

Section 75 and Schedule 9

The Northern Ireland Act 1998

Belfast Transport Hub & Wider Masterplan

Equality Impact Assessment
Draft Consultation Report

30 April 2021

Belfast Transport Hub & Wider Masterplan

An Equality Impact Assessment

CONTENTS	PAGE
1. Introduction	3
2. Belfast Transport Hub & Wider Masterplan	5
3. Consideration of Available Data and Research	9
4. Assessment of Impact	13
5. Consideration of Measures to Mitigate any Adverse Impact	15
6. Formal Consultation	16
7. Publication	17
8. <i>Appendices</i>	<i>18</i>
1: <i>Sense Check Report</i>	<i>18</i>
2: <i>Data on Residents of Northern Ireland</i>	<i>23</i>
3: <i>Data on Residents of Belfast</i>	<i>26</i>

Belfast Transport Hub & Wider Masterplan

An Equality Impact Assessment

1: INTRODUCTION

Under the statutory duties contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC), trading as Translink, gave an undertaking to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated that there may be significant implications in relation to one or more of the nine Section 75 categories.

This draft report has been made available as part of the formal consultation stage of the EQIA relating to the proposed development of the Weavers' Cross Integrated Transport Hub, and including associated works and projects, up to and including the final build stage of the project to be commenced in 2021.

At this time we would welcome any comments which you may have in terms of this EQIA and our preliminary recommendations with regard to measures to mitigate any potential future adverse impact and/or alternative policies.

Further copies of this EQIA consultation report are available on our website at:
belfasthub@translink.co.uk www.translink.co.uk [NITHC Reports\(Translink.co.uk\)](#)

If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including large print, Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:

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Deadline for comments will be 19 July 2021

Following consultation, the Final Report will be made available by 9 August 2021

SECTION 75 AND THE STATUTORY DUTIES

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires each public authority, when carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without

Without prejudice to its obligations above, the public authority must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland approved the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHCo) revised Equality Scheme on 27 February 2013. The Scheme outlines how NITHCo aspires to fulfil its statutory duties under Section 75. Following approval of the Scheme, existing policies were screened to assess impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity or the duty to promote good relations using the following criteria:

- Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy issue?
- Is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity between the relevant different groups, either by altering the policy, or by working with others in government or in the larger community, in the context of the policy?
- Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of that type create problems specific to any relevant group?

In line with the statutory duties as outlined above, to date Translink has completed two Section 75 screening exercises on the project (see below).

NITHCo AND TRANSLINK

The Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHCo) is a public corporation established under the Transport Act (NI) 1967 to oversee the provision of public transport in Northern Ireland. NITHCo is accountable to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) which develops transport strategies for Northern Ireland and determines public transport policy. NITHCo's responsibilities include holding and managing property assets and the oversight, in terms of support, control and supervision, of its private limited subsidiary companies. It is expected to operate commercially and has a duty to operate in line with Ministerial policy.

The NITHCo Board is responsible for approving the strategies of its subsidiary companies (see below) and the annual Corporate Plan and for their proper governance. It meets on a regular basis to review the implementation of policy objectives and to monitor financial performance. NITHCo also owns a portfolio of property investments that generate funds for capital investment throughout the Group.

Translink is a trading name used by any one or more of the companies under the ultimate ownership of NITHCo. The Group comprises NITHCo as the parent company which owns

Citybus Limited (which also trades as 'Metro') (NI009039), Flexibus Limited (NI006724), Ulsterbus Limited (NI006725), Translink (NI) Limited (NI006673), NIR Networks Limited (NI017638), Northern Ireland Railways Company Limited (NI006929) - each of which is registered in Northern Ireland and has its registered office at 22 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, Co. Antrim, BT2 7LX; and NIR Operations Limited (NI021091) - which is registered in Northern Ireland, with its registered office at Lanyon Place Station, 47 East Bridge Street, Belfast, BT1 3NR.

2: Belfast Transport Hub and Wider Masterplan

The Belfast Transport Hub (BTH), at Weavers Cross, is situated close to Belfast city centre. The eight hectare site will contain a modern high capacity transport hub (developed on the site of the existing Europa Bus centre and Great Victoria Street train station), together with impressive mixed-use developments for the local community. BTH is one of Europe's only fully integrated transport Hub which incorporates rail, bus, and coach modes of transport into a single location and under an unitary integrated management structure (Translink). This enables simplified and easier transitions between different modes of transport and facilitates easier transmission of travel information and choices, particularly for physically disabled or passengers with learning difficulties.

This flagship project has been prioritised by the NI Executive and developed in the context of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Regional Development Strategy 2035 along with the draft NI Executive Programme for Government. There is due recognition that public transport has a key role to play in developing competitive cities and regions and is important for a successful economy, promoting social inclusion, health, education and improving the environment.

The draft Programme for Government has identified a number of strategic outcomes which set out the ambition for Northern Ireland society. Providing a high quality public transport system impacts on many of the programme's outcomes and directly links to the outcome, 'We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure'. One of the key indicators for this outcome is to, 'Increase the use of public transport and active travel'.

The Belfast Transport Hub lies at the heart of this enterprise and will be a catalyst for the regeneration of the local area as an important gateway to Belfast, 'a modern, confident and progressive city, stimulating economic opportunities for the city and Northern Ireland'.

The proposed Belfast Transport Hub involves the redevelopment of the Europa Bus Centre, Great Victoria Street Railway Station and land (c. 20 acres) at Grosvenor Road. The integrated transport interchange will comprise: station concourse, 26 bus stands, eight railway platforms, bus maintenance and parking, car parking and a new public square. The remaining land is proposed as a phased commercial development to be known as Weavers Cross.

The wider Weavers Cross development is a transport led regeneration project supporting the Belfast City Council's Agenda, a new vision for Belfast in 2035, setting out the ambition to attract 50,000 new jobs and £1bn investment to regeneration projects in the city.

In line with best practice, Translink has endeavoured to ensure that Section 75 considerations have continued to be mainstreamed into the project at successive stages of implementation, and in particular with regard to disability.

By way of example, at the initial design stage of the Hub, all private sector companies that tendered for the project were required to indicate how Section 75 considerations had been integrated into their designs.

Translink invited submissions in July 2013 to prepare a masterplan for the whole site and to then take forward the preferred design solution. John McAslan + Partners, together with Arup, were duly appointed in July 2014 as the lead architect and designer, together with Juno Planning as the planning consultant and Kennedy Fitzgerald Architects as local supporting architects.

In partnership, these organisations then progressed options for The Hub, as outlined in the Stage Two Report (8/4/16). This outlined three preferred options for the Hub, and formed the basis for an extensive first round of public consultation that ended on December 2nd, 2016.

As part of the Transport Hub enabling works, John Tinnelly and Sons Ltd demolished the vacant warehouse buildings at Grosvenor Road during March – May 2016.

The Infrastructure Minister announced in January 2017 that when the planning application for the Transport Hub was submitted it would be processed by DfI and the final decision would rest with the Infrastructure Minister. Further to this announcement, Translink then hosted a public information event in February 2017¹.

The Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company submitted the Transport Hub planning application ([LA04/2017/1388/F](#)) in June 2017. The application proposed a, 'new integrated transport interchange comprising; station concourse, 26 bus stands, 8 railway platforms, bus maintenance and parking, track and signaling enhancements, bus access bridge, cycle and taxi provision, car parking, new public square, public realm improvements, highway improvements, infrastructure improvements, temporary structures for bus operations during construction and temporary site construction compounds'. The application was approved in March 2019.

Graham Construction was awarded the Transport Hub enabling works contract in November 2019. The works are scheduled to complete during early 2021. The main build phase is expected to commence in 2021 on completion of the enabling works.

Graham submitted a Noise Management Plan and Dust Management Plan in December 2019. The documents provide an overview of proposed activities and indicative dates:

Dec 2019 – June 2020: construction of temporary staff mess facilities.

Jan 2020 – Sept 2020: ground remediation works.

June 2020 – July 2020: demolition of two bus maintenance garages and a staff mess facility.

Aug 2020: demolition and replacement of an existing bridge over the railway.

May 2020 – Jan 2021: re-alignment of an existing culvert running through.

Further information on the Belfast Transport Hub and wider Weavers Cross development can be found at the official website www.translink.co.uk/bth

¹ Information presented at the event is available online at www.translink.co.uk/bth

Belfast Transport Hub and the Wider Masterplan, Section 75 and Public/Staff Engagement

Public Engagement

Overall, Section 75 issues have been fully integrated into public engagements through successive rounds of public consultation, during which time stakeholder groups, locally and regionally, have continued to show a healthy level of engagement with the project and continue to provide positive and constructive feedback. It is recognised and appreciated that full public engagement throughout the design and build phases of the project is in the best interests of all potential users and local communities, and has already helped to identify and mitigate a variety of potential adverse impacts from an early stage².

