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Being Dealt With By: Simon Wells

Date: 9 March 2026

Dear Craig,

QUESTIONS ASKED BY BELFAST CITY COUNCIL'S CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Please find below responses to the issues raised by Committee Members:

- 1. An update on whether a road survey had been carried out by DfI on the A55, Milltown Hill junction, in respect of potential options, including the installation of traffic lights or other appropriate measures, given the road safety issues and traffic congestion;**

In general, priority junctions form the vast majority of all road junctions and operate satisfactorily where traffic volumes on the minor roads are low in comparison with those of the major roads.

When considering the most appropriate layout and form of control for a junction, the Department takes into account such things as traffic volumes, the collision history, the amount of land available, the associated cost to implement a scheme, and its relative priority against other schemes competing for available finance.

The junctions of the Milltown Hill / Milltown Road and Gray's Park / Milltown Road are typical of many locations in that they form priority junctions, where the side road traffic gives way to traffic on the main road.

Officials appreciate the Milltown Road is busy especially during the peak traffic periods and drivers from side roads must wait for a suitable gap to progress.

A change to the current junction arrangements, for example, signalisation would normally only be considered where there are large traffic volumes from the side roads and there are consistent delays throughout the day. This would not be the case for the junctions of Milltown Hill / Milltown Road and Gray's Park / Milltown Road.

In response to local concerns, officials undertook a survey at the Gray's Park/Milltown Road Junction on Wednesday 5 March 2025 during the morning peak period between 8am and 9am. This did not indicate any significant delays or issues for vehicles exiting and entering this Junction. During this period 3 vehicles exited Gray's Park via a right turn while 52 vehicles exited via a left turn and 37 vehicles entered Gray's Park.

Similarly, Milltown Hill/ Milltown Road junction was assessed on Thursday 6 March 2025 during the morning peak period between 8am and 9am which again did not indicate any significant delays or issues for vehicles exiting and entering this junction. During this period 69 vehicles exited Milltown Hill via a right turn while 101 vehicles exited via a left turn and 36 vehicles entered Milltown Hill.

As such, while officials completely understand the concerns raised and request from residents, it is considered that the current layout at both these junctions is appropriate for the locations and there are no plans to change these at this time.

A yellow box road marking is normally provided to improve traffic management at the intersection of busy public roads where queuing traffic regularly prevents movements within the junction or, where creating a gap in queuing traffic would allow vehicles from another direction to gain access to a carriageway which is free from obstruction.

It was noted during the assessment on Thursday 6 March 2025 vehicles were able to enter and exit Milltown Hill during breaks in the traffic without any difficulties and within a reasonable length of time. There was no evidence of any queuing traffic backing across this junction preventing traffic movements.

It is however accepted that some difficulties may be experienced during the daily peak times for traffic entering and exiting Milltown Hill. However, outside peak times vehicles enter and exit Milltown Hill without any issues or delays.

Given the above information, officials do not consider a yellow box marking is appropriate at this location.

Officials have also considered the residents request that traffic exiting Milltown Hill onto Ballylesson Road should have priority over traffic flows on Ballylesson Road. It is however considered that the current arrangement is the most appropriate and as such there are no plans to change the current layout.

Notwithstanding the above assessments, officials are planning a series of measures to highlight this section of road aimed at increasing driver awareness and safety. This will include enhanced signing on the approach to the puffin crossing, new road markings and improved signing to remind drivers of the 40mph speed limit, additional high friction surfacing and bollard replacement.

2. An update on the resurfacing of roads on Sicily Park and Locksley Park, given the poor road conditions;

Both Sicily Park and Locksley Park are placed within the upper tier of the Department's three-year priority resurfacing programme. Recent inspections have confirmed that the condition of both streets meets the criteria for intervention, reflecting a combination of deterioration and recorded surface defects. Their position on the programme means they will be taken forward for delivery at the earliest opportunity, subject to the availability of funding and the scheduling of works within the wider maintenance programme.

