

YSI - Timeline of Key Events

December 2005 - DRD YSI feasibility study completed. Options ranged from traffic management options, which could have been implemented in the short term to provide immediate improvements, to full grade-separation options that removed the conflicts between traffic movements implemented in the longer term.

March 2009 - DRD Stage 1 Preliminary Options Report published

June 2011 – DRD present options for proposed YSI to BCC Development Committee as part of public consultation process. Members raised issues around connectivity to surrounding communities and north Belfast. Committee agreed that officers submit interim response to DRD based on Members comments.

Summer 2011 - BCC response to DRD YSI consultation requested assurance from DRD that any new road infrastructure is designed to improve connections to the north of the city and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Council also requested consideration be given to potential reallocation of surplus road space within surrounding network e.g. Dunbar Link.

December 2012 - DRD announce YSI preferred option, i.e. full grade separation of movement between the Westlink, M2 and M3 and grade separation via underpasses below the Lagan and Dargan Bridges.

January 2013 - YSI update paper to BCC Development Committee. Committee noted the preferred option and supported continued engagement with DRD on next stage to seek to influence the design of the preferred option to reflect the aspirations of the Council.

January 2015 - DRD Minister announced formal consultation on YSI Environmental Statement.

March 2015 - Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee approved draft response to Environmental Statement consultation. Response highlighted the need to carefully consider connections to north of City, increase opportunities for active travel linked to new UU campus and also highlighted issues relating to air quality, noise and contaminated land. Committee approved the draft response.

May 2015 - Gateway 2 review of YSI scheme approved.

September 2015 - BCCRIS launched; YSI highlighted as a significant project for the city. BCCRIS suggests that careful design is required pedestrian and cyclists and creative solutions are needed to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and make use of otherwise vacant space.

November 2015 - YSI Public Inquiry over three days, including site visits. Council raised the following issues: design, linkages and connections, air quality, contaminated land and noise. In relation to design and connectivity issues the Council emphasised the need for careful design to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and to enhance connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. The Council suggested that some modest investment by DRD in the design of the interchange proposal with the aim of improving development and regeneration potential and non-motorised movement could generate significant future social, economic and environmental benefits for the York Street area and for the wider city.

June 2016 - Council response to Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) masterplan

November 2016 - Public Inquiry Inspector's Report released and DfI publish 'Notice to Proceed' with scheme.

December 2016 - DfC's Greater Clarendon & Sailortown Masterplan published. Includes proposals for the potential development sites owned by public sector that will become available on completion of the YSI. Also suggests recreation, entertainment and public art beneath the flyover and enhanced lighting.

January 2017 - DfI publish YSI Designation Order.

April 2017 - Legal challenge to tender process by an unsuccessful contractor.

June 2017 - £2bn NI funding over two years, inc. YSI (Confidence & Supply) agreed between DUP/Tories

September 2017 - SAG reconvened following Public Inquiry and Inspectors Report recommendations. Main aim of the SAG is to provide a Forum to consider the integration of the scheme with other government agencies and private initiatives to maximise future redevelopment opportunities. It is also a Forum to develop the detail of the aesthetics of the scheme, having regard to the scheme's objectives, the inspectors report, the Departmental statement and feedback from local community engagement.

8th November 2017 - City Growth & Regeneration Committee receive update paper to Members on outcome of Public Inquiry and Council's ongoing involvement. Noted that at the Inquiry Council officers made representations on the need for careful design to reduce visual impact and enhance connectivity and raised issues around air quality, noise and vibration and contaminated land. The Inspector's report recommended that DfI Roads liaise with Council throughout the remainder of the design phase and construction phase. As a result, the Strategic Advisory group was reconvened in Sept 2017. After discussion, the Committee noted the York Street Interchange update and the ongoing participation of Council officers in the process

March 2018 - Hearing to consider the legal challenge took place in the High Court of Justice.

June 2018 - Confidence & Supply Agreement update. Statement from UK government states "*we will ensure that our commitments on major infrastructure spending, including the York Street Interchange ... agreed alongside of the Confidence and Supply Agreement with DUP ... are able to be taken forward*".

August 2018 - Court rules mistakes made during procurement and set aside construction contract award.

November 2018 - DfI to appeal Court ruling.

August 2019 - City Growth & Regeneration Committee Members Briefing from Council officers on the Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) Masterplan and the work of the YSI Strategic Advisory Group.

September 2019 - DfI appeal dismissed by Court.

January 2020 - The New Decade, New Approach deal includes YSI as an infrastructure project that will benefit from increased funding for capital infrastructure from the UK Government's 'infrastructure revolution'.

January 2020 – North Belfast MLA Nichola Mallon (SDLP) nominated as Minister for Infrastructure.

Summer 2020 - New tender process expected to begin during summer 2020. A contractor could be appointed by summer 2021 and following detailed design work, construction could commence autumn 2022. Construction is expected to take 3-4 years.

Summer 2020 – In July 2020 the Minister for Infrastructure announced the external review of the YSI scheme. At its meeting on 12th August 2020 the City Growth & Regeneration Committee agreed that the Council would write to the Minister for Infrastructure to express its support for the external review of the YSI project, and to offer an opportunity to engage with the review process.

January 2021 - Council received a response from the Minister indicating that the review was carried out by a panel of accredited reviewers, independent from the project in early November 2020. The letter also advised that the review is now complete and Minister Mallon is currently considering its findings.

March 2021 - The CGR Committee received a presentation from Mr. M. Hackett on the issue of an Alternative YSI.