Social value /community objectives have been central to the project from the outset of its life-cycle, for example with community engagement commitments included as a requirement in the Project Brief and Scope of Services issued to the Integrated Design Team.

Ongoing dialogue and engagement with local communities has been taking place since 2014 with early discussions on the need to tie in training and employment opportunities with more general community benefits. These fledgling commitments to social value gained traction and substance during the design, development and planning approval process, with early ideas progressed further through three rounds of interactive pre-application community consultation, with feedback and formal commitments evident through the planning application process.

This commitment continues to be made manifest in various tangible ways and including the following:

- A commitment to some form of 'buy social' approach – embedded into the Enabling Works Contract and within the contractor procurement process. This has evolved into a joint Belfast City Council/Translink Construction Employment Academy. (This work has been ongoing throughout the project life-cycle.)
- A commitment to provide a dedicated Translink resource for community engagement – delivered through the appointment of a BTH Community Engagement Manager in March 2017. (This position is active and ongoing.)
- A commitment to work with local schools and young people. This has included 'on the ground' practical help for local nursery and primary schools and support of community family fun day events. (This work has been ongoing throughout the project life-cycle.)
- A commitment to improve public open space. This has involved working collaboratively with local residents and business community to develop the extension of BTH public realm improvements along Sandy Row and Grosvenor Road. One example is the introduction of a pedestrian colonnade supported by an Arts and Heritage programme through the design development and planning process. In partnership with Belfast City Council it is also proposed to deliver plans for Blythefield Park following community consultation. (This work is ongoing.)

² For further details go to <https://weaverscross.co.uk/neighbourhood/community-connections/>

Staff Engagement

From 2017 onwards, a series of 'Operational Workshops' have been held with operational staff (not only senior managers) who have been engaged in the day to day, public facing delivery of different aspects of service delivery to passengers.

At these workshops, individuals have been encouraged to articulate their views of the type of facilities that they feel are required to deliver a seamless passenger experience and to identify possible barriers to successful delivery. This has enabled the design team to access the views of expert practitioners, as opposed to academic theorists, and has been an invaluable asset in the design process.

Section 75 Screening

In line with statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and a Section 75 strategy for the hub as originally drafted in 2018, two Section 75 screening exercises have been completed to date.

The first, entitled, 'Proposed Development of Integrated Belfast Transport Hub (Weavers Cross)'³, reflected the work up to that time (2018). Based on available data, the screening report concluded:

'Translink remains confident that its significant investment in public consultation and engagement has ensured that issues relating to Section 75 have already been mainstreamed into the project design, and that those tasked with bringing the project forward have good awareness of responsibilities under Section 75, including private sector contractors.

A number of mitigating measures have already been introduced as a result of public engagement, and this work will continue to inform the project through to full implementation. As the project continues to evolve so due consideration will continue to be paid to the need to carry out an EQIA, and to screen particular elements of the project as and when necessary.

At this, the Stage 2 design phase, the need for an EQIA is not immediately apparent and in particular given that the specifics of the Hub design have yet to be finalised. **Instead, it is proposed that an EQIA will be scheduled during completion of the enabling works for the Hub (e.g. site clearance and ground works) and prior to the commencement of the main works on the buildings themselves, and this is likely to be in the second half of 2018.'**

In June 2018, a Sense Check Report was produced summarising the information included in the screening exercise and also including reference to a Disability Audit undertaken at that time (see Appendix One).

From 2018 significant delays relating primarily to planning permission have impacted on the progression of the project and while site clearance and ground works continue, the procurement stage of the final build phase of the hub is only now underway.

³ A copy of the initial project screening report is available at [belfast-hub-project-screening.pdf \(azureedge.net\)](#)

During 2018 it was also identified that arrangements in and around the site during construction would impact on city-wide access for local residents in particular, and hence a further screening was carried out ('Integrated Belfast Transport Hub (Weavers Cross): Transition Arrangements 2018 – 2021'⁴). This screening report concluded:

'Translink remains confident that its significant investment in public consultation and engagement, together with professional experience of related projects, has ensured that issues relating to Section 75 have already been mainstreamed into the transition phase of the project, and that those tasked with bringing the project forward have a clear understanding of responsibilities under Section 75, and this extends to private sector contractors.

A number of mitigating measures have already been considered during the transition phase of the project in order to minimise disruption and inconvenience to staff and the public alike, and this work will continue to inform the project through to full implementation. '

'At this time, it is not anticipated that a further screening (of transition arrangements) will be required. However, if the phases and stages of the construction programme change significantly then this decision will be reviewed.'

AIM

The overall purpose of the masterplan is to create an accessible, safe, comfortable and attractive environment for the Hub's customers, visitors and employees alike that is functional and practical to operate, cost-effective to maintain, commercially attractive, efficient and sustainable. This includes the commercial development of adjoining lands in partnership with local businesses and government agencies.

The primary function of the Hub is to enable circulation of passengers with diverse needs safely around the concourse, to pay fares, board buses or trains with ease and equally to alight services and exit safely through the proposed masterplan area in comfort and with convenience.

In combination, the intended aim is:

Operating within available resources and working in partnership with both public and private sector bodies, to provide a state-of-the-art integrated transport hub for Belfast and the wider community in Northern Ireland that meets the diverse needs of all travelers, that offers facilities which are welcoming and accessible to all, that is sensitive to the history of the area, and that enhances local business, the environment and community.

3: CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE DATA AND RESEARCH

In order to carry out this Equality Impact Assessment, various sources of information have been relied upon, including those already referenced in the two Section 75 screening exercises (see above).

Population Data

⁴ A copy of the transition arrangements screening report is available at [belfasthubprojectscreeningq2.pdf \(azureedge.net\)](https://belfasthubprojectscreeningq2.azureedge.net)

Statistical profiles by Section 75 grounds of Northern Ireland (Appendix Two) and Belfast (Appendix Three) give some indication of the wide diversity of potential users of the hub, and in turn highlights the need to accommodate these various identities and their accompanying needs and priorities at the design and build stage of the project.

The Hub adjoins Blackstaff Ward, which at the time of the last census (2011) comprised 91.4% Protestant, 4.2% Roman Catholic and 4.4% Other/None.

In June 2015, it was estimated that of the 4,107 people living in the Ward, 2,134 (52%) were male and 1973 (48%) were female. This was made up of:

- 771 children aged 0-15 years;
- 1,865 people aged 16-39 years;
- 1,067 people aged 40-64 years; and
- 405 people 65 years and older.

Between 2005 and 2015 the population of Blackstaff Ward increased by 277 people or 7.2%.

Preliminary Consultation (2016)

In an earlier round of consultation (November – December 2016), 1,845 responses were obtained, and including a questionnaire. Four questions in particular were asked which are of specific relevance to Section 75:

- Do you have any personal need, access issue or priority concern in relation to the Belfast Hub proposals? If so, please specify.
- Do you envisage the Belfast Hub proposal having any positive or negative impact on certain user groups: age, gender, religion, political opinion, marital status, dependent status, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation?
- Do you have any evidence or information to support your views? If so, please specify.
- What changes to the Hub proposals would you suggest, if any? (Consider alternatives or enhancements that would ensure the Belfast Hub promotes equality for all, fairness and good relations)

In summary, the consultation highlighted:

- The importance of pedestrian connections to the city centre (both routes and signage);
- Preference for the station to be located as close to the city centre as possible, and concern regarding any additional walking distance;
- Appropriate provision for people with mobility issues both to and within the hub;
- Appropriate provision for people with visual and hearing impairments both to and within the hub;
- Access points designed to accommodate large flows of people safely and efficiently;
- Requirement for adequate seating provision – sheltered seating areas, quiet seating areas;
- Include child friendly spaces and family areas;
- Desire for building to be designed for hearing and visually impaired individuals;
- Desire for building to be designed for people with dementia;
- Desire for building to be designed for the elderly;
- Desire for the inclusion of sensory features and quiet areas;
- Desire for inclusion of covered areas and child friendly spaces;
- Desire for public realm to be designed for the visually impaired;

- Desire to retain the Boyne Bridge in situ;
- Suggestions for multilingual signage for tourists;
- Request for the design to promote the design which addresses safety and security.

