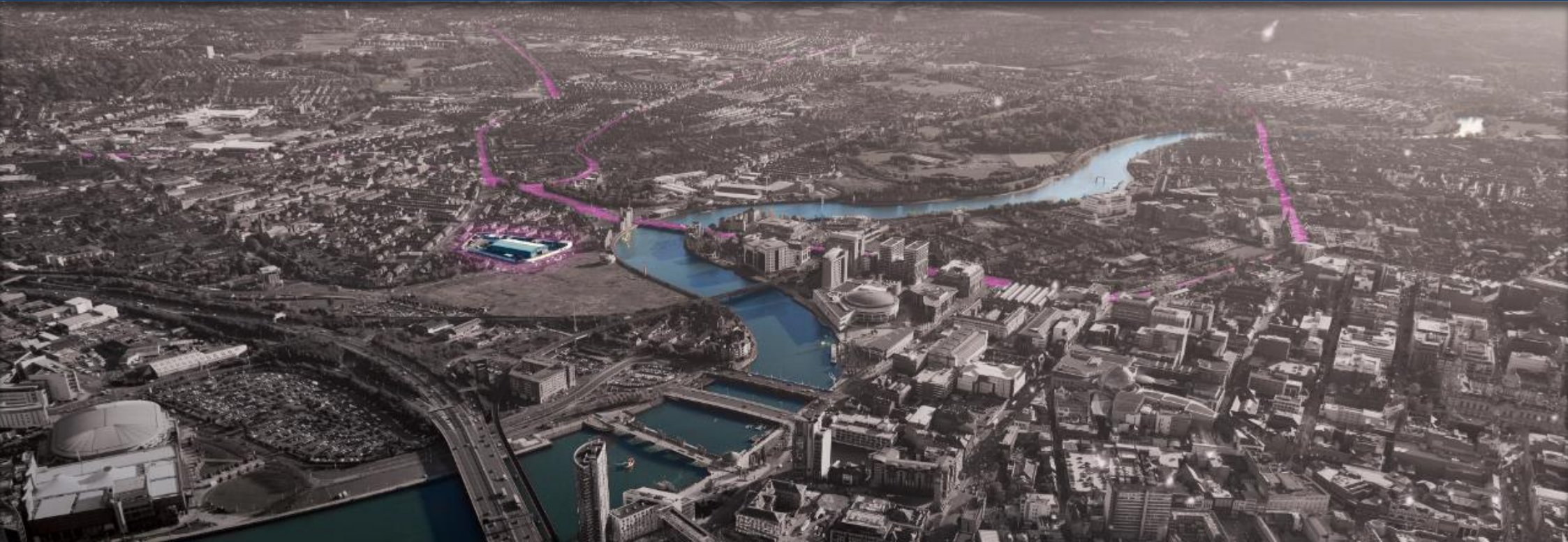


East Belfast Depot Site Search

Final Report

21 February 2020



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1. Introduction

Belfast City Council appointed Arup in partnership with Colliers to examine the re-location options for the users of the Translink Bus Depot which sits on the edge of the East Bank Development Strategy area.

This Report

On 10 October, 2018, Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee approved the East Bank Development Strategy (EBDS). Its purpose was to coordinate development of key sites and realise a world class waterfront on the east bank of the Lagan, which delivered social, economic and environmental benefits to the area and the wider city centre.

The location of the Translink Bus Depot, which sits in the heart of a residential neighbourhood on the edge of the EBDS area, was raised in the context of its impact on residential amenity and perceived, potential negative effects on the health of those who live close to it. In response to a request from Committee, it was agreed that Council officers would meet with Translink representatives to discuss the potential relocation of the East Belfast Depot, with a report to be submitted to a future meeting.

On 5 June 2019, the results of that engagement were reported to the Committee. The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Director of Public Transport Division had, in response to the Council's invitation, stated that Translink had no plans currently to relocate the East Belfast transport depot and that it continued to play a central role in delivering urban public transport, as it was ideally placed to keep operational costs to a minimum.

However, the Department 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.

DfI added that they were aware that the Council had commissioned a study to examine alternative sites and, should that identify realistic options, those would need to be given full consideration by Translink. DfI had concluded by stating that they would be content to meet with Council representatives to discuss the matter further.

The Committee agreed to proceed with the feasibility study and Arup was formally commissioned to undertake this work on 12 November 2019.

As part of the study a site search and assessment process was undertaken to examine if there are viable sites for a new East Belfast Depot.

The report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2. Methodology** – an overview of the approach taken to the site search exercise.
- **Section 3. Findings of the Site Search** – outlines the findings from the site search process.
- **Section 4. Assessment of Sites** – a review of the short listed sites against the operational criteria.
- **Section 5. Summary of Findings** – provides a summary of the outcomes from the site search process.

Existing site location

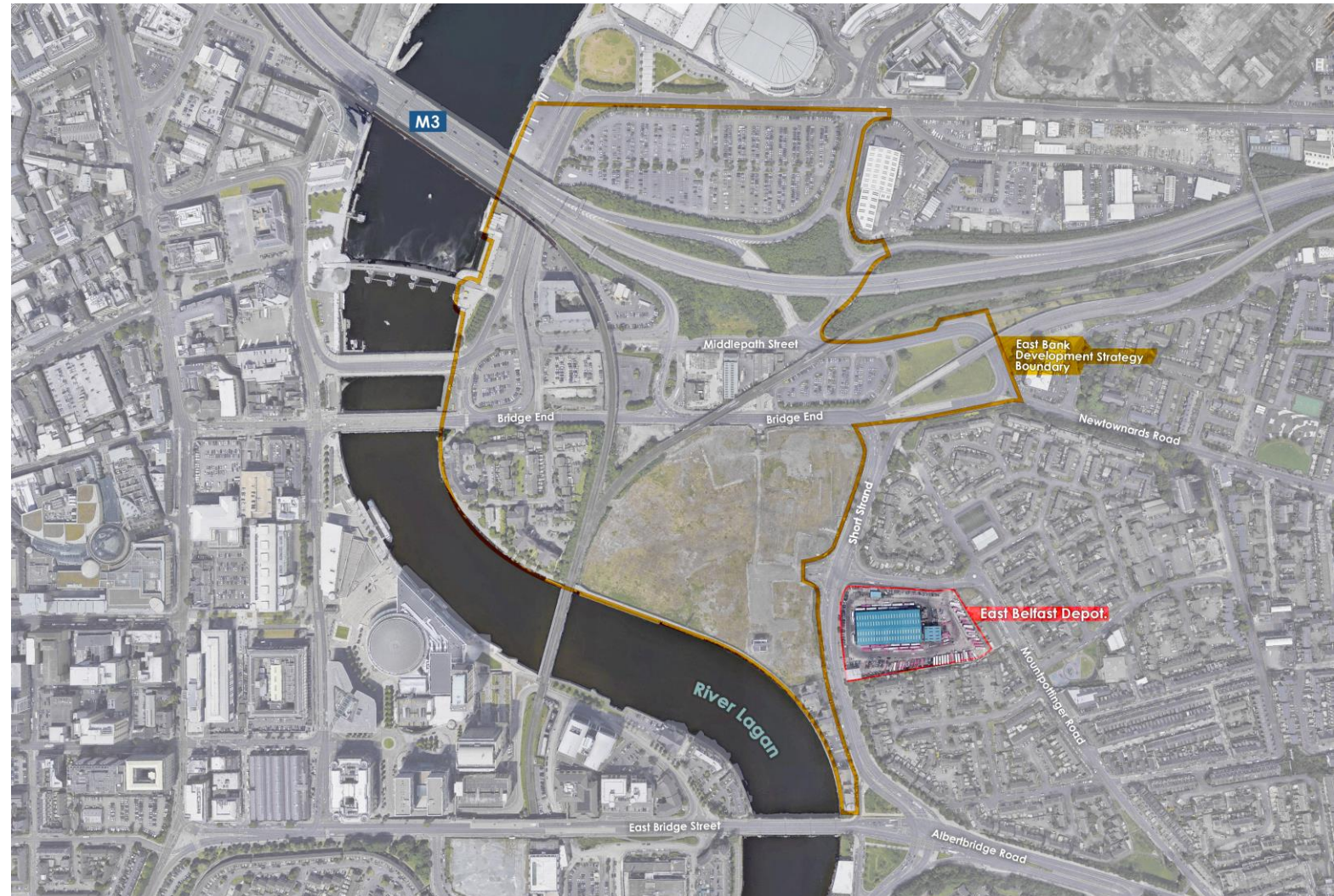
The existing depot site is owned by Translink. It is located in the Short Strand area of Belfast, bordered by Bridge End to the north and the Albertbridge Road to the south.

The existing depot is in the heart of a residential area bounded by Mountpottinger Road (with residential properties beyond it) to the north and east; to the south by residential properties located off Arran Street; and to the west by the B506. The outline planning consent for the Sirocco site opposite the depot proposes housing in the form of apartments, adjacent to Short Strand.

The main access to the site is off Mountpottinger Road. The existing site area is ca. 1.37 hectares (ca. 3.38 acres).

The existing site currently accommodates a yard and parking; service vehicle fuelling and washing building; engineering workshop; operations offices; and staff facilities.

An aerial photo identifying the location and extent of the existing site is shown opposite.



Site
Location



East Bank
Development
Strategy



Existing Depot

The existing bus depot plays an important role in the public transport network.

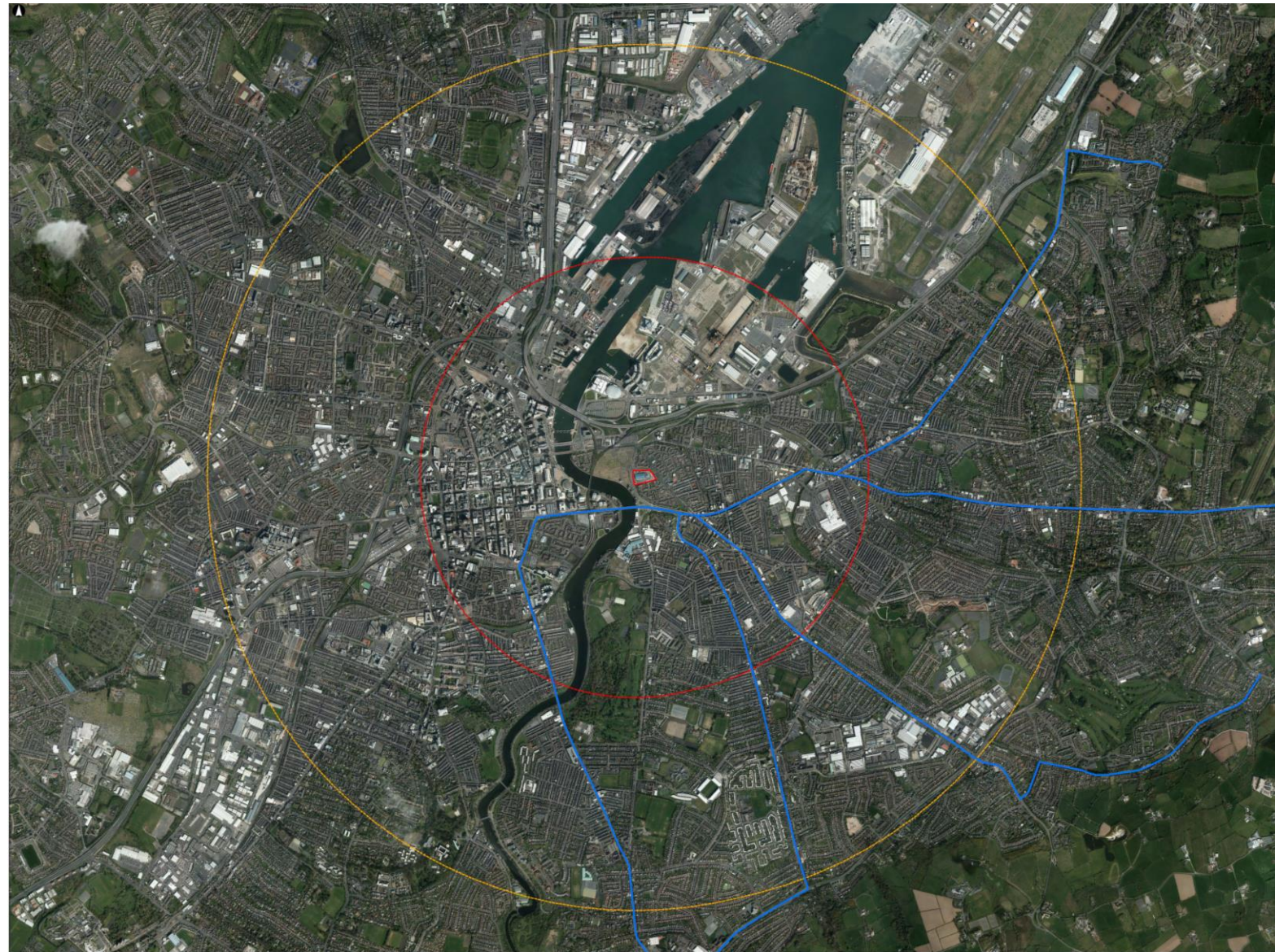
It is central and accessible to a number of key arterial routes, whilst also maintaining efficient operations with regards to minimising 'dead mileage' coverage.

