rapid transit – including the

- ▶ provision of cross-city public transport routes to minimise the need for bus layover at Donegall Square and City Hall;
- ▶ The development of traffic management and highway proposals, which adequately mitigate against any potential adverse environmental or community severance impacts, in line with the principles of sustainable development;
- ▶ The provision of a 'step change' in the level of public transport provision in the city centre including the introduction of a high quality rapid transit scheme, and enhancements to existing Metro bus services and rail services serving the city centre, which improve public transport

- ▶ journey time reliability and connectivity across the central area;
- ▶ Implementation of planned improvements to the main bus and rail stations in Belfast city centre to enhance integration, accessibility and connectivity;
- ▶ The implementation of a new public transport interchange at Gamble Street;
- ▶ The introduction of a sustainable parking strategy for the city centre;
- ▶ An increased level of cycle parking facilities in Belfast city centre, which are secure and weather protected.

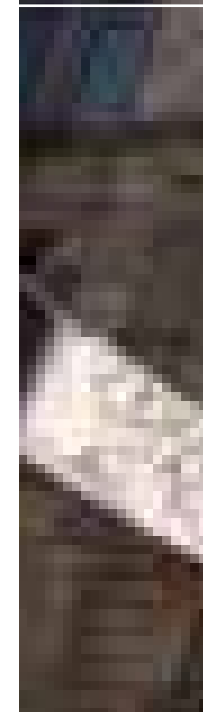
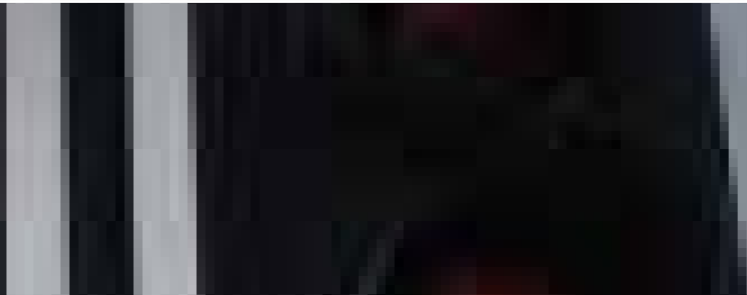
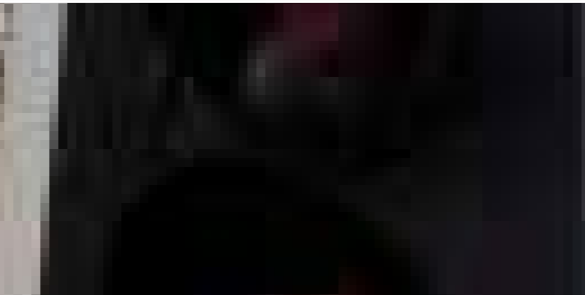
Key **internal policy objectives** for the 'Belfast city centre' theme include:

- ▶ To investigate options for the introduction of a bicycle rental service in Belfast city centre to facilitate short-term use of bicycles, particularly for tourists and visitors.

“ The reallocation of existing road space in the city centre for use for environmental improvement schemes as well as use by pedestrians, cyclists, buses and rapid transit – including the provision of cross-city public transport routes to minimise the need for bus layover at Donegall Square and City Hall. ”



Conclusion

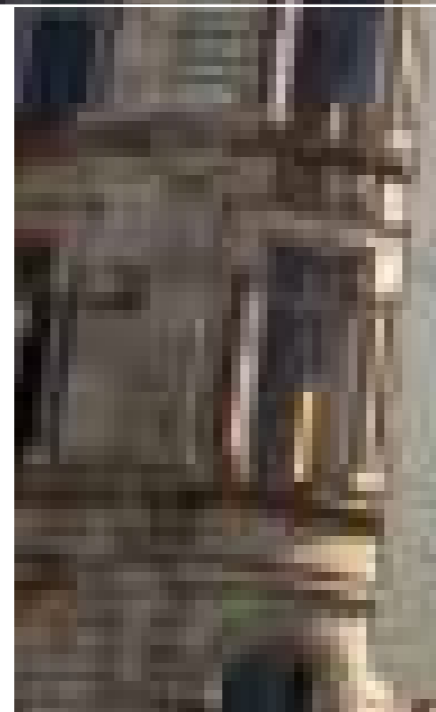


This revised Transport Policy aims to provide us with a coherent and aspirational vision for development of transport across Belfast until 2015. As responsibility for local planning transfers to local councils over the coming years, it is essential that we have a coherent view in relation to transport to ensure appropriate integration of transportation and land use planning in Belfast.

The overall development of the revised Transport Policy was informed by contributions from an interdepartmental steering group within our organisation and through consultation with


a range of key stakeholder bodies from across the city. Progress with implementation of the Transport Policy will be monitored, reviewed and reported annually.

During development of the revised Transport Policy, it was recommended that we should introduce a formal internal workplace travel plan. As a next step, we will seek to develop a workplace travel plan in consultation with staff in order to encourage greater uptake of more sustainable forms of transport for both commuting and workplace travel.



“ As responsibility for local planning transfers to local councils over the coming years, it is essential that we have a coherent view in relation to transport to ensure appropriate integration of transportation and land use planning in Belfast. ”





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