Public Engagement

A significant commitment has been made to public engagement throughout the duration of the project (see p.7 above). This work has been supported by a full-time designated Community Liaison and Communications Manager within Translink, who continues to co-ordinate a wide range of engagement activities⁵. For example, as of January 2020,

- Nine community projects have been supported;
- Over 50 community events have been attended or hosted;
- Over £9,000 has been donated to local projects;
- 1,250 hours have been volunteered for local community and schools' projects;
- Over 2,000 local people have been directly engaged with the project;
- Over £25,000 of social value has been generated for the local community.⁶

Arts and Heritage Project

The Hub's Arts and Heritage programme began in December 2019⁷, and has since been completely reconfigured to address the challenges posed by Covid-19, including online delivery, via digital platforms etc. The consultancy firm, Haller Clarke (HC), with the assistance of the Hub team, has worked innovatively to address issues such as the digital divide and to ensure that as many people as practically possible could be included within the engagement process. To date the consultation process has involved;

- 56 one-to-one consultations with stakeholders from across society (Community, Business, etc.), delivered over 150 consultation hours;
- Five online focus groups (representing cross community and intergenerational sectors) delivered over 30 consultation hours;
- An online Survey;
- A Media 'Call for Stories' using traditional media routes;
- Digital Engagement via Instagram, Facebook and Twitter request a 'Call for Stories' and 'Digital Photobooth Exhibition';
- 2,000 Community Activity Packs, designed to capture young people's stories distributed to addresses within the Shaftsbury & Blackstaff Super Output Area (SOA's) in an effort to access households that may not be digitally connected;
- Community Committee members acted as 'Envoys' to gather additional community stories;

⁵ For further details go to <https://weaverscross.co.uk/neighbourhood/community-connections/>

⁶ For further details go to <https://weaverscross.co.uk/neighbourhood/connecting-people-with-place/>

⁷ For further details go to <https://weaverscross.co.uk/news-items/translink-calls-for-stories-to-celebrate-local-heritage-as-part-of-the-belfast-transport-hub-plans/>

- Translink undertook internal consultations with staff members to ascertain their own stories and historical recollections.

A draft report strategy outlining emerging themes, art recommendations and an arts programme to Translink has been developed by HC, who are recommending that a further round of consultation and community engagement is undertaken with the Community Committee and local stakeholders on draft strategy key issues. The additional consultation phase of the Arts & Heritage process will be integral in ensuring that local communities and stakeholders remain engaged in the evolving Arts & Heritage process, ensuring that social and local cultural value continues to be embedded in the process.

Community Committee

Central to embedding social value in the community engagement process was the convening of a 'Community Committee.' The primary role of the 'Community Committee' has been to ensure that community heritage is represented and aligned with the outputs and themes identified by the Arts and Heritage Strategy facilitators (HC), the Advisory Panel and the communities themselves.

Community Committee participants have been encouraged to fulfill the role of critical friend and were encouraged to take part in debate and discussion in the design of the Arts and Heritage (Placemaking) strategy. All members signed up to 'Community Committee' terms of reference with a stated ambition that participants should engage in process, reviewing and offering advice on community participation and feedback. The members also committed to act as ambassadors and advocate for the BTH Arts and Heritage strategy process and undertook a role as project envoys to gather additional stories from their local communities.

The Community Committee is cross community, inter-generational with representatives from the business and cultural and arts sector in Belfast. The Committee is comprised of representatives from;

- NOW group;
- Northern Ireland Youth Forum;
- Prince's Trust;
- Translink • Forward South;
- QUB PhD Student, Planner;
- Grosvenor Rd resident;
- Linen Quarter BID;
- Greater Village Regeneration Trust;
- Belfast South Community Resources;
- Sandy Row resident;
- Greater Falls Neighbourhood;
- Arts Ekta • Belfast Exposed;
- West Belfast Partnership Board.

The Community Committee has met on a monthly basis throughout the process.

Disability Issues and IMTAC

From 2017 onwards there has been a series of regular face-to-face meetings with staff and members of the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC)⁸. These meetings have been invaluable in ensuring that the design of the Hub accommodates the needs of those with all forms of disability (see *Consideration of Adverse Impact: Disability* below).

As one recent example of this type of engagement, on 3 June 2020, an online Zoom meeting was attended by various representatives of the design team and Translink, together with staff and members of.

The initial presentation by members of the design team provided detailed information on the proposed design and related features, including the following:

- The hub will provide a level, step free 150m concourse, with easy access to both bus zones and train platforms;
- The first floor will accommodate various food outlets and will be accessible by both stairs and lifts;
- Information will be provided via 12m x 2.25m display boards, 6m from ground level;
- Universal images/signage will be used wherever possible;
- Bluetooth beacons will be positioned throughout the hub;
- Freestanding emergency help points will be located at strategic points within the hub;
- Platform surfacing will include appropriate texturing and contrast toning/shading;
- An open access ticket/travel office will be located close to the entrance to the hub, together with a manned information point;
- Ticket vending machines will be designed to accommodate those with different sensory needs;
- Benches and rest areas will be located throughout the hub.

Following the presentation, consultees highlighted a number of issues for further consideration including the following:

- Appropriate staffing deployment levels to aid direction and to offer portage;
- Wheelchair assistance to be available within the hub
- Access to the hub, as well as within, including taxis and car parking, must be afforded due consideration;
- Use of appropriate types of tactile flooring to aid movement to and within the hub;
- Provision of accessible support dog spend areas;
- Contrasting tones to be incorporated into the final design;
- Catering facilities to be available at ground level;
- Responsiveness to Covid-19 considerations, e.g. distancing.

The Boyne Bridge

Development of the hub will involve the removal of the existing Boyne Bridge, Durham Street, BT12 5AB. Although the current road bridge was built in 1936, the brick structure incorporates two arches from an earlier bridge known as Saltwater Bridge, with historical

⁸ <https://www.imtac.org.uk/>

links going back over 400 years. In 2017 a local campaign was started to 'Save the Boyne Bridge'⁹, together with a petition that has been signed by 1.039 people¹⁰ to date.

While an application for listed status at that time was unsuccessful, Translink maintains a commitment to, 'Preserve the remains of the older Saltwater Bridge' and intends to 'reuse and integrate elements of the Boyne Bridge into the contemporary design'.

4: CONSIDERATION OF ADVERSE IMPACT

Each of the policy areas was examined in the light of information obtained to assess whether or not there was an adverse impact on any of the nine Section 75 categories, and to determine if action could be taken to further promote good relations.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

The project should generally have a positive impact on the area through a range of social and physical initiatives, in the short, medium and longer term. For example, bi-social clauses will guarantee at least 116 construction jobs locally, and the overwhelming majority of local residents have shown positive engagement to date. The new hub will be marginally closer to West Belfast (which is predominantly Roman Catholic) than the existing stations, but slightly further from the city centre, which is mixed. The future status of the Boyne Bridge within the scope of the project continues to generate concern among some local residents.

POLITICAL OPINION

The project should generally have a positive impact on the area through a range of social and physical initiatives, in the short, medium and longer term. For example, bi-social clauses will guarantee at least 116 construction jobs locally, and the overwhelming majority of local residents have shown positive engagement to date. The new hub will be marginally closer to West Belfast (which is predominantly nationalist/republican) than the existing stations, but slightly further from the city centre, which is mixed. The future status of the Boyne Bridge within the scope of the project continues to generate concern among some local residents.

RACIAL / ETHNIC GROUP

Signage should be universally accessible to address the needs of those accessing the hub whose first language may not be written English. The design should consider the adoption of universal pictorial signage and alternative language formats as and where appropriate.

AGE

Easy access is necessary to and within the hub for those older people with mobility issues, and in particular access and egress routes to bus zones and train platforms. Level access will be provided, and lifts to upper floors that can accommodate wheelchairs.

⁹ <http://www.boynebridge.co.uk/>

¹⁰ https://www.change.org/p/iaingreenway-to-have-the-oldest-existing-bridge-in-belfast-the-historic-site-listed?recruiter=979274020&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&recruited_by_id=fe2cf240-992c-11e9-b895-5318054af170

MARITAL STATUS

Those who are married are more likely to have dependants (see below).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Safety in public spaces is often cited as a priority for those from the LGB community. The facility should provide 24 hour safety within the Hub and its environs. The design of the building and its surrounding must take public safety into account, for example with regard to lighting, security and monitoring.

MEN & WOMEN GENERALLY

Separate male and female toilets, shower & changing facilities are currently proposed, along with gender-neutral accessible facilities.