Dead mileage in public transport terms is when a revenue-gaining vehicle operates without carrying or accepting passengers, such as when coming from a depot to begin its first trip of the day.

The depot is a major local employer with over 200 staff and has been in operation at this location since 1950.

The depot serves routes to the north east (Knocknagoney), east (Dundonald), south east (Tullycarnet) and south of the city (Cairnshill).

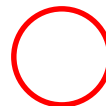
A plan showing the Area of Operation (the routes shown in blue) is shown opposite.



Site
Location



1 Mile
Radius



2 Mile
Radius



East Belfast
Depot Area of
Operation



2. Methodology

Overview of Approach

TASK 1

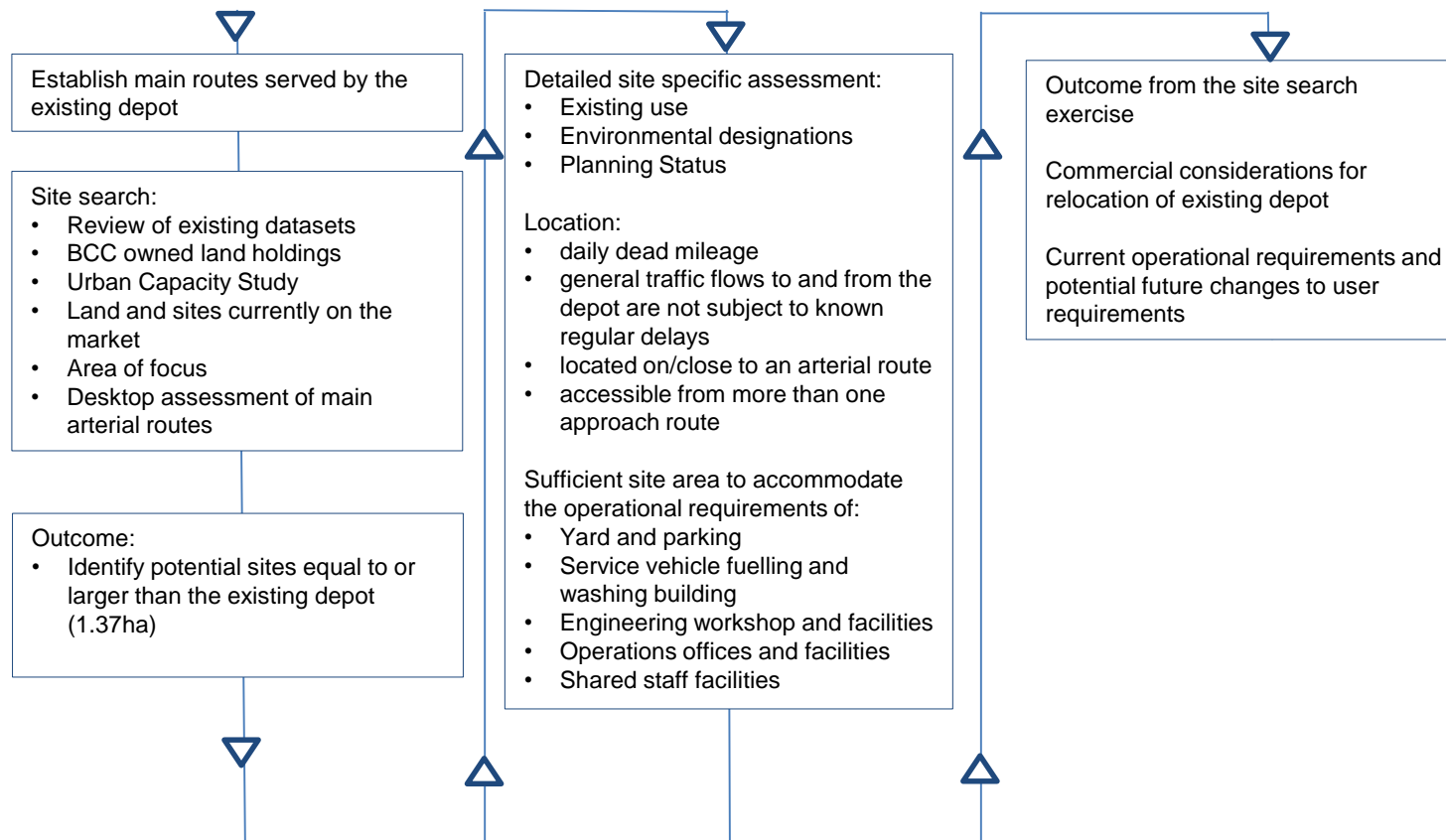
SITE SEARCH SIFTING AND IDENTIFICATION OF A SHORT LIST OF SITES

TASK 2

ASSESSMENT OF SHORT LIST OF SITES AGAINST OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

TASK 3

REPORTING



Methodology

TASK 1: SITE SEARCH SIFTING AND IDENTIFICATION OF A SHORT LIST OF SITES

The first task was to 'focus' the area of search and undertake an initial sifting of sites. This was desk based, using aerial photography, base mapping, the existing bus depot site location, the area of operation and accessibility to the surrounding highway network.

Sites were sifted based on:

- Constraints using datasets from Department for Infrastructure (DfI); Department for Communities (DfC); and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).
- Zonings from draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (2015).
- Environmental Considerations: Areas of flood risk and ecological designations, to avoid sites/areas with significant environmental constraints.
- Site Sizes: Sites that were smaller than the area of the existing Bus Depot Site (ca. 13,700 sq. m / 1.37 hectares) were sifted out.
- Identification of BCC / public sector owned land holdings.

- Identification of private land holdings currently on the market.
- Urban Capacity Study which identified derelict and underused land within Belfast's urban area.

A detailed list of all datasets used to support site search is included in **Appendix A**.

Requests were made to DfI and DfC for data on their land holdings to further refine the site search.

A desktop assessment was carried out to identify any potentially suitable sites. This search was undertaken along the roads that the existing depot serves: Ormeau Road; Woodstock Road; Castlereagh Road; Newtownards Road; and Holywood Road. Ravenhill Road was also assessed as it is an arterial route within East Belfast located between two routes served by the existing depot.

This stage of the assessment also considered land within the Belfast Harbour Estate and sites adjacent to roads around the existing depot, including those not served by bus.

The output from this stage was a short list of sites which could meet the high-level requirements. These were progressed to the next stage for detailed site specific assessment.

TASK 2: ASSESSMENT OF SHORT LIST OF SITES AGAINST OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Having compiled a short list of potential sites for the relocation of the bus depot, a more detailed site-specific assessment of each site was undertaken against the operational requirements for a new East Belfast Depot.

The key operational criteria assessed were:

Location

To ensure that:

- Daily dead mileage associated with roll out and roll in of services or staff shift changes is minimised;
- General traffic flows to and from the depot are not subject to known regular delays;
- Sites are located on/close to an arterial route due to the access/frequency of services and level of bus priority measures in place;
- The depot is accessible from more than one approach route.

Sufficient area to accommodate the operational requirements of the facility:

- Yard and parking
- Service vehicle fuelling and washing building
- Engineering workshop and facilities
- Operations offices and facilities
- Shared staff facilities

All shortlisted sites were assessed against the operational requirements.

Site visits to short listed sites were carried out to establish if there are any additional on-site constraints which would need to be considered. This helped to provide a more detailed analysis of the pros / cons associated with each shortlisted site.

The output from this stage was to establish whether there was a suitable site that could potentially meet the operational requirements for the East Belfast Depot.

TASK 3: REPORTING

This documents the process; the data used; the findings of the site search process; and the pros / cons associated with each shortlisted site.

The report sets out the outcome from the site search exercise; commercial considerations affecting the relocation of existing depot; and the current operational requirements and potential future changes to user requirements.

3. Findings of the Site Search

Site Search (1)

Strategic Context

The existing depot is located just outside the city centre boundary as defined by the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

This drawing shows:

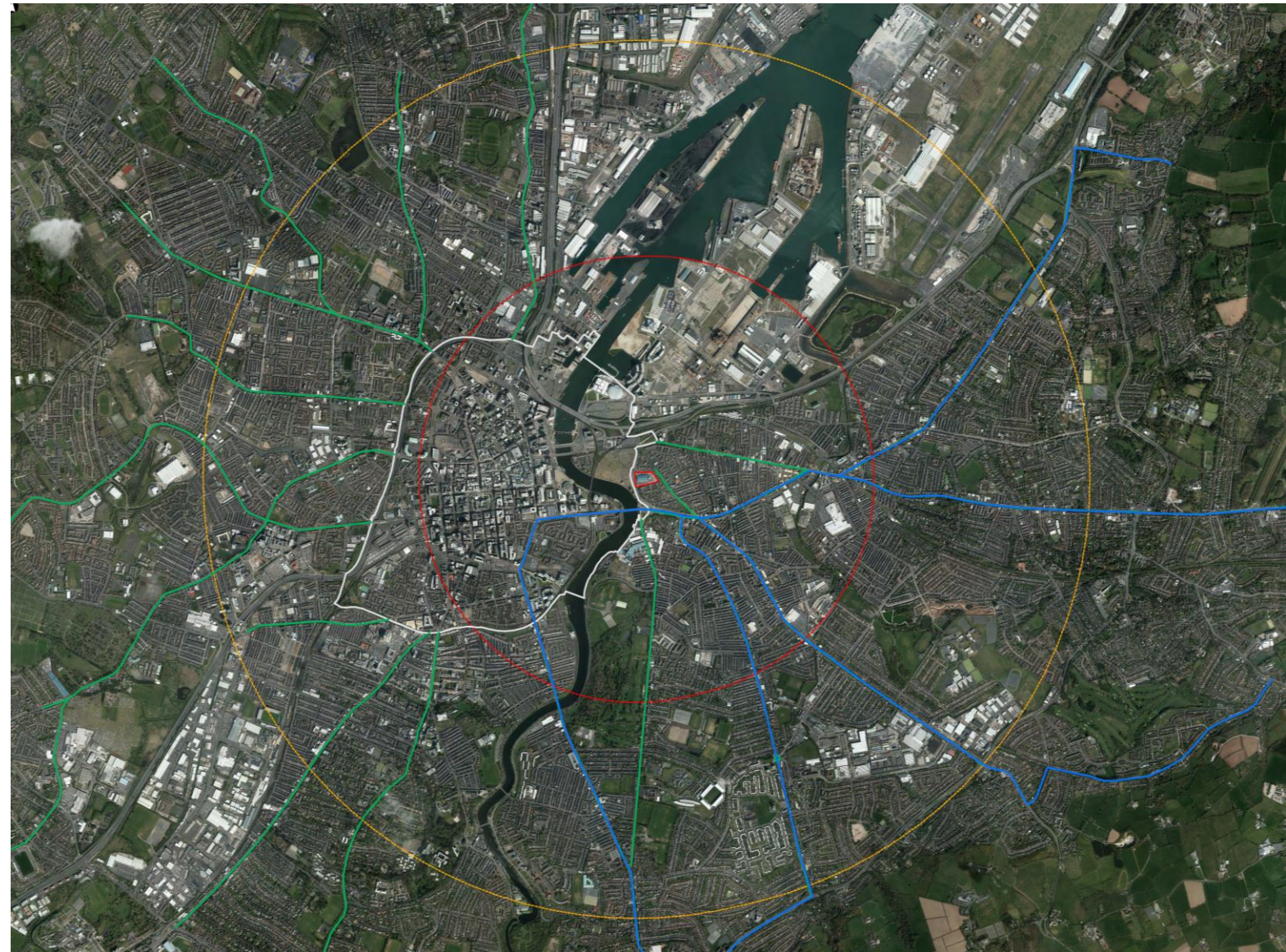
- The key routes served by the existing depot (shown in blue).
- The key arterial routes in the city centre as defined by the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (shown in green).

