



Subject:	DfI – Roads Presentation to CGR Committee on Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase 2
Date:	8 th September 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to introduce the Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2 presentation to this Committee meeting and to update Members on how the Council intends to respond to the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase 2 Public Consultation on route options (Appendix 1).
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the information provided within this report in advance of the DfI presentation on the emerging preferred routes for Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2;Note the timelines of the ongoing BRT2 Public Consultation; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the Councils proposed mechanism for providing the Councils response to the Public Consultation
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Belfast Rapid Transport (BRT) Phase 1 commenced service in 2018, providing priority corridors to both the G1 service (East-West), and the G2 service (Titanic Quarter). BRT Phase 1 has been a key driver and enabler of modal shift away from private car use on congested arterial routes in Belfast. Translink estimate BRT Phase 1 has attracted approximately 45,000 additional passenger journeys per week in its first year of operation.</p>
3.2	<p>The BRT system implemented a number of measures to prioritise the system including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus priority infrastructure - including bus lanes, priority at junctions and new halts; Glider vehicles - operating along the trunk routes, including hybrid drive chains operating in the newer models; Feeder vehicles and Residual Services – Metro and Ulsterbus services connecting into and along the BRT route benefiting from the bus priority infrastructure; Park & Ride – provision of dedicated parking facilities typically at the end of the route Connect – provision of local interchange hubs to enable connection between feeder and trunk services.
3.3	<p>Belfast has ambitious targets for sustainable economic growth and to enhance wellbeing for all, as set out in the Belfast Agenda. The vision in the Belfast Agenda sets out that “Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone”. The Agenda outlines the City’s ambition to promote the development of sustainable transport, including promoting walking and cycling. The support for, and concept of, promoting a place that can be shared by all in the City reflects one of the key policies in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) , which seeks to create a connected city centre.</p>
3.4	<p>Public transport accessibility via the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT), both to the City Centre and ‘cross city’, will play a key role in catalysing the ambitious targets of the Belfast Agenda and underpinning the inclusive economic growth that will drive the Belfast Local Development Plan.</p>

3.5	<p><u>Report</u></p> <p>BRT Phase 1 (East-West Corridor) cost an estimated £90m upon completion, with Phase 2 currently under consideration within the Belfast Region City Deal process. BRT Phase 2 will introduce high priority corridors to North and South Belfast with the preferred route options currently out for public consultation.</p>
3.6	<p>Phase 2 of the BRT project is one of several infrastructure, tourism and regeneration projects being considered as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD). The project aims to extend the rapid transit network with a North-South service as well as connecting the existing G2 Glider service to Queen’s University and Belfast City Hospital.</p>
3.7	<p>Under the BRCD approval process a draft Outline Business Case was submitted in August 2018 with an Interim Outline Business Case submitted in June 2020.</p>
3.8	<p>The Interim Outline Business Case (OBC) outlined indicative route options, including options for connecting to the G1 service in the City Centre, north route options including Antrim Road, Shore Road and Crumlin Road, and south route options including Ravenhill Road and Ormeau Road. DfI have now undertaken a shortlisting process of the route options including a Route Audit Report, an Options Assessment Report and Strategic Traffic Modelling in order to bring forward the preferred route options for Public Consultation ahead of the submission of the final Outline Business Case for consideration within the BRCD process in Winter 2021.</p>
3.9	<p>The Public Consultation was launched on the 26th July and closes on the 4th October and can accessed for full details at www.brt2.org. The emerging preferred routes for consultation include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glider G2 extension linking the City Hospital and Queens University Belfast via Howard St – Great Victoria St – Bruce St – Dublin Road – University Road and back to the City Centre via Lisburn Road and Great Victoria Street. • The South Route option runs from the existing G1/G2 network at City Hall along Great Victoria Street – Bruce Street – Bankmore Link – Ormeau Road – Saintfield Road to Cairnshill Park & Ride • The North Route contains a number of preferred options, including;

- Antrim Road option running from City Hall to a 2-way bus lane on Donegall Place and Royal Avenue – Donegall Street – Clifton Street – Carlisle Circus – Antrim Road to a proposed Park & Ride/Interchange facility on O’Neill Road;
- Shore Road to O’Neill Road running along a 2-way bus lane on Donegall Place and Royal Avenue – York Street – York Road – Shore Road – Longwood Road to a proposed Park & Ride Interchange facility at O’Neill Road;
- Shore Road to Longwood Road running along a 2-way bus lane on Donegall Place and Royal Avenue – York Street – York Road – Shore Road to a proposed Park & Facility at Longwood Road

3.10 The Dfl presentation to the CG&R Committee will outline the process regarding the shortlisting of the route options and provide further detail on the emerging preferred routes for the North, South and G2 extension. The Dfl will be welcoming comments from Members on the emerging preferred routes and offering additional opportunities to engage with the Dfl during the Public Consultation process.

3.11 As the BRT Phase 2 is a project of strategic importance to Northern Ireland and to the regeneration of Belfast City Centre, the Council intends to provide a formal consultation response to Dfl on the proposals as part of the project’s public consultation phase. In that context, the Council is finalising the appointment of a suitably qualified consultant to provide technical support, analysis and feedback on each of the emerging route options. The Consultant will assist BCC to reach a position on the options presented and prepare a formal consultation response to Dfl that reflects established Council and wider city ambitions.

3.12 The Council consultation response will be based on Member comments at this Committee meeting, the external consultant advice and the ongoing work of the Bolder Vision for Belfast as well as alignment with other Council strategy and policy documents including the Resilience Strategy, the emerging Local Development Plan and the Innovation and Growth Commission: Reset for Growth report. Phase 2 of the Bolder Vision for Belfast commenced in Summer 2021 and has held a number of engagement sessions with City stakeholders and Elected Members across the City. The Phase 2 work proposes to inform the City’s key capital infrastructure projects to ensure the right foundation for connectivity based on the future uses of the City Centre in line with the Future City Centre Programme as well as bringing forward

3.13	<p>short to medium-term interventions to provide a greener, more inclusive and better connected city centre and connections to local communities.</p> <p>Given the timeframes of the BRT2 Public Consultation it is proposed the BCC consultation response will be brought to the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum prior to submission prior to 4th October. The consultation response will be submitted, subject to CG&R Committee approval on 13th October and Council ratification on 1st November.</p>
3.14	<p>Financial & Resource Implications</p>
	<p>The procurement of the external consultant advice will be provided from within existing approved budgets within the City Regeneration & Development division.</p>
3.15	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p>
	<p>Considerations of Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Assessments will be undertaken within the Council's consultation response, although it will be DfI that will be undertaking the detailed assessments of them under the development of the BRT2 programme.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 Hyperlink to BRT Phase 2 Public Consultation on Route Options</p>