Re: Transgender Community:

It is not always easy for transgender people to use the gender toilet they feel comfortable with, depending on their stage in the process of transitioning. A gender-neutral toilet could be used by anyone, and would stop transgender people from feeling isolated and stressed about going to the bathroom.

However, 'mixed' gender-neutral facilities are not always ideal: it can increase waiting time/queues for female users; and there are issues for some women of certain faiths using mixed bathrooms.

Single, self-contained gender-neutral cubicles would address this issue, and would also not be detrimental to women's safety. Alternatively, consider providing a separate gender-neutral toilet alongside existing gendered toilet facilities. People such as carers looking after someone of the opposite gender would also benefit from gender-neutral space.

DISABILITY

Engagement with IMTAC and sector representatives generally has been invaluable in helping to inform the design process to date. By way of example, this has highlighted the need to:

- consider the layout of 'changing places' facilities;
- include the provision of 'fire lifts' that enable the safe evacuation of disabled staff and passengers in the event of a fire (as opposed to 'disabled refuges');
- modify Customer Information Screen' to automatically display evacuation messages for those with hearing loss in the event of an emergency;
- slope platforms inwards to prevent wheelchairs and buggies rolling on to the track;
- design and locate Customer Information Points to enable passengers with learning difficulties and dementia to obtain face-to-face travel information from an easily identifiable and accessible point (where wheelchair assistance may be obtained);
- incorporate taxi ranks immediately adjacent to the main station entrance/exit with level access;
- ensure that the bus waiting area seating can accommodate those with a range of disabilities (e.g. differing heights and furniture).

More generally,

- trained staff will be available for immediate advice and support;
- appropriate general staff training will support the proper use of all available adaptations;

- level access will be provided where appropriate, and lifts operating to upper floors that are able to accommodate all types of wheelchair;
- signage will represent current best practice and be universally accessible to address the needs of the blind and visually impaired, along with those with literacy concerns;
- visual contrast recommendations will be adhered to when choosing final finishes/colours;
- obvious access routes, clear signage, suitable colours and contrasts, and acoustic measures, will all assist in achieving a calm environment that users will feel confident to explore.

In addition to these measures a recent review of the Hub design has been undertaken in order to accommodate issues arising from the recent Covid-19 epidemic. The review is ongoing and has already identified a number of design features for further consideration and adoption (e.g. automatic doors to avoid the need for touching; numerous hand sanitising stations; accessible ticket machines to minimise face-to-face interaction).

DEPENDANTS

For those with caring responsibilities for either young children, older people or those with a disability, accessing the hub, using its facilities and boarding/disembarking transport safely and easily will be of critical importance.

Level access will be provided, and lifts to upper floors to accommodate prams, buggies etc.

Sufficient seating should be provided throughout the concourse for visitors to rest.

5: MEASURES TO MITIGATE / ALTERNATIVE POLICIES

As the project moves towards the final build stage, the specific comments and general feedback provided by consultees will continue to inform the hub's design, along with continued engagement with various representative groups (e.g. IMTAC).

The development of a modern, integrated transport hub must take cognisance of the diverse needs of those who may choose to use the hub, and travel to and from the hub. Many of these issues relate to mobility and access, for example in relation to disability and age, while others could involve caring responsibilities, for example, children and older people.

Over time, consultees have prioritised a number of concerns (see above), and these are summarised below.

- Internal and external signage must recognise that written English may not be accessible to all users, for example those of different nationality, those with visual impairment or those with literacy problems more generally. Various Section 75 grounds can relate to these issues.
- Travel information will be immediately available in a format that accommodates the diverse needs of potential users, and this will extend to appropriate staffing deployment levels and training.
- At some time in the future it is likely that the hub may be in use 24 hours each day, the issue of safety for those who are vulnerable will be given due consideration at that time (e.g. lighting, CCTV, alarms). In the meanwhile, the opening of a small section of the hub as a safe area for those waiting for 'night buses' is being given due consideration.
- Facilities (e.g. catering, toilets) that are available within the hub will be designed and located mindful of the diverse needs of potential users.

- Surface design features (e.g. texture, colour, tone, shade) will aspire to accommodate the needs of all potential users, including those with sensory and motor disabilities.
- When replacing the existing bus and train stations at Great Victoria Street, the hub will increase the distance to the city centre by approximately 150 metres. While this may be unavoidable due to logistical and planning constraints, easy access to and from the hub will be afforded ongoing attention to ensure that it is seen as welcoming to all those of different identities.
- The historical status of the site of the Boyne Bridge within the project will continue to be afforded due and proportionate regard; ongoing engagement with the local community will aim to ensure that good relations are maintained and enhanced.
- Design features will take into account the long term impact of Covid-19 (e.g. safe distancing).
- Contractual obligations written into tendering documentation will ensure that Section 75 continues to be afforded due regard by all relevant parties (and including private sector contractors) at all stages of development.

These measures, when implemented, should further equality of opportunity generally, in compliance with the NITHCo's obligations included in its Equality Scheme and with its obligations generally under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The masterplan will be regularly monitored to ensure that no adverse impact occurs and where it is identified then appropriate remedial action will be taken.

6: FORMAL CONSULTATION

We wish to consult as widely as possible on the findings included in this EQIA together with the preliminary recommendations offered above. With this in mind we propose to take the following actions:

- a press release will be prepared and submitted to various media outlets;
- prominent advertisements inviting the public to comment on this matter will be placed in the main newspapers in Northern Ireland, in accordance with normal practice;
- this report will be issued to all of the consultees listed in our Equality Scheme and to any member of the public on request;
- a copy of this report will be posted on the website;
- individual consultation meetings will be arranged with representatives of particular interest groups on request;
- consultation meetings for the general public will be arranged at suitable, accessible venues in the city;
- publicity material will be available at each operational location;
- the report will be made available, on request, in alternative formats including Braille, disk and audiocassette and in minority languages for those who are not fluent in English.

The arrangements for consultation are being co-coordinated by the Equality Officer, to whom all enquiries should be made.

The closing date for responses is 9 July 2021.

7: PUBLICATION

Following the end of the twelve week consultation period, all feedback will be collated and will be used to inform the Final Decision Report which will be made publicly available via hard copy, in the press and also on the website at www.translink.co.uk/bth

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APPENDIX ONE

Sense Check Report June 2018

SENSE CHECK REPORT
17163 – Integrated Belfast Transport Hub
Version 03
11 June 2018



PUBLIC SECTOR DUTIES

SECTION 75 OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1998 (the Act)

The Act, which brought the Equality Commission into being, also introduced new equality duties on public authorities – the aim of which is to ensure that equality of opportunity and good relations are central to policy making and service delivery.

These duties apply to designated public authorities: *including government departments & agencies, local councils, health trusts, housing associations, colleges & universities and education & library boards.*

The Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) that owns TRANSLINK, is one of these designated public authorities.

Such designated public authorities are subject to the statutory duties set out in **Section 75 (1) and (2)** of the Act to have:

- Due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories, and
- To have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief; political opinion; and racial group.

Section 75 requires public authorities to have due regard for the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- Men and women generally
- Persons with a disability and persons without
- Persons with dependants and persons without

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive action to promote equality of opportunity and encourages public authorities to take action to address inequality among the groups listed above.

A public authority's 'Equality Scheme' outlines the procedural arrangements that the authority proposes to follow to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 ("DDA") Section 49A requires designated public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons, and to the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life. This duty is supported by an obligation to have a Disability Action Plan*.

**Section 49A and Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the 'DDA 1995'), (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006).*

A public authority's 'Disability Action Plan' outlines the procedural arrangements that the authority proposes to follow to fulfil the Section 49A statutory duties.

SECTION 75 and DISABILITY ACCESS AUDIT

PURPOSE

To create an accessible, safe comfortable and attractive environment for customers, visitors and employees alike, that is functional and practical to operate.

FUNCTION OF HUB

To enable circulation of passengers with diverse needs safely around the concourse, to pay fares, board buses or trains with ease and equally to alight services and exit safely through the proposed masterplan area in comfort and with convenience.

POLICY SCOPING

Screening is one of the key tools to enable public authorities to fulfil their statutory obligations and mainstream the Section 75 equality and good relations duties into policy development.

The scoping process helps prepare the background and context, and set out the aims & objectives for the policy being screened. This identifies potential constraints as well as opportunities to inform the policy maker.

TRANSLINK has endeavoured to ensure that Section 75 considerations have already been mainstreamed into the development of the project at successive stages of implementation to date, including during the consultation process carried out between November & December 2016. Positive and constructive feedback was received.