The main routes served by the existing depot include:

- Ormeau Road
- Woodstock Road
- Castlereagh Road
- Newtownards Road
- Hollywood Road

Given the importance of locating an alternative depot as close as possible to the existing depot, a one mile radius and two mile radius was chosen to help focus the area of search.

For completeness, some sites beyond the 2 mile radius were also reviewed.



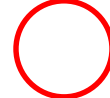
Site
Location



City
Centre



1 Mile
Radius



2 Mile
Radius



East Belfast
Depot Area of
Operation



Arterial
Route



Site Search (2)

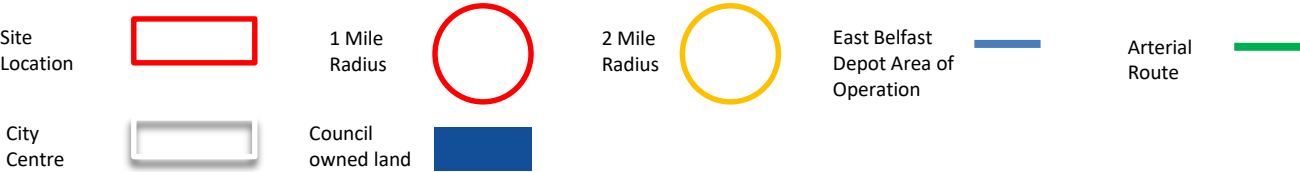
Public sector owned land

In terms of improving the deliverability of a relocated depot, it was decided to look at land in public ownership in the first instance. This plan identifies the BCC publicly owned land holdings across the city.

Each of these sites was reviewed to establish if they were suitable for a relocated bus depot.

The public sector owned assets in this case, were predominantly parks and open spaces. No suitable BCC owned land was identified as a suitable alternative location for the bus depot.

With regard to sites in the ownership of the Department for Communities (DfC), DfC has confirmed that they have no available land of sufficient size to accommodate the depot within the area of search in the east/south east of the city.



Site Search (3)

Urban Capacity Study

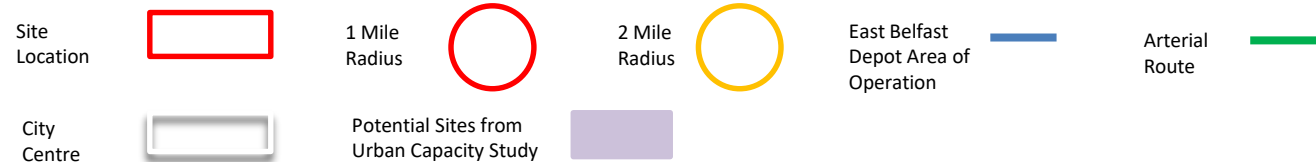
An Urban Capacity Study was carried out by Belfast City Council (March 2018) as part of the evidence base to inform the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy for the Local Development Plan (LDP),

Potential sites from the Urban Capacity Study related to a comprehensive database of housing land through its annual housing monitor function. A similar database of employment land was also developed.

This monitoring information has been used to inform the site search.

A review of relevant sites from the housing and employment land monitor has been undertaken to see if there were any potentially suitable sites for inclusion in the site search.

Suitable alternative sites identified were found to be located towards the two mile radius of the area of search. These are detailed further in the next section of the report.



Site Search (4)

Review of Land and Sites

A review of property websites was undertaken to identify sites which were on the market. The review was carried out in December 2019.

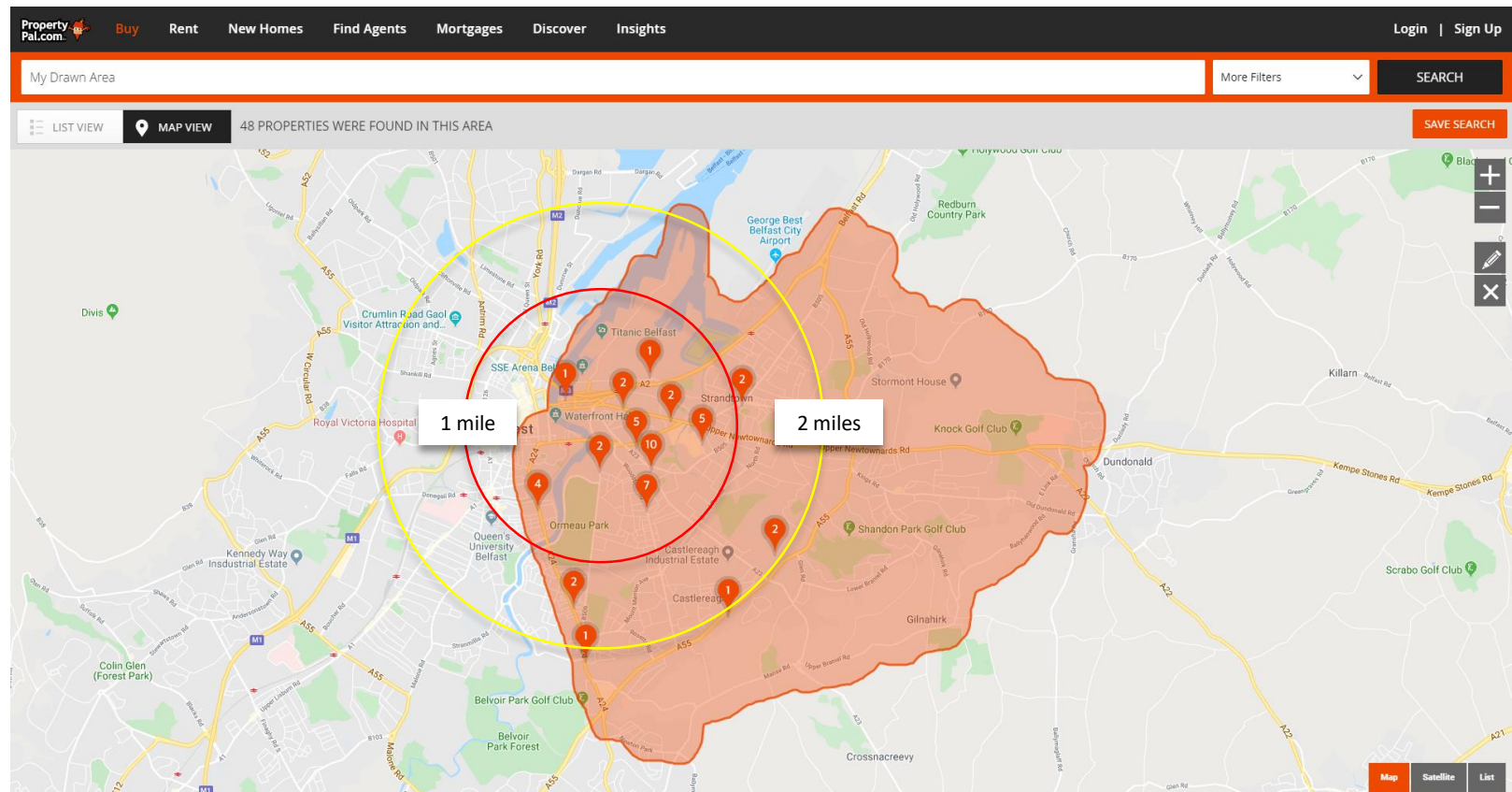
The review was carried out along the following routes:

- Ormeau Road:
- Ravenhill Road
- Woodstock Road / Cregagh Road
- Castlereagh Road
- Newtownards Road
- Holywood Road

Of the land and sites available, none were identified as being suitable.

The land and sites assessed were not considered suitable for the following reasons:

- Size: none of the available sites are large enough.
- No industrial land was listed for sale in the area of search.
- No commercial land was listed for sale in the area of search.
- The remaining available sites benefitted from outline / full planning permission for residential use.



Colliers were included as part of the project team to provide property market intelligence on any potential private sites or land known to them and not necessarily marketed for sale. No suitable land or sites was identified in the area of search.

In terms of creating a more refined area of focus, a number of factors that influence the site search were reviewed.

Site Search (5) - Area of Focus

To the north of the M3

The Belfast Harbour Estate covers an area of 2,000 acres representing 20% of the Belfast City area and comprises Belfast Port, the former Harland and Wolff Shipyard, lands on Queens Island ('Titanic Quarter'), and lands at Belfast City Airport.

Land in the Belfast Harbour Estate is subject to an existing masterplan – the Titanic Quarter is identified as part of the city centre, having significant residential, commercial and leisure potential.

As shown overleaf, the land to the north, beyond the M3, contains large areas of operational land associated with Belfast City Airport and aerospace manufacturing on the Bombardier site.

The 'salt storage site' located off Airport Road was reviewed. It is an existing Operations and Maintenance facility for DfI, comprising a salt store, yard and parking as well as a traffic information and control centre.

Whilst this site is of a sufficient size (ca. 2.7ha) to accommodate a replacement depot, it remains an operational facility used by DfI. It has not been identified as a surplus public sector asset and accordingly it has not been subject to further assessment.

In addition to these practical constraints preventing alternative uses of these land holdings, the "salt storage site" and those located north of the M3, are not located on or adjacent to an arterial route served by the existing depot.

The local road network in this area experiences capacity issues at key junctions which connect to the city centre and the main routes served by the existing depot are subject to delays, particularly during peak traffic periods (07:30 – 09:30 and 15.30 – 18.30).

Accordingly the "salt storage site" sites and others north of the M3 were not considered as appropriate for a re-located bus depot.

Nevertheless, to ensure this stage of the process was as comprehensive as possible, a desktop appraisal of this wider area was carried out to identify if there were any other potential sites.

To the north of the existing depot

The EastSide Park and Ride is located to the south of the M3 and is identified for relocation in the East Bank Development Strategy (EBDS) once an alternative site further east has been evaluated and implemented. However, this site is only 0.6ha in area and less than half the size of the existing Translink depot. The site is also earmarked for re-development in the EBDS rather than as a location for a new bus depot.

To the west of the existing depot

Any potential re-location would be subject to planning policy and the parameters set out in the Belfast Agenda and emerging Local Development Plan, which prioritise growth of the economy and resident population in the city centre.

