



Subject:	Night Mover Service
Date:	19 September 2025
Reporting Officer:	Damien Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy
Contact Officer:	Jamie Uprichard, Business Research and Development Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	The report sets out proposals from the Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for the Economy for collaborative funding of the Nightmover Service.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are asked to agree to provide funding of up to £92.3k, subject to confirmation of funding support from the Executive and further engagement with BIDS in relation to how they can support the proposal
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>In 2022 Council passed a motion relating to Nighttime transport calling on Translink to expand the provision of night-time services. This was subsequently integrated into the Belfast Agenda Action Plans.</p> <p>As Members will be aware a Christmas Pilot Nighttime Service was operated in 2024, but in addition to support from Council there has been widespread support for business organisations, including in particular from the BIDS and Belfast’s Night Czar, for the extension of this service across the year.</p> <p>Translink have provided the following information in relation to the 2024 nighttime pilot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI Railways: Over the December 2024 weekends the later last departures on Friday and Saturday nights carried over 12,000 passengers. • Metro: In December Translink piloted 11 key routes as part of Late Night services on Friday and Saturday nights. Whilst providing good geographic penetration of the city some services were significantly more popular than others. Over the 8 nights of operation Metro carried around 1700 passengers on the special services and saw a swell in numbers using the last standard timetabled departures around 11.00pm. • Ulsterbus : Translink operated a number of late-night services as part of the existing timetable. The services proved very popular averaging 30 passengers per departure. These additional services mirrored the popularity of existing late timetabled services to Derry-Londonderry and Newry with total Ulsterbus late services serving over 3300 passengers over the 4 weekends. <p>Research from Consumer Council for Northern Ireland found</p> <p><i>“Travelling at night is important to people, and the top three reasons for doing so are socialising, shopping and work. Travel at night therefore promotes social inclusion, particularly for vulnerable persons, and is vital to driving the night time economy.</i></p> <p><i>However, the number of licensed taxi drivers has fallen by a quarter since 2013 and only a small number of Translink services run late at night. Regional media has reported on consumers fearing for their personal safety due to the lack of transport options¹ and businesses saying they are losing trade because people are leaving early due to worries about getting home.²</i></p> <p><i>A strong theme that emerged from both consumers and stakeholders is that limited late night public transport services and the current shortage of taxi drivers is reducing people’s night time travel options. This is in turn causing people to choose to travel less at night.</i></p>

3.2	<p>In their letter to Ministerial Colleagues and the Council, Ministers identified that providing <i>“this extended late-night weekend public transport service will provide a range of both economic and societal benefits, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Improved connectivity to communities outside of the City Centre, facilitating people to get home safely.</i> <i>• Improved access to cultural activities in the City Centre.</i> <i>• Reduced potential for public order issues in the City Centre on Friday and Saturday evenings, leading to reduced policing costs and reduced pressure on health services.</i> <i>• Reduced potential for violence against women and girls.”</i> <p>Proposal from the Ministers for Infrastructure and the Economy</p> <p>Before the summer Council officials had positive discussions with relevant Ministers in relation to the increased calls for the extension of night-time public transport services. On 8 August the above Minister wrote to Council and Ministerial colleagues advising that <i>“the extension of late night public transport services has the potential to deliver benefits for a number of Executive Departments, we are seeking your support for a joint cross-departmental/Council funding approach on the basis set out below”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• DfI 14.6% (c.£94.9k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for public transport.</i> <i>• DfE 14.6% (c.£94.9k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for developing the night-time economy.</i> <i>• DfC 14.2% (c.£92.3k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for developing local communities and our culture & arts sector.</i> <i>• DoJ 14.2% (c.£92.3k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for public order and policing.</i> <i>• DoH 14.2% (c.£92.3k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for health services.</i> <i>• TEO 14.2% (c.£92.3k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for our Strategy on preventing violence against women and girls.</i> <i>• Belfast City Council 14.2% (c.£92.3k).</i> <p><i>The resource funding would be required on a pro rata basis as the pilot scheme would span both the 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years, with an anticipated start date of November 2025.</i></p> <p>It is understood from Translink that the proposed nighttime service would operate on select Metro key routes, as well as 4 key Ulsterbus corridors that have no rail alternative on the basis of operating standard fares with the aim of <i>“leading to greater market stimulation and repeat business from customers”</i>.</p> <p>Any decision of the Council at this stage would of course be subject to confirmation of funding from the Executive and consideration of the final details of the scheme.</p>
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4.0	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> The costs of the proposal, which would be spread across 2 financial years, would be met from future underspends and existing reserves.
5.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None associated with this report.
6.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Letter from Ministers for Infrastructure and the Economy