



Topic Paper: Transportation

Local Development Plan 2020-2035



Belfast
City Council

Executive Summary

Context

A good transportation system helps people get to where they need to go quickly and easily and makes our towns and cities better places to live. In Northern Ireland, there is a history of heavy reliance on the private car as a means of travel. However, in recent years Belfast has witnessed many improvements in the city's transportation system, in terms of roads, public transport and walking and cycling.

As Belfast continues to grow and modernise, continued developments and major enhancements to our transport infrastructure are still required. The need to integrate transportation and land use to maximise development around quality sustainable transport networks is an essential element of the local development plan.

The responsibility for transport policies and initiatives lies with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) (formerly Department for Regional Development (DRD)). During the plan-making process the Council will be required to work closely with DfI to incorporate transport policy and initiatives into the Plan. The Local Development Plan (LDP) will need to be consistent with the objectives of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 and relevant Transport Plans. Regional guidance outlines the need to deliver a balanced approach to transport infrastructure, support the growth of the economy, enhance quality of life for all and reduce the environmental impact of transport.



Evidence base	Social, Economic & Environmental Factors
<p>Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 DRD Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) PPS 13: Transportation and Land Use PPS 3 Access, Movement and Parking Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) BCC Transport Policy Northern Ireland Transport Statistics 2015-16 Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) 2013-2015 Bicycle Strategy for NI</p> <p><i>“To support & 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, visit and do business in the city.” BCC Transport Policy</i></p> <p>PROFILE</p> <p>30% of the total employment in Northern Ireland is based in Belfast and it is the main destination for commuters.</p> <p>Car travel made up over four fifths (82%) of the total distance travelled*</p> <p>Public transport (Ulsterbus, Metro, Other Bus, Northern Ireland Railways and Black Taxi) accounted for 9% of total distance travelled*</p> <p>Walking accounted for 3% and bicycle journeys 1% of total distance travelled*</p> <p>40% of households in Belfast do not have access to a private vehicle</p> <p>There are four Air Quality Management Areas in Belfast, in places where the air has been affected by pollution, principally nitrogen dioxide (NO²) from road transport.</p> <p>* DRD/NISRA Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) 2012-2014</p>	<p>How can the plan integrate transportation and land use in order to improve connectivity and promote more sustainable patterns of transport and travel?</p> <p>How can the plan balance the requirement to support the growth of the economy while reduce the environmental impact of transport?</p> <p>How can the plan improve connectivity within and to the city and improve social inclusion?</p> <p>How can the plan link with and maximise potential regeneration opportunities along sustainable transport corridors to allow higher density development and identification of regeneration opportunities?</p> <p>Opportunities</p> <p>Land use and transportation proposals and strategies are coordinated and integrated.</p> <p>Belfast Rapid Transit - a network of high quality rapid transit routes to enhance the existing public transport network in Belfast.</p> <p>York Street Interchange proposal – a strategically important enhancement for vehicular access in the city.</p> <p>Belfast Transport Hub - potential to create an integrated Public Transport Hub that will be a high class gateway for Belfast.</p> <p>Belfast Cycling Masterplan - Development of a coherent city wide bicycle network to provide convenient access to safe cycling facilities throughout the city.</p>

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1.0 Introduction

Purpose of this Document

- 1.1 This is one of a series of 17 topic papers which have been put together to inform the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.2 Each topic paper provides a summary of the evidence base required for the Sustainability Appraisal, Preferred Options Paper and LDP. They establish a baseline position and identify the key issues that need to be addressed.
- 1.3 By combining the evidence gathering stages for both the Sustainability Appraisal and LDP, we aim to streamline the documentation produced and avoid duplication. It will also help to ensure that sustainable development is embedded in the planning process and that sustainability appraisal is one of the main drivers informing the preparation of the LDP.
- 1.4 Each topic paper can be read separately but, inevitably, there are important related matters in other topic papers and background evidence.

Member Workshops

- 1.5 The series of 17 Topic Papers were drafted in the early part of 2016 to provide elected members with baseline information to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan. As such the information presented within this topic paper is intended to:
 - build the capacity of the members to make informed planning decisions, particularly within the plan making context;
 - provide baseline information which will inform Development Plan Policy making at a local level;
 - consider the Settlement Hierarchy within the new Belfast Local Government District;
 - assess the land use needs of a growing population within the Belfast City Council area and to consider the adequacy of the existing growth strategy; and
 - to link with important ongoing work in relation to the development of a Community Plan (the Belfast Agenda) and other strategic work being undertaken by the Council.
- 1.6 These papers were presented to members for discussion at a series of informal workshops with Planning Committee Members throughout the Spring of 2016, with key issues and opportunities for the City identified for consideration.
- 1.7 The original Topic paper entitled 'Belfast Transport' was presented at a workshop on 19 May 2016. It has since been updated to ensure the statistics referenced are up to date for publication alongside the Preferred Options Paper.

Transportation

- 1.8 A good transportation system helps people get to where they need to go quickly and easily and makes our towns and cities better places to live. It is essential for the growth of the local economy and impacts greatly on our environment. In recent years Belfast has witnessed many improvements in the city's transportation system in terms of roads, public transport and walking and cycling. However, continued developments and enhancements are still required.
- 1.9 The need to integrate transportation and land use to maximise development around quality sustainable transport networks is an essential element of the LDP in order to reduce car dependency and travel distance. The responsibility for transport policies and initiatives lies with the DfI. During the plan-making process the Council will work closely with DfI to incorporate transport policy and initiatives into the Plan.
- 1.10 The main policies relating to transportation are outlined in the RDS, Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) and the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP).
- 1.11 The purpose of this paper is to provide information about the current transportation situation within the plan area. This will assist the Council in the preparation of their Plan Strategy. This paper provides an overview of the regional and local planning policy context, alongside details on various issues relating to transport schemes and initiatives. Whilst transport planning is a function that will remain with the DfI, it will be important that the new LDP integrates transportation with land use. Off-street car parking is now a Local Government responsibility and must also be afforded greater weight in the preparation of the new plan.
- 1.12 Also of relevance is the obligation at a local level for the Council to regularly review, assess and report on air quality under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime. In Northern Ireland, this is established via Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents (LAQM.PGNI(09)). Under the LAQM process, where a local authority determines that exceedence of an air quality objective is likely, they must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan with measures to pursue the relevant objective.

2.0 Policy Context

This section introduces the regional policy context and local policy context relevant to transportation.

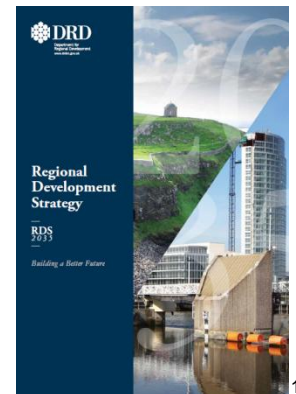
Regional Policy Context

2.1 The Regional Policy Context is provided by the RDS, Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), and Development Control Advice Note 15 (DCAN15). A summary of these documents as they pertain to plan making and transport development policy is provided in the following sections.