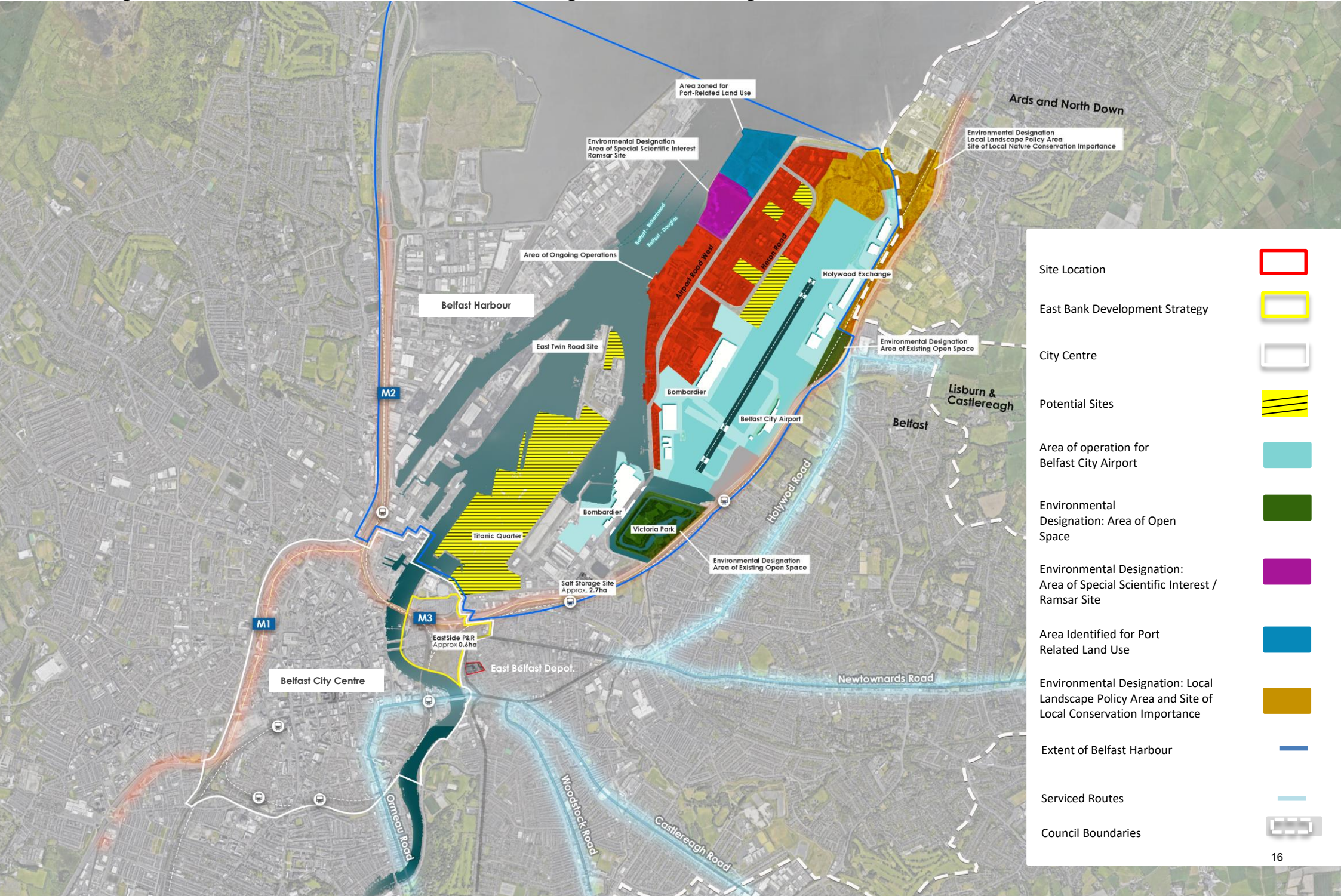
As such any potential locations to the west of the existing depot in the city centre boundary are judged to be too small or inappropriate in land use terms for use as a re-located bus depot. Sites along the Ormeau Road and further out of the city centre were also reviewed and no appropriate sites were identified.

To the south and east of the existing depot

The outcome from the review of existing datasets, identified no suitable sites on the routes to the south and the east of the existing depot.

A desktop appraisal of each route, and the area to the east of Belfast Harbour, is detailed in the subsequent pages of this section of the report.

Refining the area of focus to the north of the existing Short Strand Depot



Site Search (6): Desktop Assessment

Desktop Assessment

To ensure a comprehensive approach, the site search focused on lands and sites which serve the key routes highlighted opposite.

Area Overview

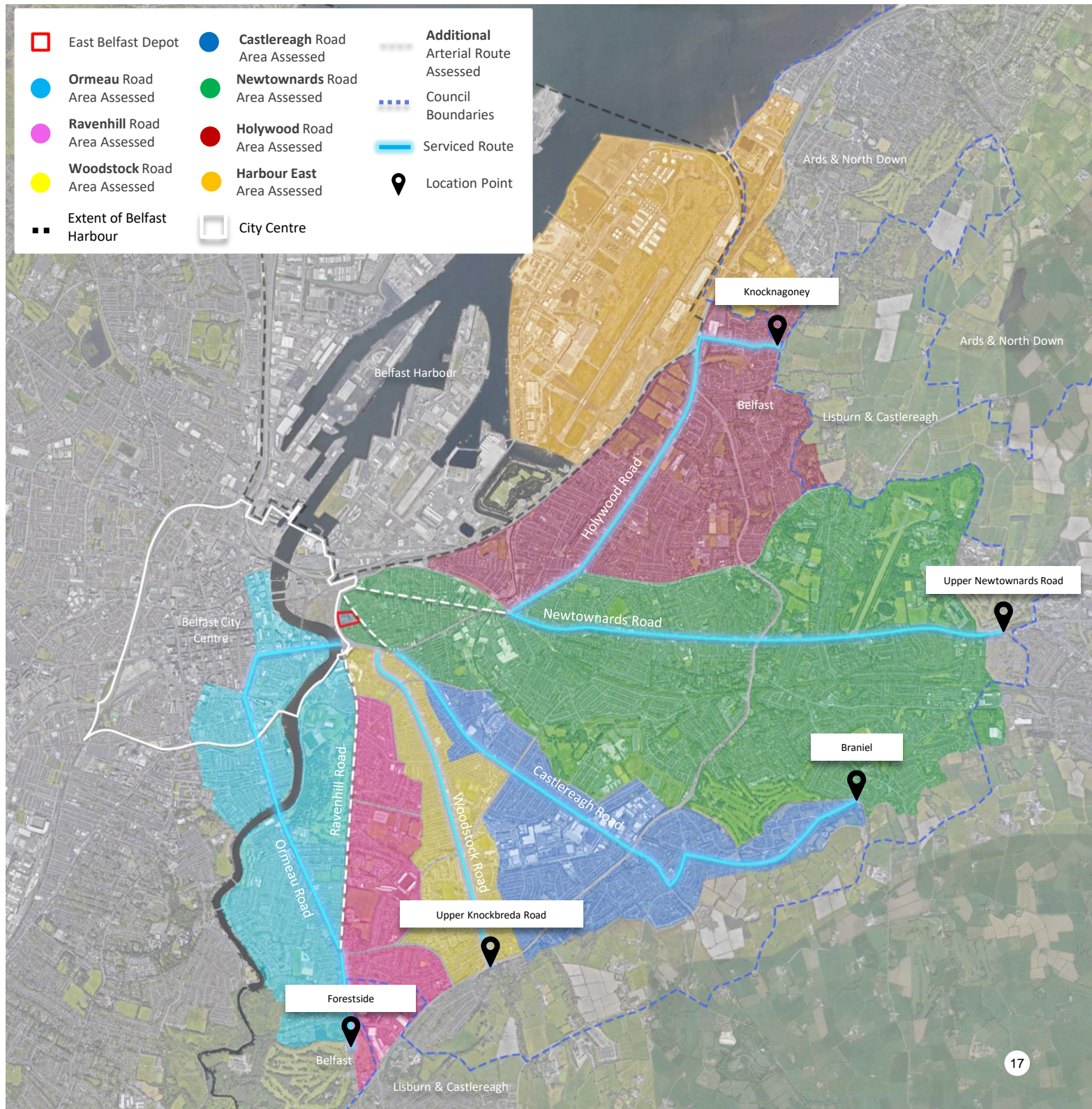
This search was undertaken along the routes that the existing depot serves:

- Ormeau Road
- Woodstock Road
- Castlereagh Road
- Newtownards Road
- Holywood Road

In addition to the five highlighted routes which are served by the East Belfast Depot, the search also considered the Ravenhill Road as it is an arterial route within East Belfast, located between two routes served by the existing depot.

The area comprising the eastern part of Belfast Harbour land holdings was also assessed.

The lands serving each route were then subdivided into sections and a further assessment of each was undertaken.



Site Search (6)

Ormeau Road

Section 1:

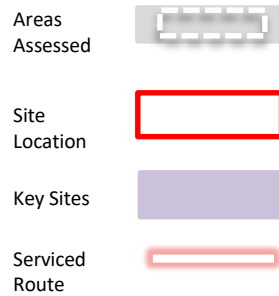
In terms of relocation, the city centre section of the Ormeau Road provides no viable sites. There is a vacant site at East Bridge Street but it does not reach the 1.37ha threshold required to accommodate a depot. The Raphael Street car park is zoned for housing.

Section 2:

South of the Botanic trainline, section 2 is predominately comprised by dense residential land use with no potential sites identified.

Section 3:

Section 3 is predominately comprised by established residential land use with a significant proportion of this area occupied by open space on the Ormeau Embankment. No potential sites for a relocated depot were identified.



Site Search (6)

Ravenhill Road

Section 1:

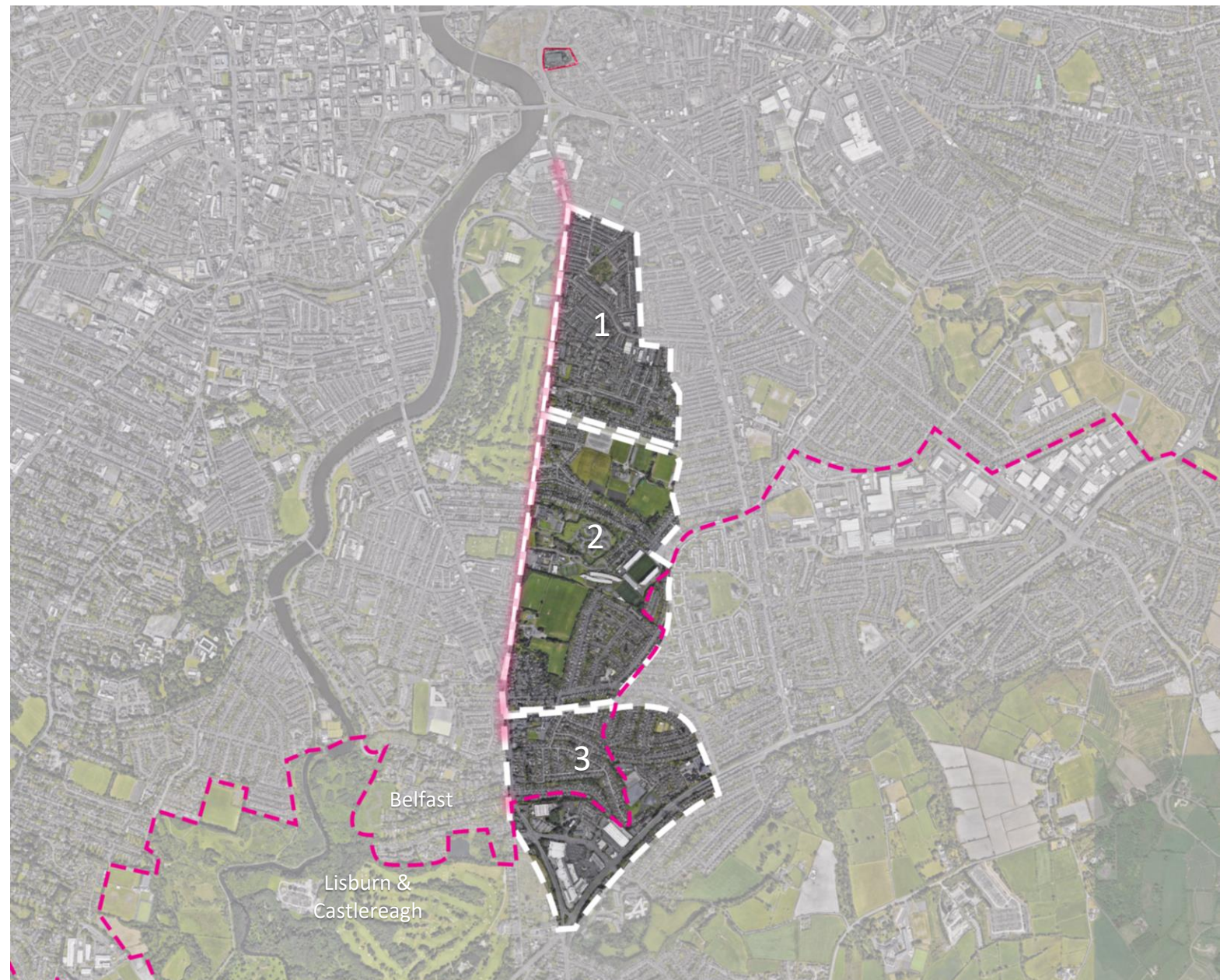
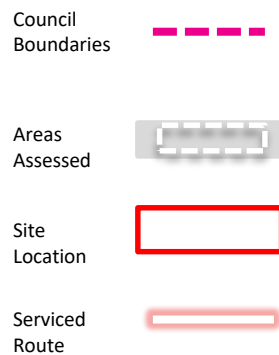
Section 1 is predominately residential. No sites were identified within this area as a suitable alternative depot location.