TRANSLINK'S Section 75 Policy Screening Form provides the following information.

Internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) considered:

- **Staff**
Staff at the existing bus and rail stations, together with Translink employees generally, will be affected by the new Hub.
- **Service Users**
All those who use the new facilities will be impacted on.
- **Other public sector organisations**
The relevant partners (e.g. DfI, SIB, Belfast City Council)
- **Voluntary/community/trade unions**

Staff associations and trade unions; local community groups; Section 75 representative bodies

Public consultation and engagement – evidence gathered revealed:

- Importance of pedestrian connections to the city centre (routes and signage)
- Preference for the station to be located closer to the city centre and concern regarding additional walking distance
- Appropriate provision for people with mobility issues
- Appropriate provision for people with visual and hearing impairments
- Access points designed to accommodate large flows of people
- Requirement for adequate seating provision – sheltered seating areas, quiet seating areas
- Include child friendly spaces and family areas
- Desire for building to be designed for hearing and visually impaired individuals
- Desire for building to be designed for people with dementia
- Desire for building to be designed for the elderly
- Desire for the inclusion of sensory features and quiet areas
- Desire for inclusion of covered areas and child friendly spaces
- Desire for public realm to be designed for the visually impaired
- Desire to retain the Boyne Bridge in situ
- Suggestions for multilingual signage for tourists
- Request for a design which addresses safety and security

Needs, experiences and priorities of the Section 75 categories:

The development of a modern, integrated transport hub must take cognisance of the diverse needs of those who may choose to use the hub, and travel to and from the hub. Many of these issues relate to mobility and access, for example in relation to disability and age, while others could involve caring responsibilities, for example, children and older people.

Signage must recognise that written English may not be accessible to all users, for example those of different nationality, or those with literacy problems more generally. Various Section 75 grounds can relate to these issues.

As the Hub is likely to be in use 24 hours each day, the issue of safety for those who are vulnerable must be given due consideration.

Facilities that are available within the hub must likewise be designed mindful of the diverse needs of potential users.

The Hub will replace the existing bus and train stations at Great Victoria Street, and will increase the distance to the city centre by approximately 150m. This issue has been raised by a number of consultees.

Screening Questions:

The 'Screening Questions' within the Policy Screening Form detail the likely impact on equality of opportunity for stakeholders for each of the Section 75 grounds; discuss opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within any of the Section 75 categories; and establish likely impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. A number of mitigating measures have already been introduced as a result of public engagement.

DRAWING REVIEW

The architectural drawing package has been reviewed in relation to impact upon staff and service users, with consideration given to evidence gathered through public consultation and engagement, particularly in relation to: mobility & access / caring responsibilities / language / safety / and distance.

Comments on whether the different needs and priorities of the Section 75 categories (as identified in the Policy Screening Form) have been addressed, may be summarised as follows:

1 – RELIGIOUS BELIEF

- Construction jobs available; enhanced proximity to local communities.

2 – POLITICAL OPINION

- Construction jobs available; enhanced proximity to local communities.

3 – RACIAL / ETHNIC GROUP

- Signage should be universally accessible to address the needs of the blind and visually impaired. We understand the design will also consider alternative language formats.
- *As no signage proposals have been provided within the Works Information, no further comment can be made.*

4 – AGE

- Easy access for those with mobility problems; access & egress routes to buses and trains.
- Level access will be provided, and lifts to upper floors.
- *Comments in greater detail may be found within the [DDA Compliance](#) section of this report.*

5 – MARITAL STATUS

- Those who are married are more likely to have dependants (*see below*).

6 – SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- Safety in public spaces is a priority. We understand the facility will provide 24 hour safety within the Hub and its environs. *M&E Engineers to comment on the proposals with regard to lighting, security & monitoring.*

7 – MEN & WOMEN GENERALLY

- Separate male & female toilet, shower & changing facilities are currently proposed, with unisex accessible facilities. *Comments in greater detail may be found within the [DDA Compliance](#) section of this report, specific to those with a physical disability.*
- Re: Transgender Community:
It is not always easy for transgender people to use the gender toilet they feel comfortable with, depending on their stage in the process of transitioning. A gender-neutral toilet could be used by anyone, and would stop transgender people from feeling isolated and stressed about going to the bathroom. However, 'mixed' gender-neutral facilities are not always ideal: it can increase waiting time/queues for female users; and there are issues for some women of certain faiths using mixed bathrooms. Single, self-contained gender-neutral cubicles would address this issue, and also not be detrimental to women's safety. Alternatively, consider providing a separate gender-neutral toilet alongside existing gendered toilet facilities. People such as carers looking after someone of the opposite gender would also benefit from gender-neutral space.

8 – DISABILITY

- *Comments in greater detail may be found within the [DDA Compliance](#) section of this report, specific to those with a physical disability.*
- *M&E Engineers to comment on the proposals with regard to safety alerts e.g. fire alarm alert for deaf visitors to the Hub.*
- We understand appropriate staff training will be given to support the proper use of all available adaptations.
- Level access will be provided, and lifts to upper floors.
- Signage should be universally accessible to address the needs of the blind and visually impaired.
- Visual contrast recommendations should be adhered to when choosing final finishes/colours.
- A mental illness is a disease that causes mild to severe disturbances in **thinking, perception and behaviour**. These disturbances significantly impair a person's ability to cope with life's ordinary demands and routines. With the proper care and treatment, a person can recover and resume normal activities. Many mental illnesses are believed to have biological causes, just like cancer, diabetes and heart disease, but some mental disorders are *caused by a person's environment and experiences*.
- Mental disability or illness falls into five major categories:
 - Anxiety disorders (phobias, panic disorders, OCD)
 - Mood disorders (e.g. depression, bipolar disorder)
 - Schizophrenia (a serious disorder that affects how a person thinks, feels & acts)
 - Dementias (e.g. Alzheimer's; loss of mental functions, including memory loss and a decline in intellectual and physical skills)
 - Eating disorders (e.g. anorexia nervosa and bulimia)

We understand appropriate staff training will be given to support the proper use of all available adaptations. Obvious access routes, clear signage, suitable colours and contrasts, and acoustic measures, will all assist in achieving a calm environment that users will feel confident to explore.

9 – DEPENDANTS

- For those with caring responsibilities for either young children, older people or those with a disability, accessing the hub, using its facilities and boarding/disembarking transport will be key.
- Level access will be provided, and lifts to upper floors.
- Sufficient seating should be provided throughout the concourse for visitors to rest.
- *Comments in greater detail may be found within the DDA Compliance section of this report, specific to those with a physical disability or reduced mobility.*

SUMMARY

Subject to comments in this section of the Sense Check Report, and the encompassment of recommendations made elsewhere in this document (*e.g. DDA Compliance*), we conclude that the transport hub will meet the diverse needs of all travellers and offer facilities which are welcoming and accessible to all.

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APPENDIX TWO

Data on Residents of Northern Ireland¹¹

Totals

	2001	2011
All residents	1,685,267	1,810,863
All residents aged 16+	1,287,211	1,431,540
Number of households	626,718	703,275

Religious belief (religion or religion brought up in)

	2001		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
Catholic	737,473	43.76	817,385	45.14
Protestant & other Christian (including Christian related)	895,382	53.13	875,717	48.36
Other religion	6,573	0.39	16,592	0.92
None	45,839	2.72	101,169	5.59

Ethnic group

	2001		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
White	1,670,988	99.15	1,778,449	98.21
Chinese	4,145	0.25	6,303	0.35
Irish Traveller	1,710	0.10	1,301	0.07
Indian	1,567	0.09	6,198	0.34
Pakistani	666	0.04	1,091	0.06
Bangladeshi	252	0.01	540	0.03
Other Asian	194	0.01	4,998	0.28
Black Caribbean	255	0.02	372	0.02
Black African	494	0.03	2,345	0.13
Black Other	387	0.02	899	0.05
Mixed	3,319	0.20	6,014	0.33
Other	1,290	0.08	2,353	0.13

¹¹ Data from Northern Ireland Census (unless otherwise indicated)

Country of birth

	2001		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
Northern Ireland	1,534,268	91.04	1,608,853	88.84
Great Britain	81,389	4.83	82,724	4.56
Republic of Ireland	39,051	2.32	37,833	2.09
Other EU prior to 2004 expansion	N/A	N/A	9,703	0.54
Other EU after 2004 expansion	N/A	N/A	35,704	1.97
Other	30,559	1.81	36,046	1.99

Note: Eight countries joined the European Union in May 2004: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Age

