



Department for

**Infrastructure**

An Roinn

**Bonneagair**

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From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure  
**Nichola Mallon MLA**

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Democratic Services Officer

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Dear Ms Donnelly,

## **INCREASING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT IN BELFAST**

Minister Mallon has asked me to thank you for your letter of 29<sup>th</sup> December 2020 about increasing sustainable transport in Belfast. Since her appointment in January 2020, the Minister has made a commitment to deliver sustainable infrastructure that will transform our communities and lives. The Minister wants to create more opportunities for active travel and make our roads safer for those who want to walk, wheel and cycle. In 2020/21, the Minister allocated £20 million capital funding for blue / green infrastructure which will support communities through transformation, promoting active travel and shaping our places to live in the new normal in support of the COVID 19 recovery.

The Minister has also asked me to stress the importance she attaches to reimagining our city and town centres with a focus on making them greener, more walkable and more connected. Connecting Belfast communities to the city centre via sustainable forms of transport is key to a shared vision for the city. The creation of a Walking and Cycling Champion within the Department was intended to provide an impetus to advocate for walking and cycling, facilitate the sharing of ideas, oversee progress and ensure that the promotion of walking and cycling is at the heart of all the work of the Department. Part of this involves partnership working with Councils to deliver on the Minister's ambition for active and sustainable travel.

In this regard, the Minister plans to publish a final Belfast Bicycle Network later this year. This document is intended to guide the development and operation of the bicycle infrastructure in the city for the next ten years.

As the Council will know, the Department is leading work on two key sustainable transport projects for the city as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) – Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) 2 and Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge.

Following the success of BRT1 (Glider), with patronage figures showing some 45,000 additional passenger journeys per week on the BRT corridors (when compared with the previous year), BRT2 would, if prioritised by the City Deal, involve a further development of the Belfast Rapid Transit system to north and south Belfast with an extension of the CITI route to serve Queens University and the City Hospital to improve urban connectivity. It potentially would be a further game changer in terms of promoting sustainable travel within the city.

The Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge aims to improve accessibility to the city centre for residents and communities east of the River Lagan. The bridge also aims to encourage both people from the city centre and local communities to use Ormeau Park for recreational use.

As you will know, BRCD partners are currently considering which projects will be included in the City Deal. Outline Business Cases (OBCs) for these two projects were submitted in August 2020 to help inform the prioritisation of schemes. It is expected that a decision on which projects go through to the final City Deal will be made in early 2021. Should BRT2 and Lagan Bridge be prioritised, their delivery would have the potential to have a huge positive impact on sustainable travel outcomes in Belfast.

I hope you find this information helpful.



**KATHRYN MCFERRAN**  
**Private Secretary to the Minister**