Section 2:

Section 2 comprises predominately residential land use with several education, leisure and recreational sites including Cherryvale Playing fields that are well utilised. No appropriate sites were identified.

Section 3:

Predominately residential land use with land designated as a District centre to south. No appropriate sites were identified.



Site Search (6)

Woodstock Road

Section 1:

Section 1 is predominately residential. No appropriate sites were identified within this area.

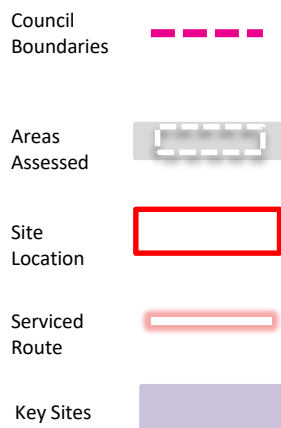
Section 2:

Predominately residential with a fine urban grain. The site search process identified no sites in this area.

Section 3:

Section 3 comprises predominately residential land use. No potential sites were identified.

To the east and immediately adjacent to section 3 is a major area of existing employment and business uses. This is assessed in more detail overleaf on page 20 under Section 2 of the Castlereagh Road / Cregagh Road Area Assessed.



Site Search (6)

Castlereagh Road / Cregagh Road

Section 1:

This section is characterised by existing residential land use with some larger sites for retail and commercial uses. No appropriate sites for a relocated bus depot were identified.

Section 2:

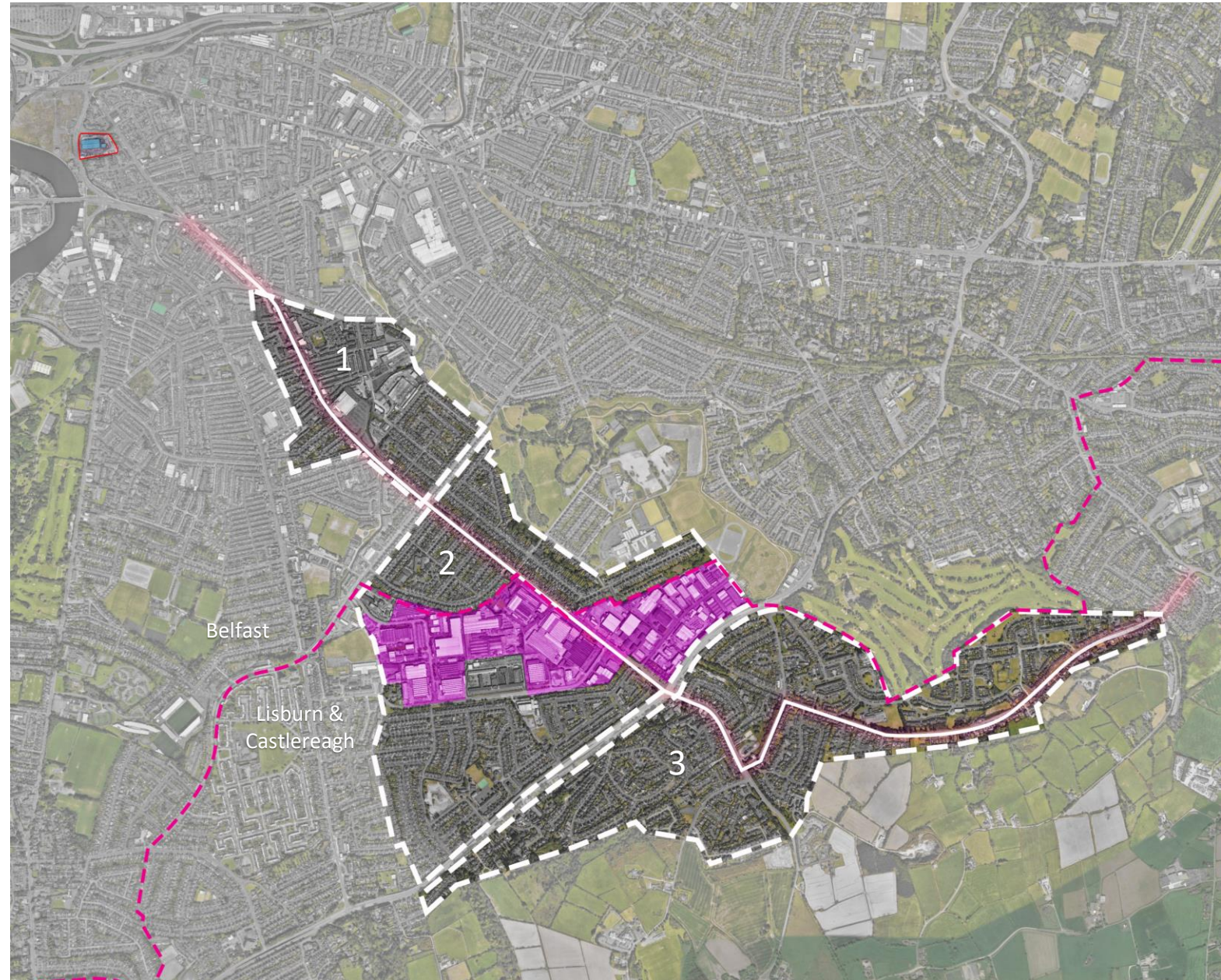
Section 2 is comprised of two pockets of residential use on either side of land zoned for existing industrial and employment) generating uses (shown in pink on the aerial photograph).

The existing premises were reviewed. None were considered large enough to meet the site search requirement. For example, one former industrial site north of Alexander Road that sold recently was 0.49ha (1.2 acres). This site would represent just over a third of the site area required for the depot relocation.

To deliver an appropriate site at this location would be likely to require multiple plots. Most sites house established uses and are in operational employment use so any site assembly would require land acquisition by agreement or by use of vesting powers.

Section 3:

This section comprises a mixture of residential and employment generating land use. No appropriate sites were identified.



Council
Boundaries

Site
Location

Areas
Assessed

Serviced
Route

Area of existing
employment and
business use

Site Search (6)

Newtownards Road

Section 1:

This section is characterised by existing residential and employment land use. No sites for a re-located bus depot were identified.

Section 2:

Predominately characterised by established residential land use with large areas of open green space to the south. No appropriate sites were identified.

Section 3:

Section predominately characterised by existing residential land use. Large areas of open green space are located to the south whilst the Stormont Estate comprises a majority of the northern portion. No appropriate sites were identified.



Council
Boundaries



Site
Location



Areas
Assessed



Serviced
Route



Site Search (6)

Hollywood Road

Section 1:

Predominately characterised by existing residential land use with areas of open space adjacent to the Oval football stadium. No appropriate sites for a re-located bus depot were identified.

Section 2:

Predominately comprises residential land use alongside several educational sites. No appropriate sites were identified.

Section 3:

This area comprises existing open and green space. The area includes the well utilised Danny Blanchflower Playing Fields, East Belfast FC and Harland and Wolff club grounds. No appropriate sites were identified.

Section 4:

Comprises primarily residential land use. No appropriate sites were identified.



Council
Boundaries



Site
Location



Areas
Assessed



Serviced
Route



Site Search (6)

Harbour East

Section 1:

This area is dominated by the operations of Belfast City Airport which takes up a significant proportion of the area assessed alongside that occupied by Bombardier.

A Local Landscape Policy Area and Site of Local Conservation Importance is located to the North of the runway.

The Hollywood Exchange retail development is located within the east of section 1 parallel to the main A2 road. No suitable sites for a replacement bus depot were identified in this section.

Section 2:

Predominately characterised by existing industry and employment land use. Four potential sites were identified in this area for further assessment.

Section 3:

Section 3 is designated as a Rural Landscape Wedge and predominately comprises open space. No sites were identified within this area.

Section 4:

Section 4 comprises the southern section of Palace Barracks and Kinnegar Waste Water Treatment Works. No sites were identified within this section.



4. Detailed Assessment

Outcomes from the site search exercise

Proximity to Existing Depot

Six sites were identified in the initial review of data sites for further assessment. They comprised:

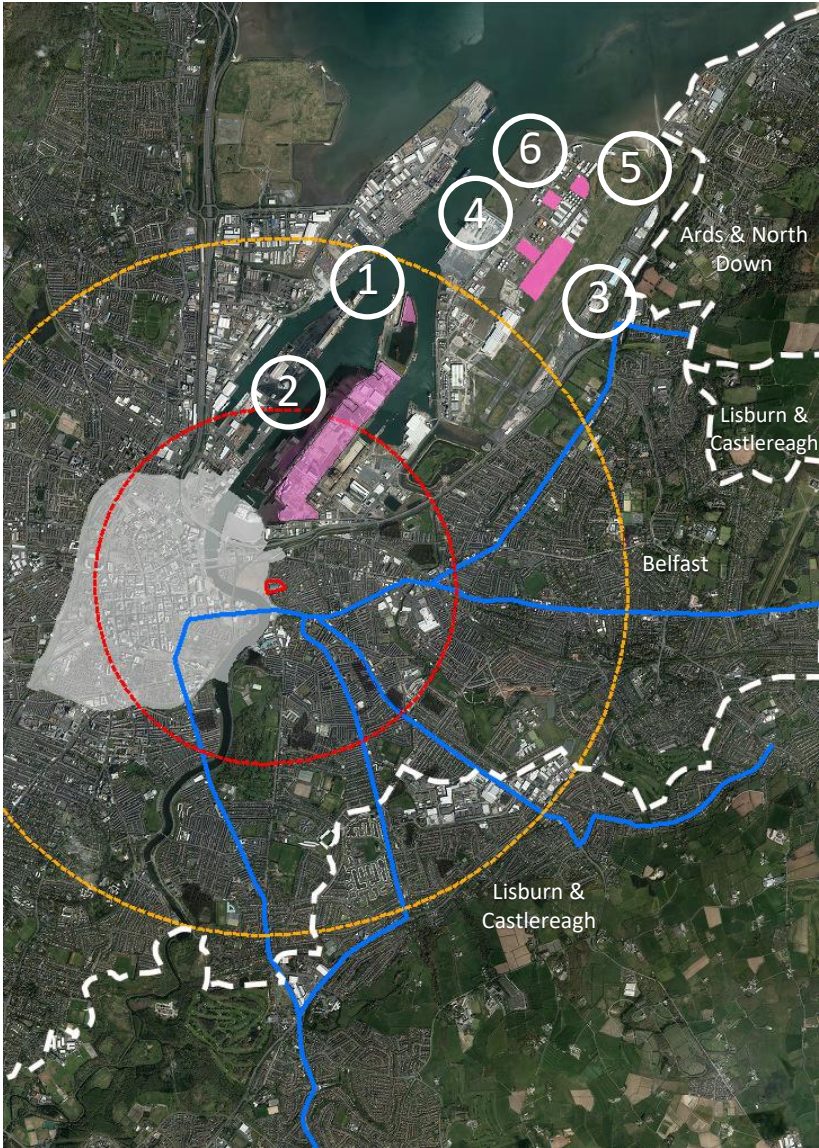
- Site (1): East Twin Road
- Site (2): Titanic Quarter
- Site (3): Heron Road 'A'
- Site (4): Heron Road 'B'
- Site (5): Heron Road 'C'
- Site (6): Heron View

Sites shortlisted for further assessment

The identified sites have subsequently been subject to further assessment, in terms of:

- A review of each site and its surrounding context.
- Relevant planning, and environmental designations.
- Specific site considerations, e.g. topography, access, etc.
- Operational requirements regarding location and area available to accommodate Translink's operational needs.