	2001		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
Under 16	398,061	23.62	379,323	20.95
16-24	211,501	12.55	227,634	12.57
25-44	489,256	29.03	498,046	27.50
45-64	363,343	21.56	442,140	24.42
65-84	200,041	11.87	232,324	12.83
85+	23,426	1.39	31,396	1.73

Marital and civil partnership status

	2001		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
Single	426,195	33.11	517,393	36.14
Married	658,023	51.12	680,831	47.56
In a civil partnership	N/A	N/A	1,243	0.09
Separated	49,429	3.84	56,911	3.98
Divorced /civil partnership dissolved	53,033	4.12	78,074	5.45
Widowed/ surviving partner of civil partnership	100,531	7.81	97,088	6.78

Gender

	2001		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
Male	821,399	48.74	887,323	49.00
Female	863,868	51.26	923,540	51.00

Disability

	2001		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
Disability / long term health problem	343,120	20.36	374,646	20.69
No disability / long term health problem	1,342,147	79.64	1,436,217	79.31

Dependents

	2001		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
Households with dependent children	262,076	36.47	238,094	33.86
Lone parent households with dependent children			63,921	9.09
People providing unpaid care	185,066	10.98	213,980	11.82

Political opinion

The elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly in May 2011 indicated the following voting pattern:

	DUP	UUP	Alliance	Others	SDLP	SF
Seats won	38	16	8	3	14	29
Change from 2007	+2	+2	-1	=	-2	-1
Vote share	30.0%	13.2%	7.7%	7.9%	14.2%	26.9%
Change from 2007	-0.1	+1.7	+2.5	-0.1	-1.0	+0.7

Source: Economic & Social Research Council (www.ark.ac.uk/elections)

Sexual Orientation

The Rainbow Project estimates that, on the basis of national and international research, 1 in 10 people in Northern Ireland would not identify as being heterosexual.

APPENDIX 3

Data on Residents of Belfast

(Extract from Belfast Local Government Plan Topic Paper 17: Population, 2017)

4.0 Equality Considerations

4.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory duty on public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial
- group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependents and persons without.

4.2 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligations, public authorities are required to have regard to the need to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

4.3 The principle of promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between people must be a key objective behind the plan and will be a central theme of the sustainability assessment. In land use planning terms, this means ensuring everyone benefits from quality housing, employment, and access to public services and recreation facilities. These themes will be addressed in more detail in later papers. However, this paper begins the process of identifying issues and needs facing different groups within the area over and above the general population, so that these can be considered at every stage of the plan making process. If an aim of the plan is also to help build a cohesive society then it must also be recognised that this can only be achieved by “sharing space” and “accessing opportunities”.

(A) Age Structure

4.4 The age structure of a population has obvious implications for planning. A growing young population will impact on the demand for and provision of childcare facilities, nursery, primary and secondary schools. A growing working age population would necessitate that planning provides adequate housing especially for those entering the housing market and employment opportunities. For a growing elderly population, adequate services and housing to meet their specific needs must also be considered.

Figure 9: Age Structure of Population 2014

District	All Persons	Persons: 0-15 years	Persons: 16-39 years	Persons: 40-64 years	Persons: 65+ years
Northern Ireland	1,851,621	385,200 (20.80%)	583,116 (31.49%)	591,481 (31.94%)	291,824 (15.76%)
Belfast LGD 2014	338,907	66,581 (19.65%)	122,942 (36.28%)	100,076 (29.53%)	49,308 (14.55%)

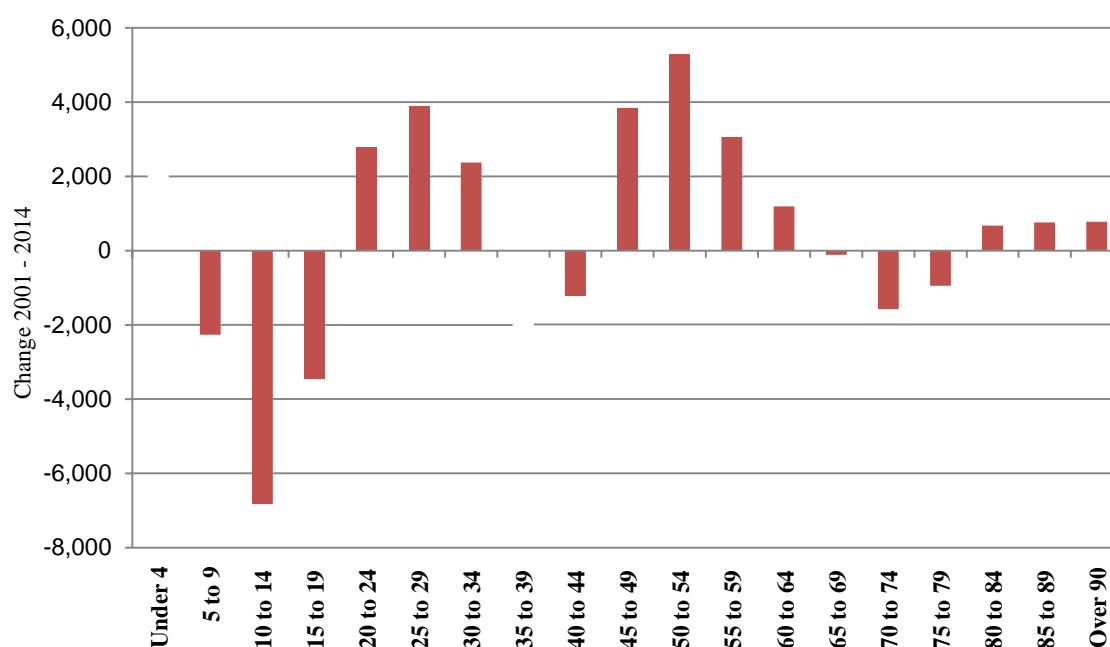
Source: NISRA Population Estimates Broad Age Bands 2014 (Administrative Geographies)

4.5 On Census day 2011, the median age of those living in Belfast in 2011 was 35 years,

which is lower than the Northern Ireland average (37 years) (BCC City Profile 2015). NISRA estimate that in 2015, 19.65% of the Belfast population were children aged 0-15 years, lower than the Northern Ireland average of 20.8%. Older persons (i.e. 65 years and over) made up 14.55% of the Belfast population, again lower than the Northern Ireland average of 15.76%.

- 4.6** Over the decade 2014-2024² the population of Northern Ireland is projected to increase by 5.3 per cent (i.e. 98,217 people), reaching 1,938,715 people in 2024. While the overall population of Belfast increased between 2001 and 2014, several age groups declined in size during this period. This includes younger people aged 5 to 19, residents aged 35 to 44 and those aged 65 to 79 years old. The strongest growth occurred in those aged 50 to 54 over this period, but comparatively strong growth was also seen in the those age groups around this cohort (45 to 64) and the younger working age population (20 to 34).

Figure 10: Change in the Age Profile of Belfast 2001 – 2014



Source: NISRA, Turley 2016¹

- 4.7** Population growth is expected for each of the 11 new local government districts over the decade, ranging from 1.4 per cent (Derry and Strabane) to 10.4 per cent (Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon). Based on these projections, Belfast's growth of 3.3 per cent is the fifth highest out of the 11 Local Government Districts.
- 4.8** In Belfast, the number of people of working age (as defined in April 2010, consists of the male population aged 16-64 and the female population aged 16-59) is projected to increase marginally from 94,357 people in 2014 to a projected 96,453 people in 2024 (2.2% increase). In contrast the number of people of pensionable age (Pensioners as defined in

² **NB.** The Belfast City Population and Housing Growth Study completed on behalf of the Council in

October 2016 is based on the 2014 population estimates and 2014-based population projections, being the most recent data available at the time.

April 2010 (males aged 65 and over and females aged 60 and over) is projected to increase from 33,779 in 2010 to 36,647 in 2025, an increase of 8.4%.