Regional Development Strategy 2035

2.2 The RDS sets the context for the sustainable development of Northern Ireland (NI) to 2035. The RDS acts as the spatial strategy of the NI Executive's Programme for Government. The strategy was revised in 2010 to reflect the changing development of Northern Ireland and continues to set the overarching planning framework for the region. It outlines two types of strategic guidance:

- Regional Guidance (RG) which is applied to the entire region and relates to the three themes of sustainable development – Economy, Society and Environment
- The Spatial Framework which enables strategic choices to be made in relation to development and infrastructural investment. The Spatial Framework comprises of the following 5 components:
 - The Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast
 - Londonderry – principal city of the North West
 - Hubs and Clusters of Hubs
 - The Rural Area
 - Gateways and corridors.



Strategic Guidance

2.3 Strategic Guidance relating to transport and associated issues are outlined below:

Regional Guidance

2.4 RG2 'Deliver a balanced approach to transport infrastructure':

- Improve connectivity
- Maximise the potential of the Regional Strategic Transport Network
- Use road space and railways more efficiently
- Improve social inclusion
- Manage the movement of freight
- Improve access to our cities and towns

¹ <http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/rds2035.pdf>

- Improve safety by adopting a 'safe systems' approach to road safety.

2.5 RG9 'Reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality':

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport
- Reduce noise and air pollution from transport
- Use more energy efficient forms of transport.

Spatial Framework Guidance

2.6 SFG4 'Manage the movement of people and goods within the BMUA':

- Manage travel demand within the BMUA
- Improve the public transport service
- Integrate Land Use and Transportation
- Introduce a Rapid Transit system
- Manage the efficient movement of freight
- Improve facilities for walking and cycling which is co-ordinated with infrastructure investment

SFG14 'Improve accessibility for rural communities':

- Improve the overall connectivity of rural communities to services and other parts of the Region by exploring innovative ways of bringing these services to the communities
- Integrate local transport

2.7 SFG15 'Strengthen the Gateways for Regional competitiveness':

- Provide high quality connections to and from the air and sea ports.
- Enhance Gateways and their environmental image.

Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation

2.8 This document sets out the approach to regional transportation and particularly future decisions on investment. Unlike the former Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS), the emphasis of this approach moves away from specific road building schemes and has the drive for sustainability in the travel choices at its core. It sets three high level aims for transportation along with twelve supporting objectives covering the economy, society and the environment.

2.9 A. Support the Growth of the Economy

1. Improve connectivity within the region
2. Use road space and railways more efficiently
3. Better maintain transport infrastructure
4. Improve access in our towns and cities

5. Improve access in rural areas
6. Improve connections to key tourism sites



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- 2.10 B. Enhance the quality of life for all
7. Improve Safety
 8. Enhance Social Inclusion
 9. Develop transport programmes focussed on the user

- 2.11 C. Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport
10. Reduce Greenhouse gas emissions from transport
 11. Protect biodiversity
 12. Reduce water, noise and air pollution



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- 2.12 The document also outlines a new approach to regional transportation decision making through a transportation policy prioritisation framework. The Policy Prioritisation Framework will be used to identify the priority strategic transportation interventions that most closely align with the strategic direction set by the Executives Programme for government and the RDS. It will be used to guide decisions on strategic transportation interventions beyond 2015.

- 2.13 Further details of the transportation proposals outlined in the previous Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012 are included in Appendix A. The RTS identified strategic transportation investment priorities and considered potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the 10 year period. The RTS signalled a move away from a transport system that is dominated by car use towards a more balanced and integrated system. The delivery of the RTS was through three Transport Plans, the first two are relevant to the Belfast area: the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2004; the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP 2015; and the Sub Regional Transport Plan (SRTP) 2015.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland

- 2.14 The SPPS sets out strategic subject planning policy for a wide range of planning matters. It also provides the core planning principles to underpin delivery of the two-tier planning system with the aim of furthering sustainable development. It sets the strategic direction for the new councils to bring forward detailed operational policies within future local development plans.
- 2.15 The SPPS highlights the importance to successfully integrate transport and land use generally in order to improve connectivity and promote more sustainable patterns of transport and travel.

² <https://s.inyourpocket.com/gallery/136364.jpg>

³ <http://i3.belfastlive.co.uk/incoming/article9165444.ece/ALTERNATES/s615/train.jpg>

2.16 The policy recognises that the planning should help to mitigate and adapt to climate change by promoting sustainable development which reduces the need for motorised transport, encourages active travel, and facilitates travel by public transport in preference to the private car.

2.17 The SPPS contains the following five core planning principles:

- Improving Health and Well-being
- Creating and Enhancing Shared Space
- Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth
- Supporting Good Design and Positive Place Making
- Preserving and Improving the Built and Natural Environment

2.18 Under the 'Improving Health and Well-being', the need for better integration between land use planning and transport is outlined.

PPS 13: Transportation and Land Use

2.19 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 13 was published in February 2005 to assist in the implementation of the RDS by being a material consideration in dealing with individual planning applications and appeals. The PPS is shaped by the following RDS strategic objectives:

- To develop a Regional Strategic Transport Network, based on key transport corridors, to enhance accessibility to regional facilities and services (SPG-TRAN 1)
- To extend travel choice for all sections of the community by enhancing public transport (SPG-TRAN 2)
- To integrate land use and transportation (SPG-TRAN 3)
- To change the regional travel culture and contribute to healthier lifestyles (SPG-TRAN 4)
- To develop and enhance the Metropolitan Transport Corridor Network; to improve public transport service in the Metropolitan Area; to manage travel demand within the Metropolitan Area (SPG-BMA 3-5)
- To create an accessible countryside with a responsive transport network that meets the needs of the rural community (SPG-RNI4) The primary Objective of PPS 13 is to integrate land use planning and transport by promoting sustainable transport choices, promoting accessibility for all and reducing the need to travel, especially by private car.

PPS 3 Access, Movement and Parking

2.20 PPS 3 sets out the Departments planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking. It forms an important element in the integration of transport and land use planning. The Policy was prepared in close consultation with DRD and needs to be considered together with PPS 13 Transportation and Land use. The main objectives of PPS3 are to:

- Promote road safety, in particular, for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users
- Restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes
- Make efficient use of road space within the context of promoting modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport
- Ensure that new development offers a realistic choice of access by walking, cycling and public transport, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas
- Ensure the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired, are taken into account in relation to accessibility to buildings and parking provision
- Promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development
- Promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion
- Protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse.

Development Control Advice Note

- 2.21 The purpose of DCAN 15 is to give general guidance to intending developers, their professional advisors and agents on the standards for vehicular access. PPS3 refers to the Department's standards for vehicular accesses. DCAN15 sets out and explains those standards and is a material consideration for planning applications and appeals.

Local Policy Context

The Local Policy Context is provided by the BMTP, relevant sections of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP), the Belfast Agenda, the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS), the Belfast Air Quality Action Plan 2015-2020, and Belfast City Council's Transport Policy. A summary of these documents is provided in the following sections.

Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan

- 2.22 The BMTP was launched on November 2004 and is the local transport plan for the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) prepared by DRD which takes forward the strategic initiatives of the RTS.
- 2.23 The elements of the plan are outlined under four main headings: walking and cycling, public transport, highway network and management. The document outlines the transport schemes and measures under these headings which are expected to be implemented up to 2015. The plan is currently subject to an interim review.
- 2.24 The process of preparing the BMTP was separate from the statutory process for the preparation of the BMAP but preparation of the Plans proceeded in parallel. There was close liaison between the plan teams to ensure that the Plans were mutually supportive and that land use and transportation proposals and strategies were coordinated and integrated.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

- 2.25 The BMAP is the statutory development plan for the city council area of Belfast published in September 2014. The plan provides a policy framework and land use proposals that will be used to guide development decisions within the BMA over the plan period.
- 2.26 The land use allocations in BMAP are closely linked with the priorities and proposed transport investment in BMTP. Proposals in the BMTP focus on improving accessibility to key strategic sites and regeneration areas identified by the RDS and being progressed by BMAP. In addition BMAP takes into account the land use requirements of transportation infrastructure. BMTP sets out the transport schemes and measures expected to be implemented up to 2015 and the Plan Proposals incorporate those elements of BMTP which have land use and spatial planning implications.
- 2.27 A key component of the BMAP plan strategy is to develop an integrated inclusive transport system. The plan proposals seek to reduce reliance on the car by a closer integration of transportation and land use by promoting significant improvement in public transport and by management measures to influence the choice of travel mode. The provision of improved facilities for walking and cycling as a means of providing greater travel choice is a key principle.
- 2.28 The plan proposals seek to manage integrated transportation with benefits to the environment and human health and to enhance accessibility to employment, community and other facilities for those without access to the use of a car. There is an emphasis on provision of housing and employment within existing urban footprints and on mixed use development to ensure patterns of development are supportive to a choice of modes of transport including public transport.
- 2.29 The BMA is the major gateway to NI and fast and efficient transportation links to the Belfast Harbour are recognised as essential to the economic prosperity of the region. The plan proposal identifies road improvements necessary to ensure the efficient movement of freight and people. Further details of the transportation policies and proposals contained in BMAP are outlined in Appendix B.

Belfast Agenda

- 2.30 Work to develop the Belfast Agenda is ongoing, building on the outputs of previous strategic stakeholder engagement which produced the 'plan on a page' and the wider Belfast Conversation in 2015 which asked people to identify their vision for Belfast and the issues they want addressed. The council are aiming to publish a final agreed Belfast Agenda by April 2017.
- 2.31 In May 2015 a series of community workshops were held and an online survey, asking questions like:
- What do you like about Belfast?
 - How can we make our city better?
 - What's your vision for Belfast in 2030?

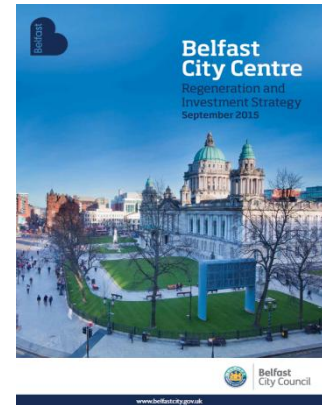
- 2.32 The response of participants showed a number of recurring themes and ideas and in particular “enhancing the city’s public transport infrastructure” was highlighted.

City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy

- 2.33 The BCCRIS outlines the Council’s vision to develop a world-class city centre for the future. The strategy sets out a collective ambition for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding areas to 2030.

The strategy is based on several core principles. It will aim to:

- increase the employment population
- increase the residential population
- manage the retail offer
- maximise the tourism opportunity
- create a regional learning and innovation centre
- create a green centre, accessible to cyclists and walkers
- connect to the city around
- enhance shared space and social impact.



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- 2.34 The strategy recognises the vital role transport and connectivity will play in the economic growth and regeneration of Belfast by enhancing access

Belfast Air Quality Action Plan 2015 – 2020

- 2.35 The Council in partnership with other organisations have developed a new Air Quality Action Plan for the city for 2015 – 2020. In Belfast, there are four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in places where the air has been affected by pollution, principally nitrogen dioxide (NO²) from road transport. These are located along:

- Westlink Corridor
- Ormeau Road
- Upper Newtownards Road
- from Cromac Street to the Short Strand.

- 2.36 The previous Air Quality Action Plan delivered improvements to our air quality. However, some parts of the city continue to exceed the European Limit Values for NO². The plan aims to promote the use of sustainable methods of transport to achieve compliance with the nitrogen dioxide European Limit Values by 2020.

- 2.37 In relation to air quality and land use planning, the Council has produced a guidance document for developers and consultants planning building work. These guidelines give technical advice to developers and consultants dealing with planning applications which could have an impact on air quality.

⁴ <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.aspx?IID=13525&SID=7616>

Transport Policy

- 2.38 The Council has an agreed Transport Policy document which was updated in 2008. The policy was established to provide the Council 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. The key message of the revised 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”.
- 2.39 The Council’s transport policy also states the following “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 the use of a 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.”

3.0 Transportation Profile

- 3.1 This section provides an overview of transportation issues in the plan area as they relate to transport modes, highways and parking, public transport, and cycling and walking. It is followed by an outline of various projects and initiatives within Belfast.

Overview of Transportation Issues

- 3.2 Belfast is a city that has historically been dependent on the private car and the streetscape has evolved to cater to these demands, resulting in road infrastructure that is over sized, over complicated and a barrier to non-motorised accessibility. However, in the recent regional and local policy and initiatives there has been a move towards a more balanced approach to pedestrians, public transport and the private car. The recent 'Belfast On The Move' initiative sought to reorganise traffic management within Belfast City Centre to facilitate the reduction in general traffic levels and encourage walking, cycling and public transport.

Transport Modes – Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.3 According to the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) 2013-2015⁵, car travel made up just over four fifths (81%) of the total distance travelled, public transport (Ulsterbus, Metro, Other Bus, Northern Ireland Railways and Black Taxi) accounted for 8% of total distance travelled, walking 3% and bicycle less than 1%. In this period, 63% of households in Belfast had access to at least 1 car, with 18% having access to 2 or more cars. The figures are lower than the percentages for households in the east and west of NI.

Highways & Parking

- 3.4 DfI Transport NI is the sole Roads Authority in Northern Ireland. Transport NI is responsible for over 25,000km of public roads, 9700km of footways, 5800 bridges and 271,000 street lights. The Northern Ireland Transport Statistics (NITS) 2015-16⁶ identify 1084km of adopted roads in Belfast, including 12.4km of motorway, 21.1km of dual carriageway, 90.6km of single carriageway, 50.7km of Transport NI operates within the policy context set by DfI, whose strategic objectives are to maintain, manage and develop NI's transportation network. DfI is responsible for formulation of the Regional Transport Strategy, while Transport NI is responsible for its implementation.
- 3.5 DfI were also previously responsible for 367 public car parks. However off street parking, has from the 1st April 2015, become a Local Government responsibility. Data from the NITS shows that the Council has responsibility for 31 car parks containing 2196 spaces. The figures include 17 fee paying car parks with 147 spaces and 14 free car parks with 739 spaces. It is important to acknowledge that while the Council is now responsible for off street parking it has no authority over the road network within the Council area. The new LDP may indicate a desire to see improvements to the existing transport network within

⁵ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/infrastructure/Travel-survey-for-Northern-Ireland-in-depth-report-2013-2015.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/infrastructure/Northern-Ireland-transport-statistics-2015-16.pdf>

Belfast but the Council will be limited in what it can achieve as it is DRD who have the authority and control the mechanisms for implementing such changes.