	Address	Source	Area (Hectares)	Distance to Existing Depot (miles)
1	East Twin Road	New Sites	2.33	1.62
2	Titanic Quarter	Housing Monitor	70.3	0.35
3	Heron Road 'A'	New Sites	10.77	2.25
4	Heron Road 'B'	New Sites	2.53	2.46
5	Heron Road 'C'	New Sites	2.20	2.92
6	Heron View	New Sites	1.57	2.75



Shortlisted Sites

Site 1: East Twin Road

Site	Vacant lands north of East Twin Road	
Existing Use	Derelict / vacant	
Surrounding Land Use	Belfast Harbour - Heavy industrial	
Environmental Designations	N / A	
Planning Status	Planning application	No
	Site part of masterplan	No – this site is identified as within the 'Titanic Quarter': http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/business/investinginbelfast/Titanic-Qtr.aspx
	dBMAP 2015	Site zoned as existing employment (Zoning BHA 06)

East Belfast Depot



Shortlisted Site





Shortlisted Site



Criteria	Assessment	
Location		
<i>(i) daily dead mileage associated with roll out and roll in of services or staff shift changes is minimised;</i>	<p>The site is located 1.6 miles to north of the existing depot which would result in daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes.</p> <p>The site is located further away from all routes currently served by the existing depot.</p>	
<i>(ii) general traffic flows to and from the depot are not subject to known regular delays;</i>	<p>The local road network experiences capacity issues, particularly at Dee Street, Sydenham Road and Queens Road.</p> <p>This would impact general traffic flows from the Titanic Quarter to the city centre and the Area of Operation.</p>	
<i>(iii) the depot is accessible from more than one approach route.</i>	<p>The site is accessible from East Twin Road only.</p> <p>There is one point of vehicle access / egress and one pedestrian access via East Twin Road.</p>	
Sufficient area to accommodate the operational requirements of the facility	<p>The site is 1.67 hectares (4.13 acres) – which is 0.3 hectares (0.74 acres) larger than the existing site. It is considered that the operational requirements of the facility could be accommodated within this site.</p>	
Topography	<p>The site is relatively flat.</p>	

This site has been discounted.

This route is not located on or adjacent to an arterial route served by the existing depot.

The local road network experiences capacity issues and traffic flows can be subject to delays.

The site location lacks network accessibility and is accessible from one approach route only.

This site has been included within the Belfast Harbour Estate, which is subject to an existing masterplan.

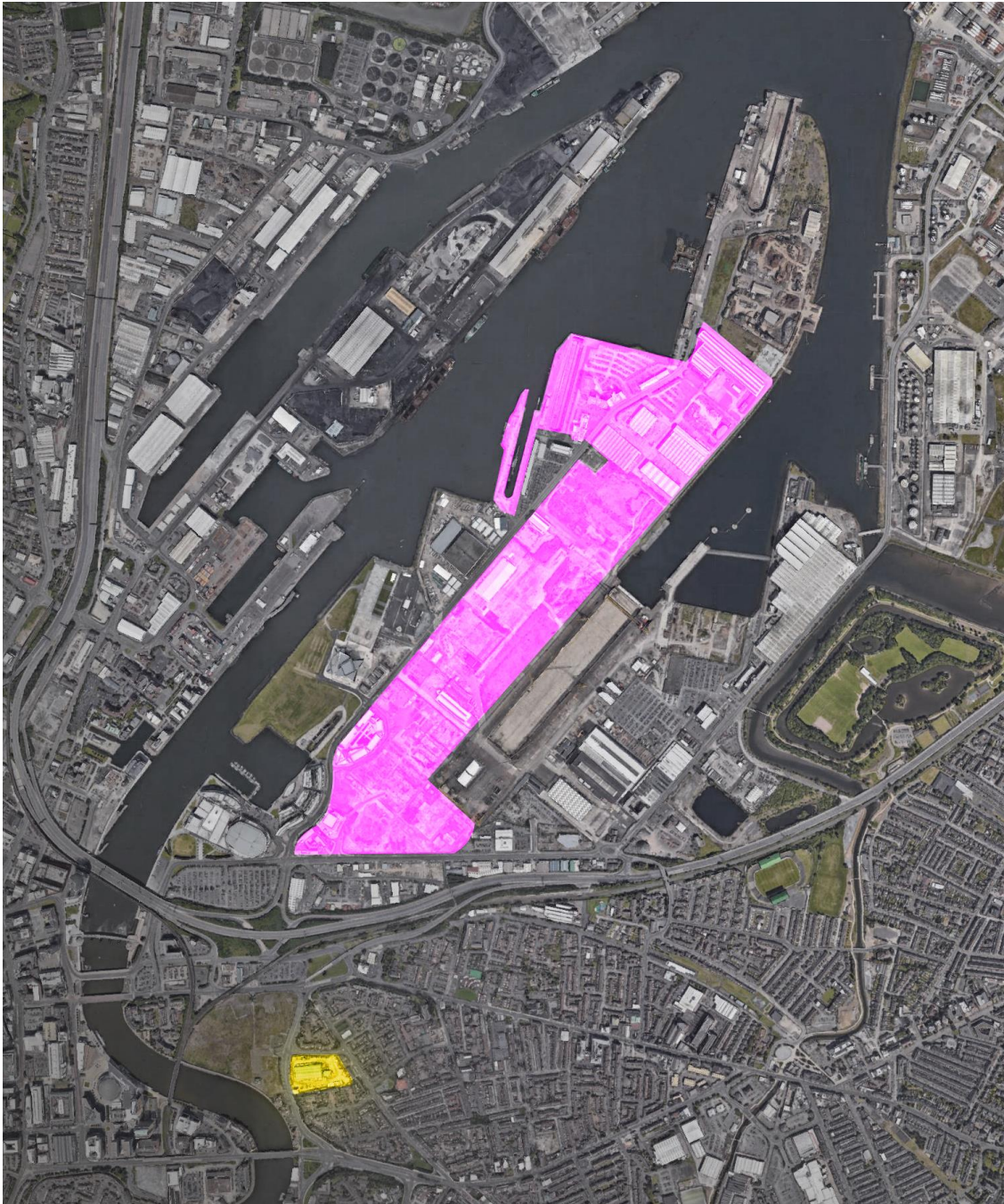
The Titanic Quarter is identified as part of the city centre as having significant residential, commercial and leisure potential.

Site 2: Titanic Quarter

Site	The site comprises several cleared lands alongside established industrial uses.	
Existing Use	Employment	
Surrounding Land Use	Belfast Harbour industrial uses and Titanic Quarter	
Environmental Designations	N / A	
Planning Status	Planning applications	Multiple, including: Proposed Titanic Exchange Data Centre Proposed Belfast Aquarium Approved Titanic Studios (7-8) - Z/2013/1509/F
	Site part of masterplan	Yes – this site is identified within the ‘Titanic Quarter’ Masterplan Area’.
	dBMAP 2015	The site comprises white land (Zoning BHA 01).

East Belfast Depot

Shortlisted Site





Shortlisted Site



Criteria	Assessment	
Location		
<i>(i) daily dead mileage associated with roll out and roll in of services or staff shift changes is minimised;</i>	<p>The site at its closest point is located ca. 0.35 miles north of the existing depot which would result in relatively limited daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes.</p> <p>The site is located further away from all routes currently served by the existing depot.</p>	
<i>(ii) general traffic flows to and from the depot are not subject to known regular delays;</i>	<p>The local road network experiences capacity issues, particularly at Dee Street, Sydenham Road and Queens Road.</p> <p>This would impact general traffic flows from the Titanic Quarter to the city centre and Area of Operation.</p>	
<i>(iii) the depot is accessible from more than one approach route.</i>	<p>The site would be accessible mainly from Queens Road.</p> <p>Primary vehicle access / egress and pedestrian access would be from Queens Road.</p>	
Sufficient area to accommodate the operational requirements of the facility	<p>The area is significant comprising 70 hectares with several cleared sites alongside established industrial uses. It is considered that the operational requirements of the facility could be accommodated within this broad area.</p>	
Topography	<p>The site is relatively flat.</p>	

This site has been discounted.

This route is not located on or adjacent to an arterial route served by the existing depot.

The local road network experiences capacity issues and traffic flows can be subject to delays.

The site location lacks network accessibility and is accessible from one approach route only.

This site has been included within the Belfast Harbour Estate, which is subject to an existing masterplan and planning permission for a range of commercial, recreational and media related uses.

The Titanic Quarter is identified as part of the city centre as having significant residential, commercial and leisure potential.

Potential re-location sites would be subject to planning policy and the parameters set out in the Belfast Agenda, which prioritise the growth of the economy and resident population where development opportunities present themselves in areas like this.

Site 3: Heron Road A

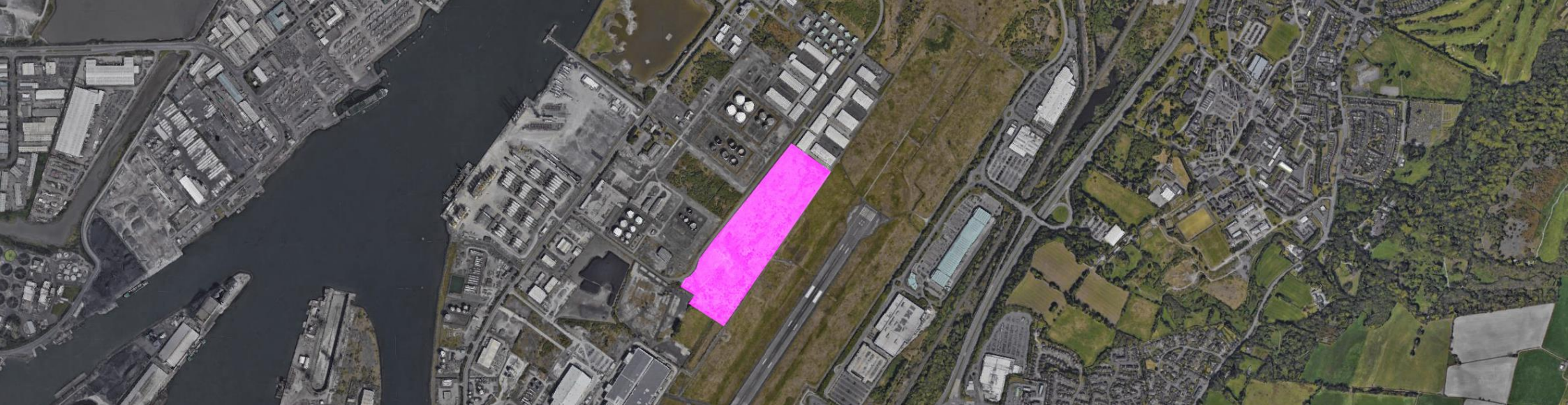
Site	The site comprises vacant and cleared land	
Existing Use	vacant	
Surrounding Land Use	Belfast City Airport, employment and industry	
Environmental Designations	Breeding Waders 2008-2011	
Planning Status	Planning applications	No
	Site part of masterplan	No
	dBMAP 2015	Site is zoned for employment (Zoning BHA 06).

East Belfast Depot



Shortlisted Site





Shortlisted Site



Criteria	Assessment	
Location		
<i>(i) daily dead mileage associated with roll out and roll in of services or staff shift changes is minimised;</i>	The site at its closest point is located ca. 2.25 miles north east of the existing depot which would result in significant daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes. The site is located further away from all routes currently served by the existing depot.	
<i>(ii) general traffic flows to and from the depot are not subject to known regular delays;</i>	The local road network experiences capacity issues, particularly on the Sydenham By Pass at peak times.	
<i>(iii) the depot is accessible from more than one approach route.</i>	The site would be accessible via Heron Road. The site does not appear to comprise formalised access / egress points.	
Sufficient area to accommodate the operational requirements of the facility	The area is significant comprising 10.77 hectares with a cleared site. It is considered that the operational requirements of the facility could be accommodated within this broad area.	
Topography	The site is relatively flat.	

This site has been discounted.

This route is not located on or adjacent to an arterial route served by the existing depot.

The local road network experiences capacity issues and traffic flows can be subject to delays at peak times (Sydenham By Pass).

