

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 28th May, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

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

Also attended: Councillor Magee.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of the Chairperson, Councillor Nelson.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Presentations (Restricted)

The information contained in the reports associated with the following two items were 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 two items as, due to the nature of the items, 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.

Department for Infrastructure - Eastern Transport Plan/Belfast Cycle Network

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Mr. A. Rafferty, Department for Infrastructure, and Mr. D. Murray, AtkinsRéalis, to the meeting.

Mr. Rafferty presented to the Committee an update on the development of the Department for Infrastructure's Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035, which included:

- **ETP overview** - transport context, Belfast city centre transport challenges, vision and objectives, and public and stakeholder engagement;
- **Belfast City Centre Transport Plan** - proposals in relation to walking and wheeling, cycling, buses, rapid transit and traffic management;
- **Metropolitan Area Transport Plan** – vision and option development;
- **Belfast Cycling Network** – delivery and short-term schemes under development; and
- **Next steps.**

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to the Belfast Cycling Network, Phase 2 of the Belfast Rapid Transit project, city centre pedestrianisation, commuter parking, sustainable urban drainage, the Climate Change Act, collaboration between Executive departments and the Council, and the ETP's alignment with the Council's 'A Bolder Vision for Belfast'.

In response to Members' questions in respect of the Annadale Embankment, improvements to existing facilities on the Stranmillis Embankment, Sydenham Greenway and Residents' Parking Zones, Mr. Rafferty advised that the Department for Infrastructure would provide the Committee with further information on the issues raised.

In response to a Member's suggestion, Mr. Rafferty welcomed the opportunity to facilitate potential site visits with Members in relation to the city centre plans.

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

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the presentation and that, where relevant, the Department for Infrastructure would provide further information on the issues raised.

Department for Infrastructure – York Street Interchange

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Mr. B. Hassard, Department for Infrastructure, Mr. J. McBride, AECOM, and Mr. P. Clarke, AECOM, to the meeting.

The representatives presented to the Committee an update on the York Street Interchange Placemaking and Active Travel Development (PATD).

Mr. McBride highlighted the purpose of the proposed York Street Interchange to alleviate existing traffic bottlenecks and deliver journey time savings to road users.

He emphasised that the Department for Infrastructure's priority remained to ensure the safety of road users and deliver improvements for the busiest junction on the Strategic Road Network.

The Committee was reminded that, in 2021, the Minister for Infrastructure commissioned AECOM to conduct a Placemaking and Active Travel Review of the scheme which was completed and published in October, 2022. It was reported that three of the six scenarios considered in the review were shortlisted for further development.

The representatives outlined:

- the placemaking themes, principles and desired outcomes;
- the development of the three scenarios shortlisted, including stakeholder and public engagement; and
- the development of an Active Travel Network.

The representatives then presented to the Committee a detailed overview of the three developed scenarios which included illustrations of indicative views.

Following the presentation, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to placemaking, public realm schemes, cost estimate for the scheme, community severance, greenspaces and the environmental impact.

In response to Members' questions in respect of the M2 to Westlink interchange link, Road Safety Audit and the potential availability of land parcels following completion of the scheme, Mr. Hassard advised that the Department for Infrastructure would provide the Committee with further information on the issues raised.

The Deputy Chairperson advised the Committee that a report, which would include the feedback provided by Members on the presentation, would be submitted to a future meeting for its consideration, prior to a formal response from the Council to the Department for Infrastructure.

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

The Committee noted:

- i. the contents of the presentation and that, where relevant, the Department for Infrastructure would provide further information on the issues raised; and
- ii. that a report on the Council's response to the Department for Infrastructure's York Street Interchange Placemaking and Active Travel Development (PATD) presentation, would be submitted to a future

meeting for its consideration, prior to a formal response to the Department for Infrastructure.

Belfast Culture Forum Event

The Committee considered a report in relation to a proposed Belfast Culture Forum event to provide a platform for engagement with stakeholders from the cultural sector at the mid-way point of the Council's ten-year cultural strategy "A City Imagining 2020-2030".

In response to Member's query on stakeholder engagement in relation to the notice of motion 'Belfast City Nightlife and Night-time Economy', the Strategic Director of Place and Economy advised that further information could be brought back to the Committee in due course.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted the proposed Belfast Culture Forum event, scheduled for 13th June, 2025 in the Great Hall, City Hall;
- ii. approved hospitality of up to £1700 for the event; and
- iii. agreed that an update report be submitted to a future meeting on the notice of motion 'Belfast City Nightlife and Night-time Economy'.

Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 2nd June, 2025, for ratification.

Chairperson