Public Transport

- 3.6 In the context of NI, public transport modes are primarily buses and trains. In 2012-2014, 68% of households lived within six minutes walk of a bus stop or place where they could get a bus. Relatively few households were close to a train station. 62% said it would take them 44 or more minutes or that it was not feasible to walk.
- 3.7 With 37% of households in Belfast not owning a private vehicle, it is evident that there is a fairly substantial reliance on public transport to allow people the ability to travel. These people tend to be the elderly, disabled or economically disadvantaged. This statement is further backed up by evidence provided in Preparatory Paper 1 (Population and Growth) which found that in NI as a whole, 25% of retired couples, 33% of single pensioners and over 50% of single parents do not have access to a private car. This demonstrates that there may be an equality issue here which must be further considered.
- 3.8 DRD retains overall responsibility for public transport policy, whilst DOE is responsible for the safety and operating standards and licensing of bus routes. This has recently changed with the two departments joined under the DfI. The majority of public transport services are provided by subsidiary companies of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC), an overseeing public corporation. The principal NITHC subsidiary companies operating under the brand name Translink are: Metro (serves Belfast area), Ulsterbus (serves regional network) and Northern Ireland Railways (NIR).
- 3.9 Improvements have been made to the Metro Bus Network over recent years offering higher frequency services in core corridors however the network of quality bus corridors and the introduction of orbital routes proposed in the BMTP have not been fully implemented. In order to encourage the greater use of public transport, there is need to expand and increase the number of bus lanes and to improve enforcement so that journeys by public transport are quicker for users than by other means of transport.

Cycling and Walking

- 3.10 Between 2012-2014 37% percent of households in Northern Ireland owned at least one bicycle but despite this, only 1% of journeys per adult per year were by bicycle and 17% of journeys per adult per year were by foot.
- 3.11 A key Government priority for growing a sustainable economy involves promoting a modal shift from private car usage to cycling and walking. DfI have taken responsibility for co-ordinating relevant cycling and walking policy. A Cycling Unit was established in November 2013 and provides a focus and co-ordination role for cycling issues and cycling related activities. The Unit works towards making cycling an integral part of network planning and development and ensures that cycling provision is a key element in both strategy and delivery.

3.12 A Bicycle Strategy for NI, published in August 2015⁷, sets out plans to make NI a cycling community over the next 25 years. The strategy promotes the development of a ‘three pillar approach’ for the development of cycling which includes careful planning, high quality infrastructure and effective behaviour change campaigns. The strategy also develops four key elements which will contribute to achieving the vision for cycling in NI:

1. Developing a comprehensive network in both urban and rural areas
2. Safe Places
3. Greater Numbers
4. Inviting Places

3.13 A delivery plan will be published following the finalisation of this draft strategy.

3.14 The Cycling Unit plans to develop a number of Bicycle Network Plans for the urban areas within NI. DfI has also established a Greenways Working Group to scope a plan for the development of greenways.

Projects and Initiatives

Belfast Transport Hub

3.15 Translink and the DfI working in conjunction with the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) have identified the potential to create an integrated Public Transport Hub (see Figure 1) that will be a high class gateway for Belfast located on the site of the Europa Buscentre and Great Victoria Street Train Station recognise the potential of the new Hub to create an excellent first impression of Belfast and create new jobs, provide investment opportunities and reduce congestion in Belfast.

Figure 1: Public Transport Hub



Source: Translink⁸

⁷ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/drd/a-bicycle-strategy-for-northern-ireland.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.translink.co.uk/Translink-Footer/the-hub/>

- 3.16 The development of a new Transport hub around Great Victoria Station has been identified in the BCCRIS as one of the key transformative interventions for the city centre. A joint working approach on the transport hub design and implementation is proposed. The proposed site is in close proximity to a number of inner city residential areas and the Council would advocate that the community needs are taken in consideration.

Belfast Rapid Transit

- 3.17 The introduction of a network of high quality rapid transit routes will enhance the existing public transport network in Belfast. The pilot Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) network is currently being developed and will link East Belfast, West Belfast and Titanic Quarter via the city centre. Work is currently underway to facilitate future introduction of bus lanes in the east and west of the city. Belfast On the Move provided the enabling measures for rapid transit in the city centre and a new Park & Ride facility at Dunlady Road, Dundonald came into operation in December 2014.



- 3.18 The pilot route does not contain proposals for north and south of the city. North Belfast contains some of the most socially deprived areas in the city and contains the Mater Hospital which is a large trip generator that could benefit from improvements in public transport provision along with a number of regeneration opportunities such as the proposed new Ulster University campus on York Street and the development of the Girdwood site.
- 3.19 Similarly, a bus rapid transit network serving the south of the city where large volumes of commuters use the southern approach would also be beneficial. In addition Queens University and the large student population living in the Ormeau Road area would benefit from improvements in public transport and connectivity.
- 3.20 There is need to link with and maximise potential regeneration opportunities along the route alignment. Integration with land use planning along the route alignment is essential to allow higher density development and identification of regeneration opportunities. There is also a need for integration with other road proposals such as the City Centre ring southern section and the York Street interchange (YSI).
- 3.21 In the longer term opportunities could be developed to link BRT to the wider region such as the International Airport as part of any roll out of the system.

Belfast Bicycle Network Plan

- 3.22 The DfI Cycling Unit is beginning to develop a number of bicycle network plans for urban areas within Northern Ireland and to build on the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland. Work has already started on a bicycle network plan for Belfast and this will help the development and operation of the bicycle infrastructure in the city for the next 10 years. It

⁹ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/styles/inline-expandable/public/images/drd/exqui-city-belfast-side-view.jpg?itok=c95Ng4NX>

is primarily focused on developing a core coherent city wide bicycle network to provide convenient access to safe cycling facilities throughout the city and further develop the strategy vision for the delivery of cycling for Belfast.