- 4.9** Closer examination of the Super Output Areas (SOAs) within the new council area indicates that some have slightly older populations than the district average and some have much younger populations. A higher proportion of children under 16 years can be found in areas such as Whiterock 1, Cliftonville 1, Legoniel 1, Ardoyne 3, Ballymacarrett 2, Falls 2 and Shankill 1, which all have children as over a quarter of their populations, whilst a significant proportion of the SOAs around Queen's University in Stranmillis and Botanic have under 10% of their populations as Children. In contrast, the proportion of population aged 65 and over is significantly higher than district level in areas including Upper Malone 1, Cherry Valley 1, Crumlin 1, Stormont 1, Fortwilliam 1 and Andersonstown 1 & 2, which are all over a quarter over 65. These areas are contrastable with the SOAs near Queen's University with SOAs at Botanic (1-5), Windsor (2, 3 & 4) and Stranmillis (2 & 3) all having less than 7% over 65s.
- 4.10** These variations between areas will require more targeted responses with regard to the type of services needed. The growing number of elderly people is a key factor in declining average household size. This has been taken into account by DRD when formulating the Regional Development Strategy 2035 Housing Growth Indicators. A Local Development Plan has a role in providing development land to meet these indicators (which will be discussed in the housing paper) and facilitate housing units to meet the needs of the elderly, particularly nursing homes, sheltered accommodation and smaller sized units. It also has a role in ensuring such units are accessible. The Development Plan housing zonings need to ensure that all housing, including for the elderly, is sited where it is accessible to local services and transportation. These services include health and other community facilities together with recreation and shops. A rising elderly population will also increase demand for health and community services, the development of which will also need to be accommodated.
- 4.11** In 2011, around one fifth of the population was under 16. Children are also a vulnerable group. In 2014/2015, approximately 109,500 children (25%) in Northern Ireland were in relative poverty before housing costs. This is two percentage points higher than 2013/2014 and 5 percentage points higher than 2012/2013. Young people can be particularly vulnerable to the vehicular traffic; therefore, safe and sustainable access to community and recreation facilities, including play parks and sports grounds, must remain high on the agenda.

(B) Gender and Life Expectancy

- 4.12** The usually resident population in Northern Ireland and the Belfast LGD is broadly split on a 50/50 basis between men and women with slightly more females in 2014 in both.

Figure 11: Gender balance of Belfast Population- 2011

Sex	Belfast LGD (%)	N.Ireland (%)
Male	48.2	49
Female	51.8	51

Source: NISRA Population Totals (LGD2014)

- 4.13** Life expectancy continues to improve for both males and females. Between 2000 and 2010, life expectancy for males improved at a slightly faster rate than for females, reducing the gender gap to females. Belfast continues to have a life expectancy of slightly more than two years less than the NI average. Belfast has a larger differential between male and female life expectancy than the NI average with females having a life expectancy of five years more than men born in the same year do.
- 4.14** In the UK, life expectancy at birth is expected to increase by around five years between 2012 and 2037 (Office of National Statistics, 2013) for both men and women and it is therefore anticipated that life expectancy will similarly increase in Belfast.

Figure 12: Life Expectancy by Gender at Birth in Belfast - 2000 & 2010

	2000		2010		% Change	% Change
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
NI	75.25	80.17	77.82	82.28	3.42%	2.63%
Old Belfast LGD	73.20	78.80	75.20	80.60	2.73%	2.28%

Source: NISRA Demography Life Expectancy at Birth

(C) Marital Status

- 4.15** The marital status of the population influences the composition of households and therefore the demand for housing. Since 2001, there has been an increase in the percentage of divorced people, a decrease in the percentage of people married and an increase in the proportion of single people in N. Ireland. In the new Belfast City Council Area, The 2011 census data shows that in the new Belfast Council Area there is higher proportion of single people, 45.32% of over 16s, than the Northern Ireland (NI) average (36.14%). A lower proportion of the adult population is married (35.57% compared with a NI average of 47.56%) and a marginally higher proportion are divorced (6.17% compared with the regional average of 5.45%).

Figure 13: Marital Status- 2011

	All People ≥ 16	Single (never married) %	Married ³ %	Divorced %	Widowed ⁴ %
NI	1,431,540	36.14	47.56	5.45	6.78
Old Belfast LGD	269,654	45.32	35.57	6.17	7.46

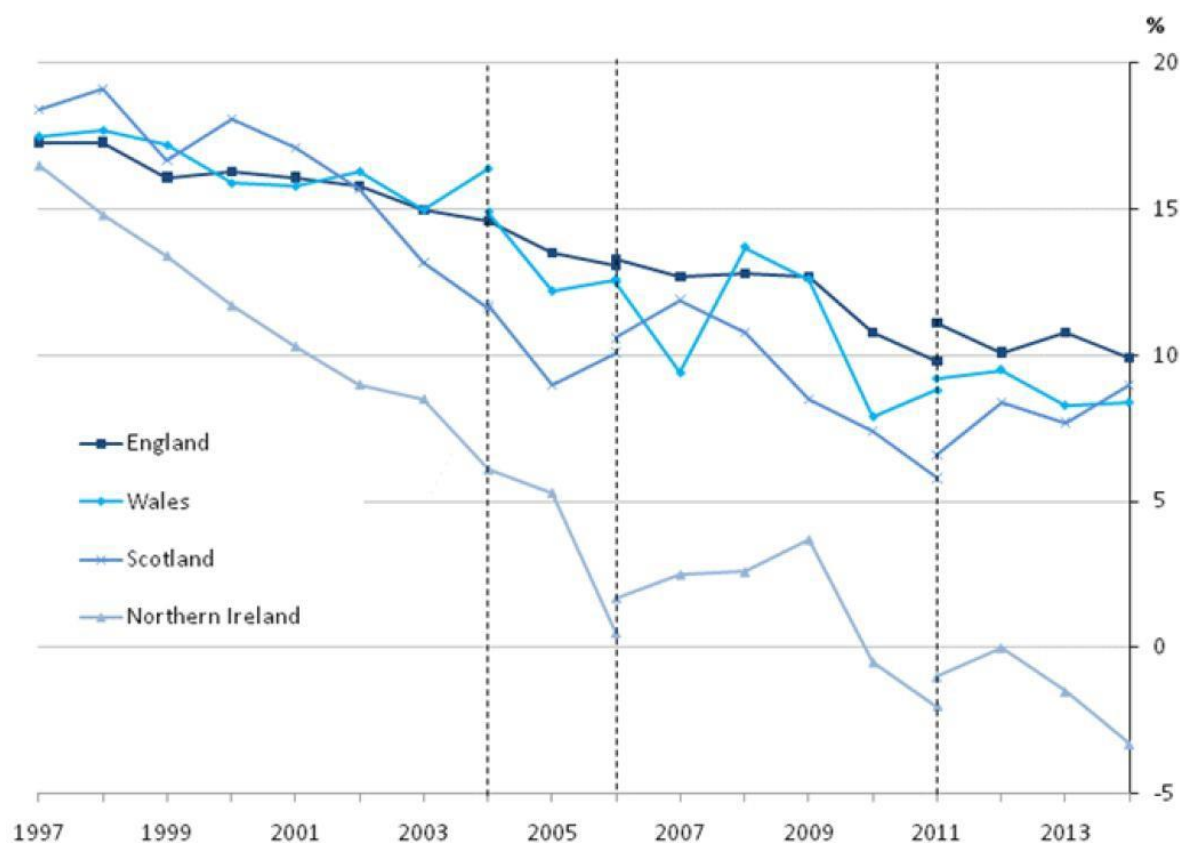
Source: NISRA Census 2011

³ Married – This includes people who were remarried; those who are separated but still legally married; and those in a same-sex civil partnership.

⁴ Widowed includes surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership.

- 4.16** The role for planning is to adequately provide for appropriate housing to meet the needs of the population. There will need to be units provided for single people. It is reasonable to assume that many single wage earners will not have the same purchase power of a double income household. Single people also have different social needs to those who are married and have families. Young, single people are key to the economy of any town centers, providing a significant part of the market for pubs, clubs and restaurants. However, this can mask the feeling of social exclusion experienced by many single people, particularly the elderly, disabled and single parents. Single parents remain one of the most disadvantaged groups with over half falling within low income groups and over half of lone parent families not having access to a car (Poverty site, 2010).
- 4.17** There are key differences between the sexes in that women tend to take on the role of carer whether it be for children or aging relatives. The traditional gender pay gap (i.e. the difference between men's and women's earnings as a percentage of men's earnings) based on median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time employees has reversed in Northern Ireland as women are now higher earners than men are. This is, in part, due to a higher proportion of public sector jobs here than in the rest of the UK. There are more women employed in this sector than men and these jobs tend to be higher paid, in general, than in the private sector (Op Cit).

Figure 14: Gender Pay Gap 1997-2014



Source: Office of National Statistics 2014

- 4.18** This figure is based on full time work. It therefore masks the fact that in NI there are more women in part-time work (167,000 women compared with 64,000 men). DETI's 2014

Annual Survey of Hours and Earning by contrast shows that the median gross annual pay for women is almost 2/3 of what men are paid (£14,871 compared with £22,327). This is exacerbated by a decrease in the median figure for females of 0.9% when male median wages increased by 2.4%.

