

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

9th November, 2021

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will be a hybrid meeting, both in the Council Chamber and via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 10th November, 2021 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

- (e) Correspondence received from Minister Mallon (Pages 1 - 6)

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Subject:	Motion: York Street Interchange – Response from Minister for Infrastructure
Date:	10th November, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Carolyn Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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"/>

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	To consider a response to a motion re York Street Interchange – Request to Share Independent Assurance Report which was passed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the response and take such action thereon as may be determined.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Council, at its meeting on 4th October, passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor O’Hara and seconded by Councillor McAllister:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“This Council notes that it is currently corporately committed to supporting the York Street Interchange project. This decision was made before this Council declared a climate emergency; before the NI Assembly declared a climate emergency and before the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Report published in August 2021, which was a ‘Code Red’ warning for humanity.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Belfast City Council is a key stakeholder in the York Street Interchange Project and sits on the Strategic Advisory Group for the York Street Interchange. We call on the Minister for Infrastructure to immediately share the Independent Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange with Belfast City Council. This will allow us to make an informed decision on whether we as a Council continue with our corporate support for this project.”</p> <p>3.2 A response has been received from the Minister for Infrastructure, a copy of which is attached (Appendix 1).</p> <p>3.3 The Minister states the Independent Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange Scheme was carried out to provide the Minister with assurance on how the proposed scheme reflects her key Ministerial priorities and both Executive and Belfast City Council objectives, in particular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minister’s priorities around focus on wellbeing, sustainable travel, creating thriving liveable places and communities, responding to the climate emergency and connecting people and opportunities; • The Executive’s priorities set out in New Decade: New Approach and the Outcomes Delivery Plan; and • The scheme’s strategic fit alongside the emerging policy context, for example, the Belfast Agenda, the Belfast City Council Development Plan Strategy and the emerging Transport Plans <p>3.4 The Minister also made clear the need to engage with local key stakeholders as part of this review.</p>

3.5	The Minister explained that she is not able to publish the report in accordance with Department of Finance guidance contained within DAO 02/20 (Section 8).
3.6	She stated that reviews must include frank and open exchanges with all of the interviewees and it is likely that interviewees would be much more guarded with their comment and less willing to share and express their views and information with the review team, if there was the expectation that future reports were to be published. Consequently this might potentially undermine the value of such reviews.
3.7	The further work which is being carried out to address the recommendations from the Independent Assurance Review which includes a placemaking and active travel review, is now well advanced and due to be completed in the coming weeks. The Minister will consider the report before deciding on the next steps for the scheme.
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Document Attached
	Appendix 1: Response from Minister for Infrastructure

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Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
Nichola Mallon MLA

Ms Louise McLornan
Democratic Services Officer
Belfast City Council
Legal and Civic Services Department
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Room 708
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: LM 04.10.2021
Our reference: CORR-1739-2021
29th October 2021

Dear Ms McLornan

YORK STREET INTERCHANGE – REQUEST TO SHARE INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE REVIEW REPORT

Thank you for your letter of 14 October 2021 to Minister Mallon on behalf of Belfast City Council, regarding the report generated from the recent York Street Interchange Independent Assurance Review. The Minister has read and considered the motion passed at the Belfast City Council meeting on 4 October 2021.

The Independent Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange scheme was carried out to provide the Minister with assurance on how the proposed scheme reflects her key Ministerial priorities and both Executive and Belfast City Council objectives, in particular:

- The Minister's priorities around focus on wellbeing, sustainable travel, creating thriving liveable places and communities, responding to the climate emergency and connecting people and opportunities;
- The Executive's priorities set out in New Decade: New Approach and the Outcomes Delivery Plan; and
- The scheme's strategic fit alongside the emerging policy context, for example, the Belfast Agenda, the Belfast City Council Development Plan Strategy and the emerging Transport Plans.

She also made clear the need to engage with local key stakeholders as part of this review.

You will be aware of my reply to your colleague Ms McGoldrick on 17 June 2021, on behalf of the Minister, when I explained that the Minister is not able to publish the report in accordance with Department of Finance guidance contained within DAO 02/20 (Section 8)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/DAOf0220att.pdf>.

Reviews must include frank and open exchanges with all of the interviewees and it is likely that interviewees would be much more guarded with their comments and less

willing to share express their views and information with the review team, if there was the expectation that future reports were to be published. Consequently this might potentially undermine the value of such reviews.

The further work which is being carried out to address the recommendations from the Independent Assurance Review which includes a placemaking and active travel review, is now well advanced and due to be completed in the coming weeks. The Minister will consider the report before deciding on the next steps for the scheme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K MCFERRAN', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

KATHRYN MCFERRAN
Private Secretary to the Minister