3.23 DfI previously consulted on three New Cycle Routes proposals:

- Grosvenor Road / Durham Street / College Square North / College Street & Queen Street - proposal to upgrade the existing cycle infrastructure along the Grosvenor Road and Queen Street and extend it to provide a new connecting two way segregated cycle lane along Durham Street and College Square North. Improvements are also proposed to enhance the environment for both pedestrians and cyclists in College Street. The proposed new bicycle route will provide a dedicated connection between the Grosvenor Road Junction with the Westlink to the city centre.
- High Street to Middlepath Street - proposal to upgrade and add to the existing cycle infrastructure along High Street to Middlepath Street. The proposed route will provide a dedicated connection between the High Street Junction with Bridge Street to Middlepath Street. It will provide an opportunity for people to avail of designated cycle infrastructure between the city centre and the eastern city approaches, as well as a connection to Titanic Quarter.
- New Cycle Route along Alfred Street /Upper Arthur - proposal to upgrade the existing cycle infrastructure along Upper Arthur Street and extend it to provide a new connecting two way segregated cycle lane along Alfred Street. This proposed new bicycle route along Alfred Street and Upper Arthur Street was implemented in March 2016 and provides a continuous segregated cycle facility between Ormeau Avenue and Chichester Street. It offers an opportunity for people to avail of designated cycle connection between the Lagan Towpath (Gasworks / Lower Ormeau) to the city centre.

3.24 It is recognised that increased levels of cycling in Belfast can have benefits for regeneration, tourism and culture, the local economy, health improvement, environmental, sports and recreation, learning and skills and services and facilities.

Belfast Bikes

3.25 In August 2013, the Council secured funding for the provision of a Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme as part of the Active Travel Demonstration Projects fund. The Belfast Bikes Scheme was subsequently launched on 27 April 2015 providing the public with access to 300 bikes across 30 docking stations in the City Centre.

3.26 Since the launch, additional stations have opened, including those at Titanic Quarter and the Queen's University Belfast Students Union and McClay Library. The latest docking station to come into operation is at the new C.S. Lewis Square in east Belfast which brings the number of docking stations in the city to 40. New stations are also planned for the Falls Road and Grosvenor Road in west Belfast and Carlisle Circus in the north.

3.27 In order to support Bike Share scheme there is a need to improve the general cycling infrastructure across the City for current and future users. There is a desire to expand the scheme to areas outside the city centre which will be subject to securing additional resources and Council approvals.



York Street Interchange

3.28 The public inquiry into the YSI proposal was held in November 2015. It is recognised that the YSI proposal (see Figure 2) will alleviate a significant bottleneck at the M2/Westlink junction which adversely impacts on city centre traffic volumes and congestion levels on a daily basis. The interchange is therefore viewed to be strategically important for vehicular access in the city. However, there is a need for careful design to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and enhance connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Investment is needed in the design of the interchange proposal with the aim of improving development. Regeneration potential and non-motorised movement could have significant future benefits.

3.29 There will be five surplus land parcels resulting from the proposed scheme post construction which can be used for development. The regeneration and development potential of these sites should be addressed through the LDP process.

Figure 2: York Street Interchange Proposal



Source: DfI¹⁰

City Centre Ring Southern Section (Shaftesbury Link)

3.30 Belfast is currently undertaking a long-term scheme to redirect general traffic flows out of the city centre, in order to permit a greater role for buses, rapid transit, pedestrians and cycling. The scheme is called Belfast on the Move (BOTM) and the work is being carried

¹⁰ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/york-street-interchange-overview>

forward through six phases. The City Ring Southern Section proposal is part of the fourth phase and in the longer term BOTM proposals will be tied in with Streets Ahead Phase 2 as outlined in the BMTP and BMAP. There are a number of issues to be considered in relation to City Ring Southern Section proposal, including:

- Design of road infrastructure and link to regeneration opportunities
- Air quality
- Quality walking corridor
- Community severance and impact on adjoining communities in particular along Cromac Street
- Cycling strategy and opportunities of using the City Centre Ring
- Link with Belfast Rapid Transit and Translink connectivity to the City Centre
- Reducing the barrier effect of the City Centre Ring – ‘boulevard’ treatment

Car Parking Strategy

3.31 The BCCRIS identified car parking as a major issue for the city centre and recommended that the Council work with the DfI to develop and implement a strategy for car parking for Belfast. The Council commissioned consultants in October 2015 to develop a Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan for the City. The main objectives of the draft strategy are:

- Ensuring appropriate provision and location of car parking to support the economic vitality of the City Centre
- Ensuring parking provision does not encourage less sustainable commuter travel, especially for journeys into the City Centre and supports access by public transport, cycling and walking.

3.32 The draft strategy was subject to public consultation between 30 August 2016 and 21 November 2016. It is envisaged that the recommendations will feed into the review of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and the new LDP.

Residents Parking Schemes

3.33 The failure to introduce residents parking schemes around the edges of the city centre was mainly a result of opposition from residents to the proposed charge and access for visitors. The option of introducing the scheme as a demand management tool which is not self financing should be explored; in particular, to address any negative impacts from commuter parking in the inner north Belfast area as a result of the proposed Ulster University development.

Park & Ride

3.34 Council supports the provision of park and ride sites but recommends that they be sited in appropriate locations so as to maximise the opportunity for modal shift whilst minimising adverse environmental and other impacts on the surrounding population and environment.

George Best Belfast City Airport

3.35 In March 2012, George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA) submitted a request to the Department of the Environment (DoE) to vary the terms of its 1997 Planning Agreement

established under Article 40(A) of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 and modified in 2008. The Airport requested that the seats for sale restriction be removed and replaced with a noise control contour and noise control measures.

- 3.36 A Public Inquiry was held in April 2015 to consider representations to the Seat for Sale Restriction. Council made representations at the Public Inquiry outlining its position. While Council is supportive of George Best Belfast City Airport's aspirations for passenger growth and the benefits that such an expansion will bring in terms of both local employment and added value to the local economy, the Council is also aware of the need for a balanced approach to ensure effective noise management arrangements are in place so that noise levels experienced by exposed communities are kept to lowest levels that could reasonably be managed. Accessibility to the airport by public transport is by bus and taxi. There is a rail halt nearby at Sydenham but the need for a halt at the airport has been identified.

4.0 Issues and Approaches

4.1 This section provides a summary of the key issues relating to transportation, outlines the role of the LDP in relation to transportation matters, and identifies options for the development of transportation policy in the LDP.

Summary of Key Issues

4.2 There are a number of issues relating to matters of transportation. These are as follows:

- With the responsibility for transport policies and initiatives under the DfI and community planning, local planning and off-street car parking the responsibility of the Council, there is a need to enhance future working arrangements. The Council's involvement in the future transportation policy and initiatives needs clear articulation of roles and responsibilities.
- In particular, there needs to be close liaison between the plan teams to ensure that the Plans are mutually supportive and that land use and transportation proposals and strategies are coordinated and integrated. Steering group arrangements and links to governance with DfI for the development of the LDP and the BMTP review need to be considered.
- In Belfast, there are four AQMAs in places where the air has been affected by pollution, principally nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from road transport. These are located along:
 - Westlink Corridor
 - Ormeau Road
 - Upper Newtownards Road
 - from Cromac Street to the Short Strand.
- There are a number of strategic and local road improvements proposals identified for Belfast which are considered necessary to ensure the efficient movement of freight and people. Belfast is the major gateway to NI and fast and efficient transportation links to the Belfast Harbour is recognised as essential to the economic prosperity of the region
- With 37% of households in Belfast not owning a private vehicle, it is evident that there is a fairly substantial reliance on public transport to allow people the ability to travel. These people tend to be the elderly, disabled or economically disadvantaged.
- There is a need for high quality continuous bus lanes on arterial routes and better enforcement in order to improve the speed and reliability of public transport journeys. A key issue in providing attractive public transport services is connectivity. However, Belfast's bus network continues to suffer from a lack of through services,

travelling through the city centre as opposed to terminating there and this is coupled with a lack of orbital services.

