



Subject:	East Belfast Translink Depot – Outcome of Site Search Process
Date:	4th March, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Sean Dolan, Acting Director of City Regeneration and Development
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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 report the findings of a site search exercise for a potential alternative location for the East Belfast Translink Depot.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. note the findings of the site search process;2. agree that the Council writes to the Minister for Infrastructure requesting that the findings of the site search and the operational requirements of Translink are given further consideration in the context of the impact of the current depot location on neighbouring residential amenity.

3.0	Main Report
	<p data-bbox="272 208 448 241"><u>Background</u></p> <p data-bbox="165 309 1469 898">3.1 At its meeting on 10th October, 2018, the Committee granted approval for officers to meet with Translink representatives to discuss the potential relocation of the East Belfast Translink Depot. Following a series of discussions, a letter was received from Ms. S. Kerr, Director, DfI, Public Transport Division and this was reported to the Committee on 5th June 2019. The letter explained that, at present, Translink had no plans to relocate the East Belfast Translink Depot and stated that it continues to play a central role in delivering urban public transport, as it is ideally based to keep operational costs to a minimum. It went on to say that DfI would not rule out the relocation of the depot in the longer term but would need reassurance that an alternative site would offer a similar level of efficiency and cost effectiveness and could be achieved with no financial detriment to Translink. The Committee noted the response and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting, once a site search study had been completed.</p> <p data-bbox="165 965 1469 1704">3.2 In November 2019, Arup was appointed to undertake the site search (see attached - East Belfast Depot Site Search). The methodology involved a process which began with the identification of a list of potential sites which were then sifted based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="304 1167 1469 1245">i. Constraints: Areas of open space, residential areas and other land use zonings that would not be appropriate for such a facility; <li data-bbox="304 1267 1469 1346">ii. Environmental Considerations: Areas of flood risk and ecological designations, to avoid sites/areas with significant environmental constraints. <li data-bbox="304 1368 1469 1447">iii. Site Sizes: Sites that were no smaller than the area of the existing bus depot site (ca. 13,700 sq. m / 1.37 hectares). <li data-bbox="304 1469 1469 1547">iv. Ownership: identification of any suitable Council/ public sector owned land holdings which might facilitate delivery; <li data-bbox="304 1570 1469 1704">v. Ownership: identification of any sites on the market for sale (predominantly privately owned land) or known to property agent Colliers who assisted Arup with the search (respecting the confidentiality of this work no enquiries would be made). <p data-bbox="165 1771 1469 1951">3.3 This stage also drew on previous work undertaken on behalf of Council for the Urban Capacity Study which identified derelict and underused land within Belfast's urban area as part of the Local Development Plan process. Sites identified which met the high-level requirements were mapped and progressed to the next stage for further consideration.</p>

<p>3.4</p>	<p>Having compiled a short list of potential sites for the relocation of the bus depot, the consultants undertook a more detailed assessment of each site against the following operational requirements, as defined by Translink:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Location: includes consideration of minimising daily ‘dead mileage’, which is the distance travelled by a revenue-gaining vehicle without carrying or accepting passengers, such as when coming from a depot to begin its first trip of the day. To assess this, the following criteria were used in respect of each potential site; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. it should be accessible from more than one approach route; b. it should be on, or close, to an arterial route served from the existing depot; c. general traffic flows to and from the proposed site should not be subject to known regular delays or located on an existing network experiencing capacity issues; d. the topography of the site should be suitable for development as a depot, and e. it should be of sufficient size (a minimum of 1.37 ha) with adequate space to construct the required buildings or facilities, including Yard and Parking, Service Vehicle Fuelling and Washing Building, Engineering Workshop and Facilities, and Operations Offices and Facilities
<p>3.5</p>	<p>Commentary was also provided on the planning context (land use zoning, site history and compliance with policy); any other environmental constraints; existing infrastructure; and proximity to established residential neighbourhoods.</p> <p><u>Key Issues and Site Search Findings</u></p>
<p>3.6</p>	<p>Page 10 of the report identifies routes served by the existing depot and the key arterial routes in the city centre (it also illustrates a one and two mile radius from the existing depot). In addition to the lands around these routes, pages 14 -16 illustrate how other available land to the north, south, east and west of the existing depot and north of the M3 (within the Belfast Harbour Estate) was assessed. This included consideration of the “salt storage site” off Airport Road, the Eastside Park and Ride and lands within the eastern section of the Belfast Harbour Estate.</p>
<p>3.7</p>	<p>Pages 17-23 of the report demonstrate how land close to the arterial routes (Ormeau, Woodstock, Castlereagh, Newtownards and Holywood Roads) was subdivided into five search areas to provide a further breakdown and assessment of suitable sites. Areas around the Ravenhill Road were also considered as it is an arterial route within East Belfast, between two routes served by the existing depot. To complete the exercise, the site search scoped</p>

	available land at Holywood Road and Harbour Estate East (including land around Belfast City Airport and Holywood Exchange).
3.8	As a result of the assessment six potential locations were identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. East Twin Road (2.33 ha) ii. Titanic Quarter (70.3ha) iii. Heron Road A (10.77 ha) iv. Heron Road B (2:53ha) v. Heron Road C (2.20 ha) vi. Heron View (1.57 ha)
3.9	All of these sites are larger than the existing depot, suitable in terms of topography and within 3 miles of the current location and as such meet the majority of the search criteria. However, they are located further from the arterial routes the depot serves, and would therefore inevitably perform worse than the existing depot in terms of the key commercial consideration of minimising 'dead mileage'. Accordingly, all have been discounted as suitable alternative locations for a replacement depot by the Arup report, based on current Translink operational requirements.
3.10	However the City Growth and Regeneration Committee has previously raised concerns that the existing depot location, directly adjacent to an existing and emerging residential community, has a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of the local population. With this in mind it is recommended that the constraint of 'dead mileage' is reviewed and reassessed by the Department for Infrastructure and Translink when considered in the context of the health and wellbeing considerations of the local communities. The review of this constraint, along with additional infrastructure works currently planned for the Queens Island area, could effectively bring a number of the shortlisted sites back into consideration.
3.12	It is, therefore, proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Infrastructure requesting that the findings of the site search and the operational requirements of Translink are given further consideration in the context of the impact of the current depot location on neighbouring residential amenity. <u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.13	None. <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.14	None at this time.
4.0	Document Attached
	East Belfast Depot Site Search report