



Subject:	DfI Request to Present on the York Street Interchange
Date:	5 th February 2025
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration & Development

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. 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 matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to request that the Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee agree to receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure in relation to the York Street Interchange at a future meeting of the CG&R Committee.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Agree to receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure in relation to the York Street Interchange at a future meeting of the CG&R Committee.
3.0	<p>Background</p> <p>At the February meeting of the CG&R Committee Members agreed to receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure on the findings of the York Street Interchange Active Travel and Place Making Review. At Special Meeting of the CG&R Committee in February 2023 Members received the presentation from DfI and their consultant team. The minutes of that meeting, and the associated present are available via this link.</p> <p>The York Street Interchange (YSI) represents the last remaining at-grade junction on the Belfast Motorway Network and forms the junction of the M2, M3 and A12 Westlink strategic corridors. This signalised junction forms the busiest junction in Northern Ireland and caters for approx. 100,000 vehicles per day. The YSI project proposes to create a grade separated (free-flowing without signals) junction to free up the congestion experienced within the existing scenario and to improve air quality in the area.</p> <p>Following a legal challenge in 2018 the procurement competition to appoint a preferred Design and Build Contractor to develop the scheme designs and costs was set aside bringing uncertainty to the delivery timeframes for the project. The Minister for Infrastructure ordered a short-sharp external review of the YSI project in July 2020 focusing on the schemes ability to deliver on sustainable and active travel, creating thriving places for communities and creating liveable places and responding to the Climate Emergency. In March 2021 the Minister announced the outcomes of the review, accepting in full the six recommendations as outlined below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The YSI project brief should be reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with the concept of “place making” and new best practice in terms of urban transport design, and with the Minister’s agenda. 2. The wider area impact and benefits of the Project should be evaluated using appropriate quantitative and qualitative assessment mechanisms. 3. The current Project costs should be updated to act as a benchmark to inform any decision on future alternative development.

4. There needs to be a system of ongoing communications with all interested parties. This should include updating the 2017 Communications Strategy and employing a robust Communications Structure now as well as during any construction phase. Communications should be ongoing and not just point in time.
5. There needs be much closer co-ordination both within the Dfl and between Dfl and other relevant departments and interested parties at both policy and delivery levels with regard to YSI development and delivery.
6. There needs to be a co-ordinated decision made in the context of emerging policies, which then needs to be applied to ensure that the YSI project aligns to this context.

In November 2021 the CG&R Committee agreed that the Members of the Committee withdraw Belfast City Council’s corporate support for the York Street Interchange scheme and will only reinstate corporate support for the scheme, if the review, and any new scheme arising from it, meets the Council’s climate, air quality, place making and housing ambitions as a city and complements the aims of “A Bolder Vision”. This decision was ratified at the December 2021 meeting of the Full Council.

Following discussion at the Special Meeting of the CG&R Committee in February 2023 the Committee;

- Noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, Dfl would provide further information on the issues raised;
- Agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to request that it reviewed the Strategic Transport Objectives of the York Street Interchange. in light of the objectives being set in 2008 and prior to the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council and the NI Assembly, and the passage of the Climate Act; and
- Requested that Dfl share the Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange which was provided to the Minister in March 2021.

The Dfl response to the requests from the Committee was presented to the August 2023 meeting of the CG&R Committee, with the associated letters attached as Appendix A of this report.

4.0	Main Report
4.1	Following direction from the Dfl Minister the Department has been considering options for improving placemaking and active travel as part of the development of the York Street Interchange project. Following the recommendations from the Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR) report, published by Minister O’Dowd in October 2022, the Minister asked officials to carry out further work on three scenarios recommended within it, to further refine them to maximise ambition

<p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>in terms of delivery for communities, connectivity, and the wider living places agenda, and to explore any implementation issues. This work, entitled Placemaking and Active Travel Development (PATD), was to consider how the scheme could deliver positive improvements for the local community. As part of this, along with our consultants AECOM, we met with stakeholders including Council, to discuss the work being carried out and seek any feedback on it.</p> <p>Dfl have confirmed that the PATD work is now complete, and a report and presentation have been given to the Minister.</p> <p>The Minister has asked officials to meet again with elected representatives to share the presentation, including the preferred option, and seek feedback prior to his final consideration and publication of the report.</p> <p>To that end Members are asked to agree to receive a presentation from Dfl on the York Street Interchange Place Making & Active Travel Review at a future meeting of the CG&R Committee.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no finance or resource implications associated with this report.</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no Equality or Good Relation Implications/Rural Needs Assessment requirements associated with this report.</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>Appendix A: Correspondence YSI Place Making & Active Travel Review</p>