



<b>Subject:</b>	Correspondence – Public Realm Projects
<b>Date:</b>	8th December, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Carolyn Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To note the correspondence received regarding City Regeneration and Development.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the correspondence as set out in the report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b> At its meeting in August 2021, Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Communities and the Minister for Infrastructure, in relation to public realm projects within the city centre specifically in relation to ensuring that the outworking's of the Bolder Vision are adequately captured and addressed within public realm

3.2	<p>scheme designs, and that a number of capital schemes are progressing through design without an holistic overview of a modern transport plan. The Committee asked that the Ministers consider the impacts of the current BRT2 preferred route options would impact the public realm and open spaces of the city centre, but also noted that effective public transportation connections would need to be delivered and asked both Ministers to address these issues as a priority and to bring forward capital investment at pace.</p>
3.3	<p>Accordingly, Democratic Services wrote to the Minister for Communities (Appendix 1) and Infrastructure (Appendix 2). A response was received on behalf of the Minister for Communities, from the Acting Director, Belfast Regeneration (Appendix 3) and on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure, from the Private secretary to the Minister (Appendix 4). The response highlights on behalf of the Minister for Communities, outlines awareness of the challenges that the current BRT2 preferred options poses to the public realm and the city centre environment and further outlines an upcoming joint DfI/DfC/BCC meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, with both Ministers for DfI and DfC due to attend, to discuss these issues and to agree a way forward.</p>
3.4	<p>The response on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure outlines that the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) will be developed in a collaborative manner with the five relevant councils, and that early engagement between the Department's officials and council representatives has taken place. The response further advises that the city centre will be the initial focus for the BMTP and early in the New Year, along with supporting consultants, the intention is to commence the detailed work of considering changes to walk, cycle, public transport and road networks to meet the shared objectives of the Department and the council. The Department have advised that they will contact Democratic Services to organise a meeting/ workshop which hopefully can be held in January 2022. The response further outlines the development of plans for the delivery of phase 2 of the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Project and the option that was recently consulted on, which recommends two-way operation of Glider along Donegall Place and Royal Avenue. The Department advise that if the aspiration of significant modal shift to sustainable transport is to be achieved, public transport must be made more attractive than car, and that pushing public transport to the fringes of the city centre would be counter to this. The response also highlights that considering public transport in advance of the BMTP could result in a relatively narrow view that does not integrate sustainable transport modes nor provide the solutions necessary to meet the future needs of a cleaner, more attractive and more accessible city. The Department also advise that Translink is engaging on The Bolder Vision, Streets Ahead and BRT projects and encourage Council to continue to engage proactively to ensure the best outcomes for public transport and the city.</p>

3.5	<p>Members should also note that under the Bolder Vision officials and officers from DfI, DfC and BCC are under taking extensive consultation across all sectors of the community and city stakeholders to provide an holistic approach to how we can effectively deliver quality space within the city centre while maintaining effective public transportation connections and reducing the severance to communities and the wider Belfast area. These engagements include meetings with senior officials from DfI, Translink, QUB, Ulster University, the Chamber, BIDs, BHC, Section 75 Groups and community groups across the city.</p>
3.6	<p>Future reports on the outworking of these engagements will be brought to this Committee at a future date.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – CGR Letter to Minister Hargey  Appendix 2 – CGR Letter to Minister Mallon  Appendix 3 - DfC Response  Appendix 4 – DfI Response</p>