

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 27th June, 2018

## SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Lyons (Chairperson);  
Alderman Kingston; and  
Councillors Beattie, Dorrian,  
Dudgeon, Graham, Hussey, Murphy,  
O'Hara, O'Neill, and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. A. Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mr. G. Copeland, City Events Manager; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Also attended: Councillor Boyle.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from The High Sheriff of Belfast, Councillor Howard, Alderman Haire and Councillors Baker and O'Donnell.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Dudgeon, Hussey and O'Hara declared an interest in Item 2b, namely, Belfast City Marathon, in that they were Members of the Licensing Committee, and left the room for the duration of the discussion.

### **Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes**

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 2nd July for ratification

### **Presentations**

#### **Transport NI – Spring Report**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr. K. Monaghan, Eastern Divisional Manager, Mr. G. Doherty, Belfast South Section Engineer, Mr. G. Miskimmin, Higher Professional Technical Officer Belfast North, and Mr. C. de Burca, Director for Transport Projects and Business Services in the Department for Infrastructure, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Monaghan outlined to the Members that pressures remained on both capital and resource funding in 2018/2019 but that his staff would continue to develop resurfacing and traffic management schemes to enhance safety, improve traffic flow and provide measures for pedestrians and cyclists. He advised the Members that almost 40,000

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surface defects had been repaired over the past few months through the roads recovery fund.

He provided the Committee with updates on the main strategic transportation schemes for the City and highlighted key statistics within the Council area of the Eastern Division.

In relation to the York Street Interchange, he advised the Members that the tender process to appoint a contractor to bring the scheme to construction-ready stage had been completed but that the tender award could not occur due to an ongoing legal challenge and that they were awaiting the judgement. He pointed out that, following Ministerial approval, the consultation of local residents and key stakeholders on issues which had been identified in the Inspector's report had now commenced.

He also advised the Members that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had intended to extend the hard shoulder bus lane on the M1 to junction 8 at Blaris and to introduce a hard shoulder bus lane on the M2 towards Belfast, between Greencastle and Duncrue Street. He explained that a previous proposal to carry this out in 2017 did not proceed due to higher than expected tender costs. The Committee was advised that an alternative proposal had since been drawn up, and was currently going through the procurement process.

Mr. de Burca provided the Members with an update on the numerous works which had been completed in preparation for the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme, which would begin on 3rd September 2018. He advised the Members that a full upgrade of the lighting and to the pavements had been carried out along the BRT route and provided details of the 12-hour BRT bus lanes along the route.

The Committee noted that all 30 Glider vehicles were currently being tested on the roads and that alternative routes were also being trialled for those occasions when roads were closed. He explained that a shadow trial of the service would be held between 28th and 30th August.

The Members were advised that the official launch event would take place on Friday 31st August in the Titanic Centre.

A Member referenced the reduction of car parking spaces on the Falls Road area as a result of the BRT works, and that a recent survey had shown that car parking was already at 100% capacity in the area. He highlighted that the survey had been conducted at a time when St. Mary's University students were not in attendance, and that a new Children's Hospital would be built at the Royal Victoria site.

Mr. de Burca outlined to the Committee that a 15metre prohibition of parking on corners, including along the Falls Road, had to be imposed. He explained that a number of visitors to the Royal Victoria Hospital preferred to avail of free, on-street car parking instead of using the hospital carpark. The Members were advised that public transport must be given priority on the roads over street parking in order that the public transport scheme would be a success and that the Department hoped that more people would begin to use public transport.

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He added the Members that the Glider service would connect the Royal Victoria Hospital with the City Hospital, as well as connecting the city centre and the east of the city to the west.

In response to further Members' queries in relation to vehicles which entered a bus lane for a short period of time in order to, for example, turn right at a junction or enter a parking space just beyond a bus lane, and if they would lead to prosecution by the DfI, Mr. de Burca advised the Committee that the cameras were assessed by the DfI and, if a driver's use of the bus lane was deemed unreasonable and deliberate, that prosecution would be pursued. He outlined the terms of the appeals process for fines.