- The introduction of sustainable transport corridor plans should be considered 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 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
- The potential of the new Belfast Transport Hub to create an excellent first impression of Belfast and create new jobs, provide investment opportunities and reduce congestion in Belfast is recognised. The development has been identified in the BCCRIS as one of the key transformative interventions for the city centre. A joint working approach on the transport hub design and implementation is needed. The proposed site is in close proximity to a number of inner city residential areas and the Council would advocate that the community needs are taken into consideration.
- In relation to BRT there is a need to link with and maximise potential regeneration opportunities along the route alignment. Integration with land use planning along the route alignment is essential to allow higher density development and identification of regeneration opportunities. There is also a need for integration with other road proposals such as the City Centre Ring Southern Section and the YSI for future planning of routes.
- It is recognised that increased levels of cycling in Belfast can have benefits for regeneration, tourism and culture, the local economy, health improvement, environmental, sports and recreation, learning and skills and services and facilities. There is a need to improve cycling infrastructure linking to residential areas outside the city centre and compliment any expansion of the Belfast Bikes scheme outside the city centre.
- Demand management measures are necessary in order to influence the choice of travel mode through initiatives such as parking supply and pricing policies. The LDP also has a major role to play. The need to integrate transportation and land use to maximise development around quality sustainable transport networks is an essential element of the LDP in order to reduce car dependency and travel distance.
- There is a need 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.
- There is a need for careful design to reduce the visual impact of the YSI and enhance connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Investment is needed in the

design of the interchange proposal with the aim of improving development and regeneration potential and non- motorised movement which could have significant future benefits. There will be five surplus land parcels resulting from the proposed scheme post construction which can be used for development. The regeneration and development potential of these sites should be assessed through the LDP process

- Design of the City Centre Ring Southern Section (Shaftesbury Link) is important and its link to regeneration opportunities. Community severance and impact on adjoining communities in particular along Cromac Street must be considered.

Role of the Local Development Plan

- 4.3 With the responsibility with DfI to review the BMTP as a separate statutory process from the preparation of the LDP, there is a need to proceed in parallel to ensure the integration of land use and transportation planning. There needs to be close liaison between the plan teams to ensure that the Plans are mutually supportive and that land use and transportation proposals and strategies are coordinated and integrated.
- 4.4 The SPPS states that the preparation of a LDP provides the opportunity to assess the transport needs, problems and opportunities within the plan area and to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to transportation issues in the allocation of land for future development. It advises that Councils should take account of the RTS and transport plans and that they should also undertake a local transport study to identify transportation and land use planning issues to be addressed in the LDP. These issues include:
- Land Use Allocations and Associated Transport Infrastructure
 - New Transport Schemes, Walking and Cycling
 - Disused Transport Routes
 - Car Parking
 - Protected Routes.
- 4.5 Having considered the different modes of travel and the responsibilities for their provision, it is apparent that in order to conform with Regional Policy, the new LDP needs to promote a modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport.
- 4.6 The SPPS states that LDPs should also identify opportunities for mixed use development, including economic development uses, where this would create synergy and underpin the economic viability of the development as a whole. It is important that such development is sustainable, and major mixed use sites should therefore be identified in locations that are well served by public transport, accessible by walking and cycling, have adequate infrastructure and where development can be properly integrated, in terms of land use and design, with surrounding areas.

Options for the Development of Transportation Policy

4.7 In preparing the LDP it is important to assess the transport needs, problems and opportunities within the plan area and to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to transportation issues in the allocation of land for future development. Consideration should also be given to the RTS and the relevant Transport Plans. This will ensure that the LDP and Transport Plans have a complementary role to play in promoting greater integration of transportation and land use planning. SPPS seeks to secure this improved integration with land-use planning, consistent with the RDS; and to facilitate safe and efficient access, movement and parking.

4.8 The BMTP is currently subject to an interim review and this will be followed by a full review. Consultation will be required with Transport NI when considering land use allocations and future development sites. This will allow for a detailed assessment of the impact of proposed development on the highway network and the possibility of providing suitable access. It is suggested that there are three options open to the Council in how they can approach transportation provision within Belfast:

Option 1 – The Public transport Option

4.9 This option is centred on maximising and encouraging the use of public transport as the primary mode of travel within. It will involve the promotion of measures to not only encourage the use of public transport but also to discourage the use of the private car, for example, reducing the number of car parking spaces in town centres, increasing the cost of using car parks, introducing constraints within the city to make it more difficult to get into the city centre using the private car and by increasing the number of cycle ways and bus service provision. This is considered to be an idealistic option for Belfast and with the high reliance on the private car currently it may be difficult to implement.

Option 2 – The Roads Based Option

4.10 This option is centred on maximising the use of roads and encouraging the use of the private vehicle as the primary mode of travel within. It will involve measures such as increasing the number of car parks and car parking spaces, reducing the cost of car parking, improving roads infrastructure which may indirectly result in less investment in cycle ways and bus services. The only role of the LDP in the context of this option would be to safeguard existing roads infrastructure and car parks. This option is not considered to be a feasible one primarily as Council only has responsibility for off street car parking, whilst DRD is responsible for roads infrastructure and investment. This option would also be unsustainable. It would result in an increase in car usage and therefore in pollution and would also lead to inertia and increased isolation and social deprivation, especially for section 75 groups and rural dwellers who do not have access to private vehicles.

Option 3 – The Balanced Approach

4.11 This option takes a more balanced approach to transportation development within Belfast. Given the high reliance on the private car, this approach will provide choice to the public. The use of public transport will be encouraged through measures such as designing for

buses within our towns and settlements. It will also encourage the use of Park and Ride facilities through concepts such as car-pooling and also encourage the provision of these facilities at key locations across the wider BMA. This option will also seek to encourage the use of existing walk ways and increase the provision of these to ensure connectivity particularly within our towns. The design of new housing developments in a manner that can support connectivity within our towns will also be encouraged. This option will ensure that those living in Belfast will be provided with a choice of travel and that all people are treated fairly and equitably. This option will put less strain on natural resources, for example fossil fuels, and will contribute to economic growth throughout the district. This option would therefore be considered as the preferred approach for the city.

- 4.12 The information contained within this topic paper has been used to inform the next stage of the LDP process, the Preferred Options Paper.

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Appendix A: The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012

The RTS identified strategic transportation investment priorities and considered potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the 10 year period. The RTS signalled a move away from a transport system that is dominated by car use towards a more balanced and integrated system. Its main features included providing a transport system in which walking, cycling and public transport will be more attractive options. Of the £3500 million budget to be spent on improving transportation, 63% was to be directed to roads infrastructure, 35% to public transport and 2% promoting walking and cycling. This funding would contribute to, upgrading existing railways; improving bus corridors; local improvements in towns to assist pedestrians and cyclists; local highway infrastructure measures; and strategic highway improvements.