The site location lacks network accessibility and is accessible from one approach route only.

The site has been cleared and void of any existing uses.

The site which would result in significant daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes.

The site does not appear to comprise formalised access / egress points.

The site has been cleared and void of any existing uses.

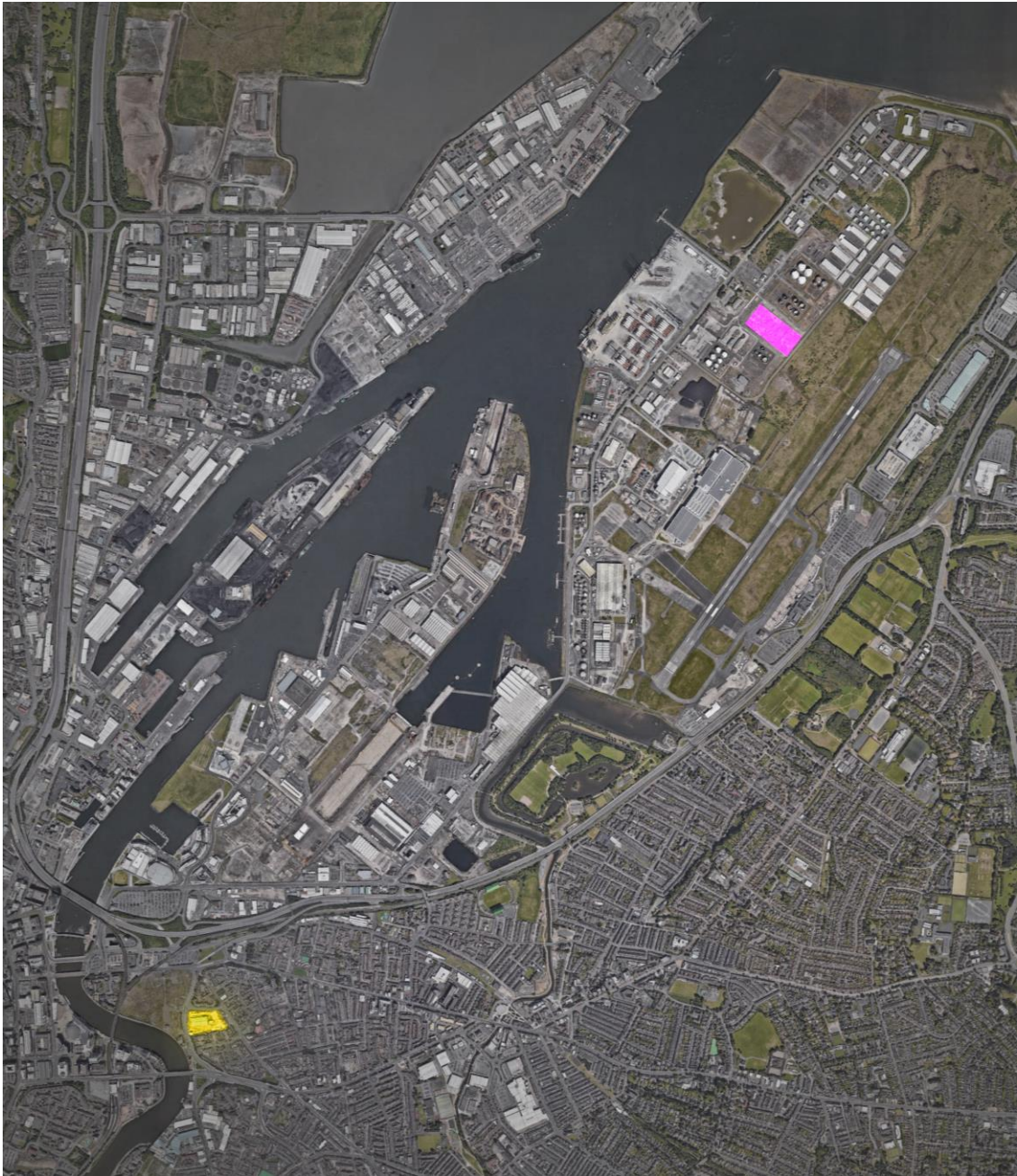
Site 4: Heron Road B

Site	The site comprises vacant and cleared land	
Existing Use	Vacant site, heavily overgrown.	
Surrounding Land Use	Employment and industry	
Environmental Designations	Breeding Waders 2008-2011	
Planning Status	Planning applications	No
	Site part of masterplan	No
	dBMAP 2015	Site is zoned for employment (Zoning BHA 06).

East Belfast Depot



Shortlisted Site





Shortlisted Site



Criteria	Assessment	
Location		
<i>(i) daily dead mileage associated with roll out and roll in of services or staff shift changes is minimised;</i>	The site at its closest point is located ca. 2.46 miles north east of the existing depot which would result in significant daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes. The site is located further away from all routes currently served by the existing depot.	
<i>(ii) general traffic flows to and from the depot are not subject to known regular delays;</i>	The local road network experiences capacity issues, particularly on the Sydenham By Pass at peak times.	
<i>(iii) the depot is accessible from more than one approach route.</i>	The site would be accessible mainly from the Sydenham By Pass, Airport Road West, then Heron Road. The site does not appear to comprise formalised access / egress points.	
Sufficient area to accommodate the operational requirements of the facility	The area is significant comprising 2.53 hectares. It is considered that the operational requirements of the facility could be accommodated within this broad area.	
Topography	The site is relatively flat.	

This site has been discounted.

This route is not located on or adjacent to an arterial route served by the existing depot.

The local road network experiences known capacity issues and traffic flows can be subject to delays at peak times (Sydenham By Pass).

The site location lacks network accessibility and is accessible from one approach route only.

The site which would result in significant daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes.

The site does not appear to comprise formalised access / egress points.

The site appears to be significantly overgrown.

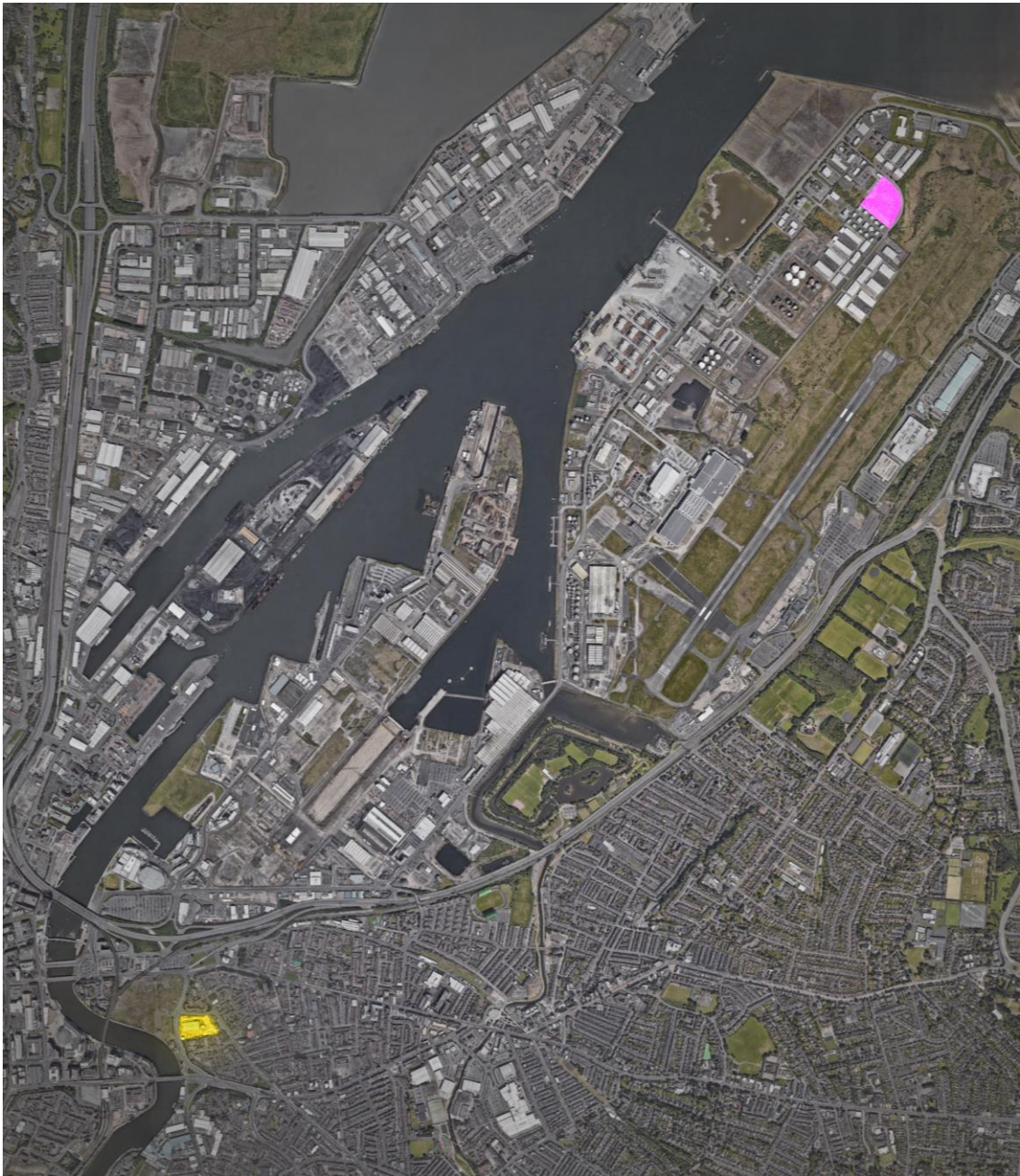
Site 5: Heron Road C

Site	The site comprises vacant land	
Existing Use	Vacant site, heavily overgrown.	
Surrounding Land Use	Employment and industry	
Environmental Designations	Breeding Waders 2008-2011	
Planning Status	Planning applications	No
	Site part of masterplan	No
	dBMAP 2015	Site is zoned for employment (Zoning BHA 06).

East Belfast Depot



Shortlisted Site





Shortlisted Site



Criteria	Assessment	
Location		
<i>(i) daily dead mileage associated with roll out and roll in of services or staff shift changes is minimised;</i>	The site at its closest point is located ca. 2.92 miles north east of the existing depot which would result in significant daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes. The site is located further away from all routes currently served by the existing depot.	
<i>(ii) general traffic flows to and from the depot are not subject to known regular delays;</i>	The local road network experiences capacity issues, particularly on the Sydenham By Pass at peak times.	
<i>(iii) the depot is accessible from more than one approach route.</i>	The site would be accessible mainly from the Sydenham By Pass, Airport Road West, then Heron Road. The site does not appear to comprise formalised access / egress points.	
Sufficient area to accommodate the operational requirements of the facility	The area is significant comprising 2.20 hectares. It is considered that the operational requirements of the facility could be accommodated within this broad area.	
Topography	The site is relatively flat.	

This site has been discounted.

This route is not located on or adjacent to an arterial route served by the existing depot.

The local road network experiences capacity issues and traffic flows can be subject to delays at peak times (Sydenham By Pass).

The site is only accessible via one approach route.

The existing depot which would result in significant daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes.

There are no formalised access / egress points to this site.

The site appears to be significantly overgrown.

