

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 23rd October, 2024

SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nelson (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCormick;
Alderman Lawlor;
Councillors Black, De Faoite, D. Douglas, Duffy,
Kelly, Lyons, Maskey, F. McAteer, McCabe
McDonough-Brown, McDowell, I. McLaughlin,
McKay, R. McLaughlin, O'Neill and Smyth.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager
Ms. L. Toland, Senior Manager, Economy;
Ms. C. Persic, Development Manager;
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following item is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

Translink - Belfast Grand Central Update

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. McAllister, Head of Belfast Grand Central Station Programme, Mr. D. Curry, General Manager Bus Services, and Ms. L. Shannon, Corporate Communications Manager, representing Translink, to the meeting.

Mr. McAllister provided a progress update of the Belfast Grand Central Station/Weavers Cross Transport Led Regeneration Project which included details of main works, access trail and wayfinding, rail systems, interventions, and social value on the live construction.

Mr. Curry provided a progress update of the bus and rail operations, including timetables, traffic congestion, impact of roadworks, and mitigation plans.

During discussion, the representatives answered a wide range of questions regarding noise levels associated with night-time construction works, Translink's communication with the public in relation to timetable and bus location changes, community engagement, incentives to increase use of public transport, language signage in Belfast Grand Central Station, wayfinding, street works and interventions, bus prioritisation progress of the Eastern Transport Plan, social value of the project for local communities, and air quality. Mr. McAllister provided detail on the continuation of public realm works and future reinstatements, together with pedestrian crossing monitoring.

In response to a Member's question in relation to local residents concerns regarding noise levels associated with night-time construction works, Mr. McAllister advised that, while construction noise levels were monitored to ensure they were within the permitted levels, he assured the Member that the local residents concerns would be raised and addressed with the construction team.

Members highlighted to the representatives the impact to the public in respect of the disruption and changes to bus timetables, routes, and bus stop locations and the need for better communication from Translink in relation to providing regular updates. Ms. Shannon explained further the end terminal design of the Grand Central Station and highlighted that it had impacted some of the train connections for users.

In response to a Member's question in relation to the wider impact that the new schedules had made to the transport connections outside of Belfast, Mr. Curry advised that Belfast had always been seen as the regional hub and he would engage with the Member in relation to specific route issues.

During further discussion, in response to a Member's proposal to write to the Minister for Infrastructure and Translink requesting details of when Translink's late-night services would come into operation over the Christmas period, Ms. Shannon advised the Committee that communication on the routes and schedules would be announced in the week commencing 28th October.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor De Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to write to the Minister for Infrastructure requesting that consideration be given to the reduction of public transport fares over the Christmas period, as an incentive to increase the use of public transport.

Mr. Curry highlighted that any changes to the cost of public transport fares would be a decision for the Minister for Infrastructure.

In response to Members questions in relation to language signage in Belfast Grand Central Station, Ms. Shannon advised that Translink had taken steps to include language signage. Furthermore, she highlighted that there had been lengthy engagement with a wide range of stakeholders on this matter. She advised that engagement would continue with key stakeholders, including with the Irish Language Commissioner and the Commissioner for the Ulster Scots and Ulster British Tradition once they were appointed.

The Members drew the attention of the representatives from Translink to a number of additional matters, which the representatives advised would be investigated and a further update submitted to the Committee in due course:

- detailed figures on the Social Value Outcomes delivered directly within the two adjoining neighbourhoods of Sandy Row and Grosvenor Road;
- data in relation to the impact of the proposed pilot scheme, announced by the Minister for Infrastructure, permitting Class A and Class C taxis to use certain bus lanes in the vicinity of the road works associated with Belfast Grand Central Station; and
- information on Air quality modelling and monitoring.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee:

- I. noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, Translink would provide further information on the issues raised;
- II. noted that, in response to the Committees request to write to the Minister for Infrastructure and Translink requesting details of when Translink's late night services would come into operation over the Christmas period, Translink would provide details of its

- Christmas late night services in an announcement on 28th October; and
- III. agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request that consideration be given to the reduction of public transport fares over the Christmas period, as an incentive to increase the use of public transport.

Chairperson