The initiatives of the RTS are presented across 4 “areas” comprising:

1. The Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN)
2. The Metropolitan Area (BMA)
3. Other Urban Area
4. Rural Areas

The delivery of the RTS is being achieved through three Transport Plans, the first two are relevant to the Belfast area:

1. **BMTP** - The Metropolitan Transport Plan 2004
2. **RSTNTP** - Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015
3. **SRTP** - Sub Regional Transport Plan 2015.

These contain the detailed programmes of major schemes and transport initiatives that the DRD wants to carry out to achieve the RTS objectives and targets. These Transport Plans link with relevant Development Plans and thus provide Northern Ireland with an integrated approach to transportation and land use planning. The RTS also gave a commitment that DRD would develop an Accessible Transport Strategy for NI, which was published in 2005.

The Regional Transportation Strategy included a commitment to carry out a review and resulted in the publication of “Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation” published in April 2012. This is the most relevant and up-to-date document on Regional Transportation and sets out how the Department will develop regional transportation beyond 2015.

Appendix B: BMAP Transportation proposals

The Plan Strategy & Framework outlines the following two policies:

- Policy TRAN 1: Parking Standards within Areas of Parking Restraint; and
- Policy TRAN 2: Publicly owned Off-Street Surface Car Parks within City and town Centres

Policy TRAN 1: Parking Standards within Areas of Parking Restraint

BMAP designates Areas of Parking Restraint within Belfast City Centre Core and Belfast City Centre Fringe. Within these areas the following parking standards will be applied:

	Residential	Non-residential	Non Residential
	No. of spaces per dwelling	No. of nonoperational spaces per m2 of floorspace	No. of operational spaces per m2 of floorspace
Belfast City Centre Core	1.0	1/300	1/930
Belfast City Centre Fringe	1.0	1/100	

The policy states that reductions in the specified standard will be considered where there is evidence of alternative transport arrangements or other material considerations that justify an exception. Furthermore, proposals involving parking provision in excess of the standards will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

In line with the aspirations of the BMTP, the purpose of the policy is to reduce the need for commuting via car and to promote a shift towards other more sustainable forms of transport.

Policy TRAN 2: Publicly owned Off-Street Surface Car Parks within City and Town Centres

BMAP stipulates that planning permission will only be granted for development on publicly owned off-street surface car parks provided that all existing car parking spaces are replaced, either on site or in an appropriate location nearby. In addition the spaces are required to be used for short-stay use only to reduce car bourne commuting.

The policy allows for long stay use where the replacement parking is associated with public park and ride schemes or with railway stations where the sole use of the parking is limited to those using train services.

The policy recognises that car parking can occupy sites with development potential as well as locations where there is pressure for development and where it is desirable to have built development to reinstate the streetscape. The Policy also states that the Department will consider proposals which seek to facilitate a number of publicly owned car parks in one location, for example, a multi storey car park replacing a number of surface level car parks.

Regional Gateways

In relation to the regional gateways, the Plan Strategy & Framework acknowledges the important strategic role of Belfast Port and the George Best Belfast City Airport.

The Plan Strategy and Framework recognises that good access to the Port and associated facilities is fundamental to the economic and social wellbeing of the Metropolitan Area and Northern Ireland as a whole. The Plan Proposals seek to facilitate development of the Harbour Area and it is stated that proposed schemes such as the Sydenham Bypass and York Street Interchange will improve the Strategic Road Network and provide better access to the area.

In relation to the George Best Belfast City Airport, the Plan Strategy highlights the proximity of the airport to a large residential population and acknowledges that a Planning Agreement is in place to control the environmental impact of airport operations on nearby residents.

It is considered that the proposed widening of the A2 Sydenham Bypass will improve accessibility to the airport. The BMAP Plan Strategy and Framework notes that policy exists to control activity and development within Public Safety Zones close to the ends of airport runways.

District Proposals

Belfast City Centre

The District Proposals provide an overview of the following proposals identified in the BMTP:

- City Centre Ring Road;
- Civic Spine;
- Belfast Cross; and
- High Accessibility Zones.

The District Proposals acknowledge that there are a large number of car parking spaces available in the City Centre which has increased significantly from the 1980s reflecting an increase in private car use for journeys to the City Centre. In order to encourage a modal shift from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling, the Plan makes provision for strategic Park and Ride sites and Areas of Parking Restraint.

The following Belfast City Centre proposals are detailed within the District Proposals:

Proposal CC022 Non-strategic Road Scheme (City Centre Ring – Southern Section including Bankmore Link)

This scheme proposes to widen Hope Street, Bruce Street and Cromac Street to two lanes in both directions and the construction of a new carriageway (Bankmore Link) between the existing Dublin Road/Bruce Street/Bankmore Street junction and the existing Cromac Street/Ormeau Avenue/Lower Ormeau Road junction. The scheme also includes junction improvements at Grosvenor Road/Durham Street and Durham Street/Albert Street/College Square North. A Road Protection Corridor has been delineated (on the DOE website) to facilitate the implementation of the scheme.

Proposal CC0 23 Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge Crossings

Two new pedestrian/cycle bridge crossings are proposed between the east and west sides of the River Lagan at:

- Corporation Square to Queens Quay (CC 023/01); and
- Gasworks to Ormeau Embankment (CC 023/02).

The purpose of the proposed crossings will be improve connectivity and improve access to the City Centre.

Proposal CC024 Extended Railway Station (Great Victoria Street/Grosvenor Road)

A new transport hub is proposed incorporating Great Victoria Street Railway Station and the Europa Bus Centre to facilitate public transport interchange. The proposal will help revitalise the surrounding area and is also considered to be of significant strategic importance by creating a Regional Gateway for the City.

Proposal CC025 Area of Parking Restraint (Belfast City Core)

An Area of Parking Restraint has been designated within Belfast City Core which applies the standards noted in section 1.0. An Area of Parking Restraint for Belfast City Fringe Area is also designated under BT 009 in Outer Belfast City Proposals.

Belfast Harbour Area

The District Proposals reiterate the Plan Strategy in terms of the important role of the Port and City Airport as gateways to the City and sets out a Belfast Harbour Area Strategy which seeks to facilitate development of the Port, protect and promote the City Airport and develop a new City Quarter at Titanic. The Strategy seeks to enhance the City's gateway role and encourage riverside renewal. In addition to encouraging employment, the Belfast Harbour Area Strategy seeks to improve accessibility from other parts of the city and the wider region.

Titanic Quarter

The District Proposals zone 87.31 hectares for mixed use at Titanic Quarter (Zoning BHA 01). As part of the key site requirements it is stipulated that a development Framework will be required and it should be accompanied by a Transport Masterplan for the site. In addition transportation proposals are required to include provision for appropriate public transport for the site. The District Proposals also states that the primary vehicular access to Titanic Quarter from the strategic highway network shall be a new grade separated junction off the Sydenham Bypass as detailed in Proposal BHA 08.