The Department will continue to monitor both locations through routine inspections and will manage any safety related defects in line with established maintenance standards until full resurfacing can be completed.

3. An update on the installation of traffic calming measures on Carnanmore Park and Tildarg Avenue, which had been previously surveyed a number of years ago, given the increased traffic on those streets;

Carnanmore Park and Tildarg Avenue – As the last traffic calming assessment has been over three years ago new traffic calming assessments will be carried out in line with current policy.

4. An update on the implementation and delivery of the Residents' Parking Schemes and the potential to explore a citywide approach;

Following the introduction of the first residents' parking scheme, on Rugby Road and College Park Avenue in Belfast, the Department completed a review of residents' parking schemes and the Residents Parking Review Report is available to view on the Department's [website](#).

During the development of this report and since its publication there has been a significant level of interest in the establishment of residents' parking zones across Northern Ireland.

Given this level of demand, and ongoing budgetary and resource constraints, the Department has developed an application and assessment process for residents' parking schemes that will ensure a streamlined approach for considering, assessing, and prioritising requests for schemes going forward.

An announcement will be made as to how future residents' parking schemes will be assessed by the Department in due course.

With regards to a citywide approach to Residential Parking Zones, the Department are working in partnership with the local councils to produce tailored, evidence-based Parking Strategies as part of the suite of Transport Plans under development. Specifically in Belfast, a dedicated Parking Strategy for Belfast City Council is currently being developed in collaboration with council officers as part of the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP). This strategy will be included within the Belfast City Centre and Metropolitan Area sections of the ETP and will guide any future changes to the transport network. The strategy will seek to identify areas where it would be appropriate to introduce Residential Parking Zones to prioritise local access and reduce commuter parking in neighbourhoods.

5. An update on the potential to reimagine the Westlink Footbridge;

Divis Footbridge re-imagining proposals are currently a low priority within our structures programme. We have a Bridge Strengthening programme in which works are prioritised on those structures in the worst condition (safety critical). DfI has approx. 6,000 bridges and unfortunately currently do not have the resource to be able divert to improving the aesthetics of Divis footbridge.

6. An update on the installation of traffic calming measures on Distillery Street;

This location is current ranked 34th on the DfI Eastern Division traffic calming programme. This is a live document, and rankings are subject to change on receipt of new data. As the survey data is over 3 years old a new assessment will be carried out.

7. An update on the potential to extend the double yellow lines on Orby Street;

I can advise that it is considered that the extent of the current waiting restrictions on Orby Street is adequate and assists with the traffic management and progression in the area.

An examination of the history of personal injury road traffic collisions at this location, provided by the PSNI, has also not indicated a particular safety concern. As such there are no plans to change the current road layout.

8. An update on the timeline for the Sailortown and Ulster University pedestrian and cycling improvements and whether there were plans to consult in respect of the Limestone Road;

The Sailortown and Ulster University pedestrian and cycling improvement schemes are currently in detailed design, following initial public engagement in November 2025. DfI officials expect to begin the Traffic Regulation Order process and formal public consultation in 2026. Initial public engagement for the Limestone Road scheme is planned for April 2026.

9. An update on the timeline to complete the works to the Victoria Park underpass;

Works at the Victoria Park underpass are now complete. As part of this programme, the old foundry gully pots were replaced with new storm pots. These modern units allow for more efficient cleaning of the gullies and make jetting of the drainage lines considerably easier, which will support ongoing maintenance of the system.

The Department will continue to monitor the location to ensure the drainage network performs as intended and to minimise the risk of flooding returning.

Apologies for the delay in replying, but I trust that the responses now provided satisfactorily address the various questions raised by Members.

However, if further clarification is required on any of the issues please email Eastern Secretariat EasternSecretariat@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk and your query will be forwarded to the relevant team.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Wells
Divisional Roads Manager (Acting)