The Members drew the attention of the officers from Transport NI to a number of other matters, a number of which are set out hereunder:

- That a section of grass required cutting in the Ballymegarry Lane area;
- a Member requested a site visit to discuss greenways in the lower Shankill area;
- that safe cycle routes between the city centre and west Belfast continue to be progressed;
- that an update be provided on when Barnett's Road would be reopened;
- to consider Traffic Calming Measures in Twinbrook;
- to consider Traffic Calming Measures in Windsor/Derryvolgie Avenue;
- to investigate possible drainage options in Barbour Gardens in Dunmurray; and
- to provide an update on the delay in installing the 3 Belfast Bike docks on the Ormeau Road.

Mr. Monaghan advised that, where relevant, action would be taken on these issues by Transport NI if it was deemed necessary after inspection.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives from Transport NI for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

**Belfast City Marathon**

Upon receiving advice from the City Solicitor, Councillors Dudgeon, Hussey and O'Hara declared an interest and left the room for the duration of the item. The City Solicitor identified that, as Members of the Licensing Committee, those Members had responsibility for considering objections to applications in relation to restricting or prohibiting traffic using a road for the holding of specific events under the Roads (Misc provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010.

The Committee was reminded that representatives from Belfast City Marathon Ltd. had previously attended a Special meeting of the Committee, on 21st February, where

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they had outlined proposals to change the City's marathon route and the day on which it was held, from 2019 onwards.

The Committee had acceded to a request from the representatives to attend a further meeting, at its meeting on 13th June, in order to address the issues which had been raised by Members at the previous meeting.

The Chairperson introduced Mr. S. Burns, Event Manager, Mr. J. Allen, Board Member, Mr. J. Glover, Route Designer, and Mrs. E. Riddell, Marketing and Events Officer of Belfast City Marathon (BCM) to the Committee and they were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Burns provided the Committee with an overview of the BCM Finisher report 2018. He explained that the current marathon route had been used for thirteen years and that over 80% of participants had requested a change. He added that 90% of participants were content for the event to move to a Sunday.

He explained to the Committee that, from 2019 onwards, and having considered feedback from a number of sources, BCM Limited was proposing to change the route of the marathon and to stage it on the Sunday immediately prior to May Day.

He outlined to the Committee a number of the challenges which BCM had considered in developing a new route, including:

- minimising the impact on places of worship on the route or affected by the road closures;
- reducing the impact on businesses across the City;
- ensuring implementation of new Traffic Management Legislation
- maintaining current levels of sponsorship and identify funding sources for any increased cost in traffic management and stewarding;
- making it a more runner friendly route and increasing participation;
- including iconic landmarks of Belfast, whilst visiting all parts of the City; and
- the increased costs due to Road Closure legislation and a reduction in policing.

In relation to the increased costs of staging the Marathon, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy explained to the Committee that any financial request from BCM Ltd. would be submitted for the Committee's consideration at a future date and that it would need to be considered within the context of other financial requests presented to the Council. He added that, if the request for additional funding was recurrent, then it would either need to be considered as part of the rate setting process for 2019/2020 onwards, or that recurrent savings within the department's budget would need to be found to cover the increase.

The Committee considered two provisional routes which BCM had designed having taken the above challenges and Member feedback into account. He outlined that both routes would start in the Stormont Estate and finish in the Ormeau Park.

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During discussion, a number of Members stated that they were pleased to see that BCM had taken their views and comments into account. A number of Members stated that they preferred route Option 1 within the report, as it included opportunities for more local businesses and that it went through areas which had not been included within the previous route.

In response to a Member's question regarding the facilitation of those who would be trying to get to and from places of worship on a Sunday, Mr. Burns confirmed to the Members that a road reopening schedule would be publicised in advance of the Marathon and that they would also create a number of gateways along the route to enable people to cross the road, similar to those which were used during the Giro d'Italia in 2014.

He added that BCM Ltd. would continue to consult widely and that they were happy to engage with Members about any further concerns.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed:

1. to support the Belfast City Marathon Ltd in relation to the proposed changes to the course, and that the event would be staged on a Sunday from 2019 onwards; and
2. to recommend route Option 1 as its preferred route.

Chairperson