



<b>Subject:</b>	Request to Present: Dfl Castle St Plans
<b>Date:</b>	10 June 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director City Regeneration & Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development Callie Persic, Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**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	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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<b>Call-in</b>
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<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise Members that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) have submitted a request to present to the August 2026 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. The purpose is to provide Members with an update on their potential plan to reopen lower Castle Street to public transport.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. Agree to receive a presentation from officials from the Department for Infrastructure at the August meeting of the CG&amp;R Committee in relation to the potential reopening of lower Castle Street to public transport.</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<u>Background</u> In the aftermath of the Bank Buildings fire in 2018, Castle Street was closed between Fountain Street and Castle Place through a Road Closure Order to facilitate the establishment of a large cordon surrounding the building and enable stabilisation and reconstruction works. Following the construction works the section of Castle St remained closed, effectively pedestrianising the lower part of Castle Street with the potential to create a people-focused space, safe pedestrian movement and wider placemaking. However, pending the development and recommendations of the Eastern Transport Plan it has not been feasible to develop a proposition for the area, and in the interim scenario there have been occasions of ASB issues, for example, lack of definition and use of the space and access/escape of e-motorbikes. Road Closure Notices on Union Street and Brunswick Street were also brought forward at that time that enabled the delivery of additional public realm and spill out space for hospitality that were successfully delivered through the Primark Revitalisation Fund, reanimating and activating these streets into popular destinations in their own right.
3.2	As reported to the CG&R Committee in April 2026, DfI is planning to bring forward the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) consultation in the near future. The ETP will set the framework for

	<p>making transport policy and investment decisions up until 2035. Throughout the preparation of the ETP Council Officers have worked closely with Dfl to ensure alignment in terms of policy development and agreed Council priorities as set out in the Belfast Agenda and A Bolder Vision. In the current draft of the ETP lower Castle St remains closed to all traffic and Royal Avenue is designated as a 2-way Glider only route, although this is subject to consultation and finalisation.</p> <p>3.3 At the CG&amp;R meeting in February 2026 Members approved the final A Bolder Vision Strategy, which supported a 2-way glider only movement on Royal Avenue, with members previously not been supportive of Royal Avenue reopening to 2-way full public transport penetration. Reopening lower Castle St to public transport will reintroduce 2-way glider movement on Royal Avenue.</p> <p>3.4 In advance of the finalisation of the ETP, the Department has been considering re-opening Castle Street to address issues highlighted by Translink. Specifically, these include congestion at bus stops on Chichester St, additional journey time and poor bus stop provision on North St that they advise have affected the North Belfast Services in the period from 2018 to present.</p> <p>3.5 Dfl held a meeting with traders and elected representatives in September 2025 to gauge support for reopening lower Castle St to public transport. At this meeting some traders were in favour of the proposal to reopen Castle Street supporting the additional benefits of having additional halts in the area, while some were against the proposal citing additional traffic, a negligible impact on trade and loss of a potential better use of the space.</p> <p>3.6 Dfl is now in the position to present proposals for Castle Street and have requested to present the options to Members of the CG&amp;R Committee in August 2026. Dfl are also planning to re-engage with traders in the area on their proposals in September 2026. Council officers will be in attendance and continue to liaise with Dfl following feedback from the meeting.</p>
4.0	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>No additional financial or resource requirements are associated with this paper.</p>
5.0	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
6.0	<p><b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b></p> <p>None</p>