Provision is also required for appropriate pedestrian/cycle routes and facilities throughout the development.

Belfast City Airport

The District Proposals recognised that an Article 40 Planning Agreement currently controls the level of airport operations at the City Airport. Furthermore, there are no plans to alter the provisions of the Agreement within BMAP.

In addition, *Policy BHA 02 Airport Safeguarding* states that planning permission will not be granted for development proposals which would adversely affect airport safeguarding operations.

The Port of Belfast

Policy BHA 03 Port Operations and Port-Related Land Uses states that outside airport lands and nature conservation designations (except within Zoning BHA 04) and subject to criteria for Titanic Quarter, planning permission will be granted for port operations and port-related land uses within the Belfast Harbour Area.

In addition, *Zoning BHA 04 Port Operations and Port-Related Land Uses Area of land known as D3, Airport Road West* zones 19.1 hectares of land for port operations and port-related uses.

In terms of transportation, the following strategic road schemes are proposed within the Belfast Harbour Area:

Proposal BHA 07 A2 Sydenham Bypass

It is proposed to widen the A2 Sydenham Bypass between Tillysburn and M3 Lagan Crossing from a 2 lane dual carriageway to a 3 lane dual carriageway. The purpose of the scheme is to increase the capacity of the road network and facilitate easier access for strategic traffic. A Road Protection Corridor has been identified on the DOE website and protection for the scheme is in accordance with policy contained in PPS 3.

Proposal BHA 08 New junction on the A2

It is proposed to provide a new junction on the A2 to replace the existing Dee Street junction and provide improved access to Belfast Harbour.

The District proposals also highlights that the Rapid Transit Scheme CITI Route is proposed to pass through part of Belfast Harbour Area thus providing a rapid transit service connecting the City Centre with Titanic Quarter.

Arterial Routes

The following 18 Arterial Routes have been designated in the City:

- York Street/York Road/Shore Road (AR 01/01);
- Antrim Road (AR 01/02);
- Oldpark Road (AR 01/03);
- Crumlin Road (AR 01/04);
- Shankill Road/Woodvale Road/Ballygomartin Road (AR 01/05);
- Divis Street/Falls Road/Glen Road (AR 01/06);
- Grosvenor Road/Springfield Road (AR 01/07);
- Andersonstown Road/Stewartstown Road (AR 01/08);
- Donegall Road (AR 01/09);
- Lisburn Road (AR 01/10);
- University Road/Malone Road (AR 01/11);
- Ormeau Road (AR 01/12);
- Ravenhill Road (AR 01/13);
- Woodstock Link/Woodstock Road/Cregagh Road (AR 01/14);
- Castlereagh Street/Castlereagh Road (AR 01/15);
- Albertbridge Road (AR 01/16);
- Newtownards Road/Upper Newtownards Road (AR 01/17); and
- Holywood Road (AR 01/18).

The Arterial Routes which connect the City Centre to the surrounding suburban residential areas are recognised not only for their transportation function but also as retail and service centres providing social, commercial, shopping and leisure functions for the communities along these routes. Arterial Routes are also considered to make a significant contribution to the overall physical appearance and regeneration of the city.

BMAP highlights that the routes are well served by public transport but recognises that some routes experience issues of pedestrian/vehicular conflict and high levels of car parking in adjacent residential areas.

Within BMAP, the Arterial Routes Strategy is intended to reflect the RDS drive to enhance Belfast City and reduce the need to travel by car.

The Plan designates 14 Commercial Nodes and 17 Shopping/Commercial Areas on most of the Arterial Routes. Within these areas specific retail and office development policies will apply with the intention of promoting appropriate scale local facilities to serve the adjacent communities. The Plan also stipulates building height requirements (Policy AR 02) in order to encourage higher density land use in close proximity to public transport routes.

In addition, the Commercial Nodes are designated as Areas of Parking Restraint to restrain long-stay commuter parking (Designation AR 02).

Outer Belfast City

BMAP acknowledges the need for an efficient, safe, and sustainable transport system in order to reinforce the role of Belfast as the regional capital and focus of administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities and a stronger role as an international city.

BMAP states that Belfast City Centre represents the hub of the transportation network within the Plan area. It is noted that within the City a set of radial road and public transport links connect the City Centre with suburban areas, other settlements within the Plan Area and beyond.

BMAP states that the existing transport system has suffered from underinvestment and requires substantial new investment to transform it into a modern integrated transport system, which is required to support the wider Plan Strategy. It is noted that the environment and the quality of life of citizens within the City are adversely affected by transport problems.

Furthermore it is stated that increasing congestion is impacting on the economic competitiveness of both the City and the wider region. Concerns are also being raised regarding road safety issues on the City's road network.

It is noted that the development of the transportation strategy for the City and the Plan Area has required a co-ordinated approach to preparation of BMAP and BMTP which have been prepared in parallel in order to ensure successful integration of land use and transportation proposals. In this regard it is noted that BMTP provides for and encourages greater use of public transport and greater levels of walking and cycling, whilst also supporting an appropriate level of movement by cars and goods vehicles. BMAP incorporates the integration between transportation and land use and identifies those elements of BMTP which require protection through the planning process.

The following strategic road schemes have been proposed in the Outer Belfast City Area:

- Proposal BT 006 - Widening of the A55 Outer Ring Road (Knock Road) from one lane in each direction to two lanes in each direction with right hand turning provision.
- Proposal BT 007 - Widening of the M1 between Blacks Road and Sprucefield (Lisburn) to dual 3 lane motorway.
- Proposal BT 008 – Construction of Blacks Road Link between Upper Malone Road and the M1 at Blacks Road, Dunmurry, with slip roads onto the motorway.

An Area of Parking Restraint has been designated within the Belfast City Fringe Area (Designation BT 009).

BMAP also notes the following proposals within the BMTP:

- Orbital Bus Services
- Upgrading the commuter rail network by increasing service frequencies on all routes and extending the railway station at Great Victoria Street
- Establishing quality walking and cycling networks focused on Belfast City
- Improving access to and from public transport facilities
- Enhancing the cycle network.

Appendix C: The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (RSTN TP)

The purpose of the RSTN TP is to plan the maintenance, management and development of the NI Strategic Transport Network up to the end of 2015. It comprises the complete rail network, 5 Key Transport Corridors (KTC's), 3 of which encroach on Belfast; 4 Link Corridors, Metropolitan Transport Corridor's and the remainder of trunk road networks. The measures in the plan fall into the following categories: walk/cycle; bus; rail; and highways.

The Draft SPPS was launched for consultation in February 2014 and is intended to supersede 20 individual planning policies into 1 strategic policy. The aims of the Draft SPPS with regard to transportation are to secure improved integration with land-use planning, consistent with the RDS; and to facilitate safe and efficient access, movement and parking. There are seven policy objectives identified for transportation and land-use planning within the Draft SPPS which are:

- Promote sustainable transport choices including walking, cycling and public transport, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas;
- Ensure accessibility for all, particularly the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired;
- Promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development;
- Promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion;
- Protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse;
- Restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes;
- Promote road safety, in particular for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.