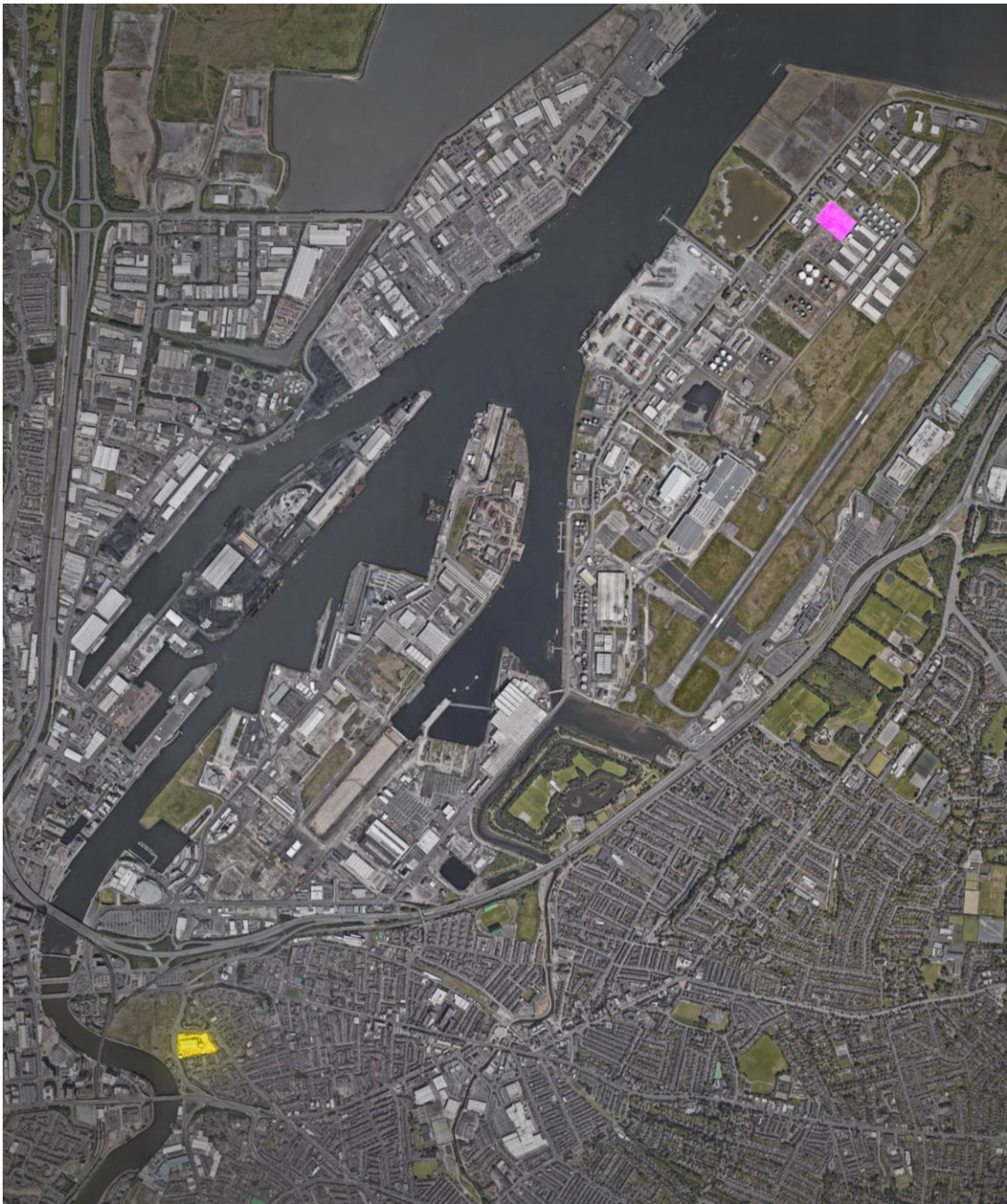
Site 6: Heron View

Site	The site comprises vacant land	
Existing Use	Vacant site, heavily overgrown.	
Surrounding Land Use	Employment and industry	
Environmental Designations	Breeding Waders 2008-2011	
Planning Status	Planning applications	No
	Site part of masterplan	No
	dBMAP 2015	Site is zoned for employment (Zoning BHA 06).

East Belfast Depot



Shortlisted Site





Shortlisted Site



Criteria	Assessment	
Location		
<i>(i) daily dead mileage associated with roll out and roll in of services or staff shift changes is minimised;</i>	The site at its closest point is located ca. 2.75 miles north east of the existing depot which would result in significant daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes. The site is located further away from all routes currently served by the existing depot.	
<i>(ii) general traffic flows to and from the depot are not subject to known regular delays;</i>	The local road network experiences capacity issues, particularly on the Sydenham By Pass at peak times.	
<i>(iii) the depot is accessible from more than one approach route.</i>	The site has only one approach route via Heron View. The site does not appear to have previously developed formalised access and egress points.	
Sufficient area to accommodate the operational requirements of the facility	The area is significant comprising 1.57 hectares. It is considered that the operational requirements of the facility could be accommodated within this broad area.	
Topography	The site is relatively flat.	

This site has been discounted.

This route is not located on or adjacent to an arterial route served by the existing depot.

The existing depot which would result in significant daily dead mileage associated with services and staff shift changes.

The local road network experiences capacity issues and traffic flows can be subject to delays at peak times (Sydenham By Pass).

The site is only accessible via one approach route.

There are no formalised access / egress points to the site.

The site appears to be significantly overgrown.

5. Summary of Findings

Findings from the site search exercise

Sites shortlisted for further assessment

As outlined in the previous sections, six sites were shortlisted from the site search exercise for further assessment (pages 25-37). None were considered to meet the current operational requirements of Translink, in terms of being a suitable site for a relocated depot.

The site search sought to establish whether any BCC or other publicly-owned land could offer a suitable viable alternative for the Short Strand depot.

Searches have also been undertaken to identify any private land holdings on the market; and the evidence supporting the Urban Capacity Study which identified derelict and underused land within Belfast's urban area was utilised as part of the site search process.

A desktop assessment of the key arterial routes has also been undertaken, which outlines the limited availability of sites of a suitable size to meet the specific requirements of Translink.

The outcome is that the site search has been unable to identify a suitable alternative location for the Short Strand depot.

Surplus public sector property

The Disposal of Surplus Public Sector Property in Northern Ireland (Land & Property Services) identifies two pathways for disposal of publicly owned land.

- (1) The Internal Market refers to the transfer of an asset for reuse / redevelopment for public benefit.
- (2) The External Market route entails the sale of an asset to an individual entity or organisation on the open market.

It is possible that surplus public landholdings may be identified in the future which are capable of meeting Translink's operational requirements but this is currently not the case.

Commercial considerations for relocation of existing depot

In addition to the operational considerations associated with finding an appropriate alternative site, Translink, or any other business would be expected to consider the financial implications of such a move.

Such an assessment would be expected to consider if the relocation would deliver a better operational facility and provide an additional positive financial receipt to the landowner / business occupier and/or deliver business efficiencies.

In the absence of a suitable alternative site being available, an alternative strategy would require to be developed, for example, to separate the functions of the existing depot and locate them across a number of smaller sites. However, this would generate additional operational costs as duplication could occur in providing identical amenities at each new location and increase the potential for "dead-miles" when bus routes reach their termination point.

Moreover, another consideration is that potential re-location sites will be subject to planning policy and the parameters set out in the Belfast Agenda, to grow the economy and resident population. This seems likely to present additional challenges in terms of identifying an appropriate alternative depot site. These challenges also apply to areas of land currently occupied by businesses or other employment-generating uses as well as to areas of vacant or "un-zoned" white land.

In the event that a suitable alternative site for the depot was located and Translink agreed to re-location, it is anticipated that at least some of the relocation costs would require to be funded by the re-development of the existing depot site.

In terms of the amount of revenue this could raise, it should be borne in mind that the redevelopment of any site which has been home to industrial-type use has the potential to involve significant supplementary site preparation costs which are likely to reduce its value as a development site.

The alternative, which would be to consider selling the existing facility with no planning consent in place for alternative uses, seems unlikely to maximise the value of the asset or attract an adequate capital receipt to help facilitate a relocated depot.

Therefore in addition to the practical considerations around finding a suitable, alternative location for a depot which meets Translink's operational requirements which have been explained elsewhere in this document, the commercial considerations set out above also appear to mitigate against relocation being actively pursued by Translink at this time.

Outcomes from the site search exercise

Existing Depot and Operational requirements

Strategically located bus depots are important to Translink's existing services.

The current site location allows Translink to operate and maintain an efficient service, with the main arterial corridors readily accessible from the Short Strand area, thus reducing operational overheads on dead mileage. However, its location at the heart of a residential neighbourhood appears somewhat incongruous with the East Bank Development Strategy's stated objective of delivering environmental benefits to the area and the wider city centre.

Operational Certainty

The demand for Public Transport in Northern Ireland is at an all time high, with 80 million passengers using public transport modes within the last year.

Translink are currently planning to construct a new fully integrated Transport Hub for Northern Ireland, to allow future proofing of bus and rail network and to accommodate continued growth.

Translink operations are sensitive to disruption, and whilst the existing Europa Bus Station will remain open during construction of the Transport Hub, it will require a managed approach through to 2025, to maintain the passenger experience until completion.

Further disruption on the network within this timeframe would be challenging for Translink to overcome, and may result in loss of revenue.

Potential Future Changes to User Requirements

Transport is currently going through a rapid process of change on a global level, responding to emerging technology and an increasing modal shift to sustainable transport. In September 2019 Belfast declared a climate emergency. There is a renewed focus on ensuring a sustainable approach to emissions from vehicles, with the UK Government seeking to stop producing all diesel vehicle by 2040.

In 2020, Translink will be testing new fuel types, on 3 prototype hydrogen vehicles. These vehicles can travel for much longer distances, are much cleaner and require lower maintenance. Adoption of emerging technologies and new fuels will undoubtedly have an impact on Translink's operational model – lending greatly towards improved air quality, especially in residential areas.

Whilst the impact at this point is far from certain with regards to necessity for their Short Strand Bus Depot, it may result in additional operational requirements for Translink, which will factor into future flexibility with regards to centrally located maintenance hubs.

Appendix A – Datasets used to support the site search

Data to support site selection (inputs)

Type	FeatureDataset	Type	Date	Source
Basemapping	Aerial Imagery	ecw	2014	BCC through LPS sublicence
Basemapping	Road Centreline	Polyline	2017	BCC through LPS sublicence
Input	Existing Depot	Polygon		BCC / Translink
Input	Area of Operation	Polygon		BCC / Translink
Input	Potential Sites	Polygon	2017	BCC
Input	BCC Sites	Polygon		BCC
Input	Private Land Holdings			
Input	One mile radius			
Input	Two miles radius			
Input	Derelict and underused land from the Urban Capacity Study			

Data to support site selection (zoning)

Type	FeatureDataset	Type	Date	Source
Zoning	Housing	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Mixed Use	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Health Use	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Office	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Industrial	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Existing Park & Open Space	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Proposed Open Space	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Local Landscape Policy Area	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Area of Townscape Character	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Protected Route	Polyline	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Arterial Route	Polyline	2015	BMAP 2015

Data to support site selection (zoning)

Type	FeatureDataset	Type	Date	Source
Zoning	Character Areas	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Conservation Areas	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Local Centre	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	District Centre	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Strategic Centre	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Landscape Wedge	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Lagan Valley Regional Park	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015
Zoning	Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance	Polygon	2015	BMAP 2015

Data to support site selection (constraints)

Type	FeatureDataset	Type	Date	Source
Constraint	River Flooding	Polygon	2017	BCC through DFI sublicence
Constraint	Surface Flooding	Polygon	2017	BCC through DFI sublicence
Constraint	Tidal Flooding	Polygon	2017	BCC through DFI sublicence
Constraint	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Polygon	2017	DEARA
Constraint	Area of Special Scientific Interest	Polygon	2017	DEARA
Constraint	Nature Reserves	Polygon	2017	DEARA
Constraint	National Natures Reserves	Polygon	2017	DEARA
Constraint	Listed Building	Point	2017	DFC
Constraint	Historic Parks & Gardens	Polygon	2017	DFC
Constraint	Special Area of Conservation	Polygon	2017	DEARA
Constraint	RAMSAR	Polygon	2017	DEARA

Data to support site selection (constraints)

Type	FeatureDataset	Type	Date	Source
Constraint	Special Protection Area	Polygon	2017	DEARA
Constraint	Sites and Monuments Record	Point	2018	DFC
Constraint	Landscape Character Area	Polygon	2017	DEARA
Constraint	Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Areas	Polygon	2017	DEARA
Constraint	Scheduled Zones	Polygon	2016	DFC
Constraint	Industrial Heritage Record	Point	2016	DFC
Constraint	Defence Heritage Sites	Point	2017	DFC
Constraint	Known Wreck sites	Point	2016	DFC
Constraint	Area of Significant Archaeological Interest	Point	2016	DFC