Figure 15: Gross Annual Pay (£) for all Employees (who had been in the same job for 1+ years), NI/UK 2014

Description	Northern Ireland		United Kingdom	
	Median (£s)	Annual percentage change 2013-14	Median (£s)	Annual percentage change 2013-14
All	18,764	1.6	22,044	0.9
Male	22,327	2.4	27,162	0.0
Female	14,871	-0.9	17,103	0.8
Full-time	24,020	0.3	27,195	0.7
Part-time	8,624	4.7	9,000	1.6
Public Sector All	23,105	2.1	24,302	1.2
Private Sector All	16,375	3.5	21,259	0.9
Public Sector Full-time	29,658	3.6	29,785	1.0
Private Sector Full-time	21,345	3.7	26,000	0.8

a Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS

(D) Households with or without dependent children

- 4.19** A “dependent child” is defined as 0-15 or aged 16-18 who is a full-time student and living in a family with his or her parent(s) or grandparent(s) (Census 2011). In both Northern Ireland and Belfast, the proportion of households (including lone parent households) with dependent children has declined since 1981.

Figure 16: Percentage of Households with Dependent Children– 1981 & 2011

Households	N. Ireland	Belfast
% with dependent children 1981	45.98%	37.30%
% with dependent children 2011	33.85%	29.74%

Source: Census 1981, 2011

- 4.20** A closer examination of the Super Output Areas within each district reveals that many have much higher proportions of households with children than the district level including Whiterock 1, Glencolin 1, Cliftonville 1, Upper Springfield 2 and Legoneil 1. At the opposite end of the scale, other SOAs around Queen’s University (Botanic 1, 2, 3 & 4 and Windsor 2, 3 & 4) are those with the lowest proportion of households with dependent children as all are less than one in eight households.

(E) Racial Group and Ethnicity

- 4.21** The 2011 census data showed that 96.69% of the population of the new Belfast Council Area are white. Whilst this represents the vast majority of the population, Belfast is also the

most ethnically diverse council in Northern Ireland. The main minority ethnic groups in Belfast are Chinese (0.71%), Indian (0.70%), Other Asian (0.61%), Mixed (0.48%), Black African (0.32%), Irish Travelers (0.08%) and Pakistani (0.08%).

- 4.22** In the new Belfast City Council Area (from Census 2011), 5.97% of the resident population were born either in the European Union (EU) (2.58% - 0.67% pre-2004 accession states and 1.91% post-2004 accession states) or outside the EU (3.39%). It is unlikely that the Local Development Plan will have a particular impact on these groups; however, it is important to monitor changes over time as this may have implications particularly in relation to equality of access to homes and jobs. The housing needs assessment undertaken by the NIHE addresses the distinct needs in terms of Irish Travelers.

(F) Sexual Orientation

- 4.23** Sexual orientation is the only equality strand on which the UK census does not collect information⁵. However, several UK and NI based studies have attempted to quantify the number of people who identify as LGB. Estimates for LGB population range from 0.3-10% using different sources. A commonly used estimate of LGB people in the UK, accepted by Stonewall UK, is approximately 5-7% of the population.⁶
- 4.24** A growing body of research indicates that LGB young people are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience bullying, exclusion and intimidation in the educational institution. This can lead to higher rates of depression, suicidal ideation, self-harm and other risk-taking behaviours amongst LGB&T young people⁷. Young LGB people are 5 times more likely to be medicated for depression, 2.5 times more likely to self-harm and 3 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts. Further to this 28.6% of young same sex attracted men showed signs of a mental health problem compared to 10.2% of those who were attracted to the opposite sex.⁸
- 4.25** One of the key issues for LGB people is the promotion of community safety across the city to reduce both homophobic hate crime incidents and fear of crime. Research by the Rainbow Project in 2009 found that 21% of gay and bisexual males and 18% of LGB females had been victim of one or more homophobic hate crimes or incidents in the previous three years and 30% of these incidents resulted in physical injury. In addition, 13% of LGB people felt that harassment/attacks on people because of their sexual orientation in their neighbourhood was a problem.⁹
- 4.26** The PSNI Annual Bulletin "Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police" shows that in 2014/ 15 there 126 incidents with a homophobic motivation recorded in Belfast, an increase of 11 incidents (9.6% increase) from the previous year. This

⁵ <http://www.ark.ac.uk/pdfs/policybriefs/pbso.pdf>

⁶ *Through Our Eyes, The Housing and Homeless Experience of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans people in Northern Ireland, NIHE, 2015*

⁷ *Outstanding in your field: Exploring the needs of LGB&T people in rural Northern Ireland, The Rainbow Project, 2016*

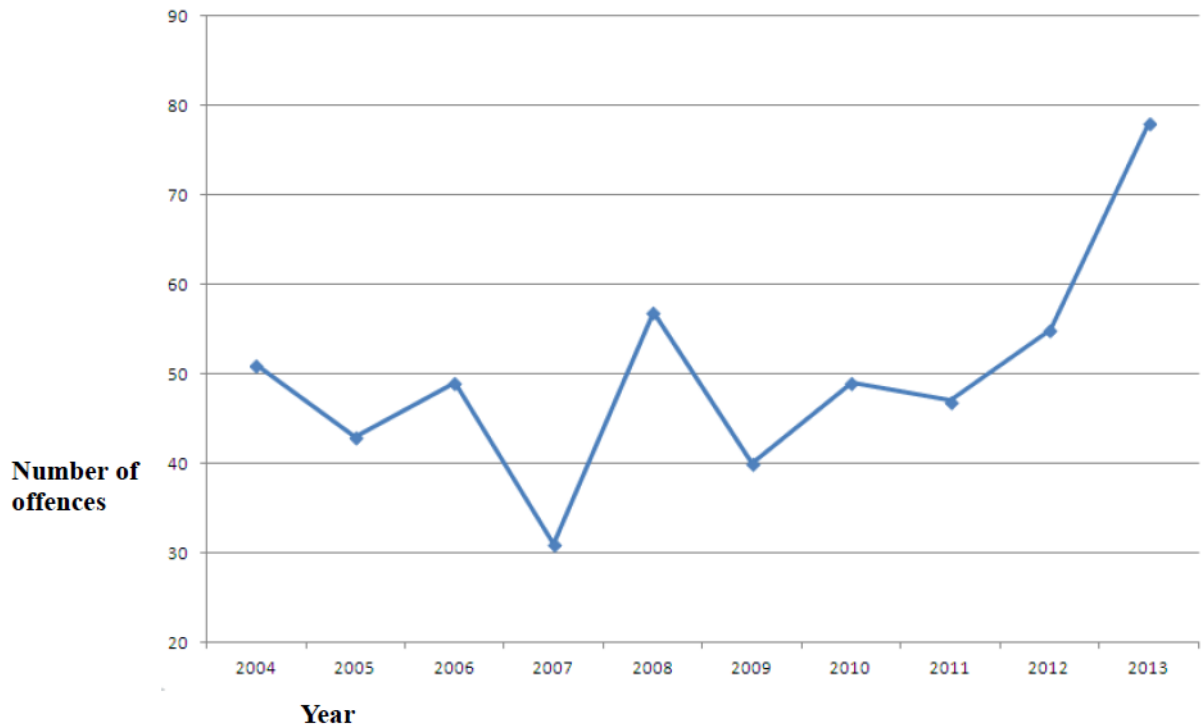
⁸ *Inequalities in Health: A Strategy for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, The Rainbow Project, 2010*

⁹ *Through Our Eyes: Perceptions and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People towards Homophobic Hate Crime and Policing in Northern Ireland, The Rainbow Project, 2009*

represents 37.7% of all incidents with a homophobic motivation recorded in N Ireland in 2014/ 15 (334). The Bulletin also reports that there were 82 recorded crimes with a homophobic motivation in Belfast, an increase of 9 recorded crimes (or 12%) from the previous year. This represents 39.2% of all recorded crimes with a homophobic motivation across N Ireland in 2014/ 15 (209 recorded crimes in NI with a homophobic motivation).¹⁰

4.27

Figure 17: Hate Crimes Offences Recorded with a Homophobic Motivation



Source: NISRA

- 4.28 Whilst the plan is unlikely to bring forward specific proposals and policies for this group, it is anticipated that many of the measures in a Local Development Plan aimed at providing a range of house types, creating employment and accessible services as well as improving safety and security will benefit this group.

(G) Disability and Health

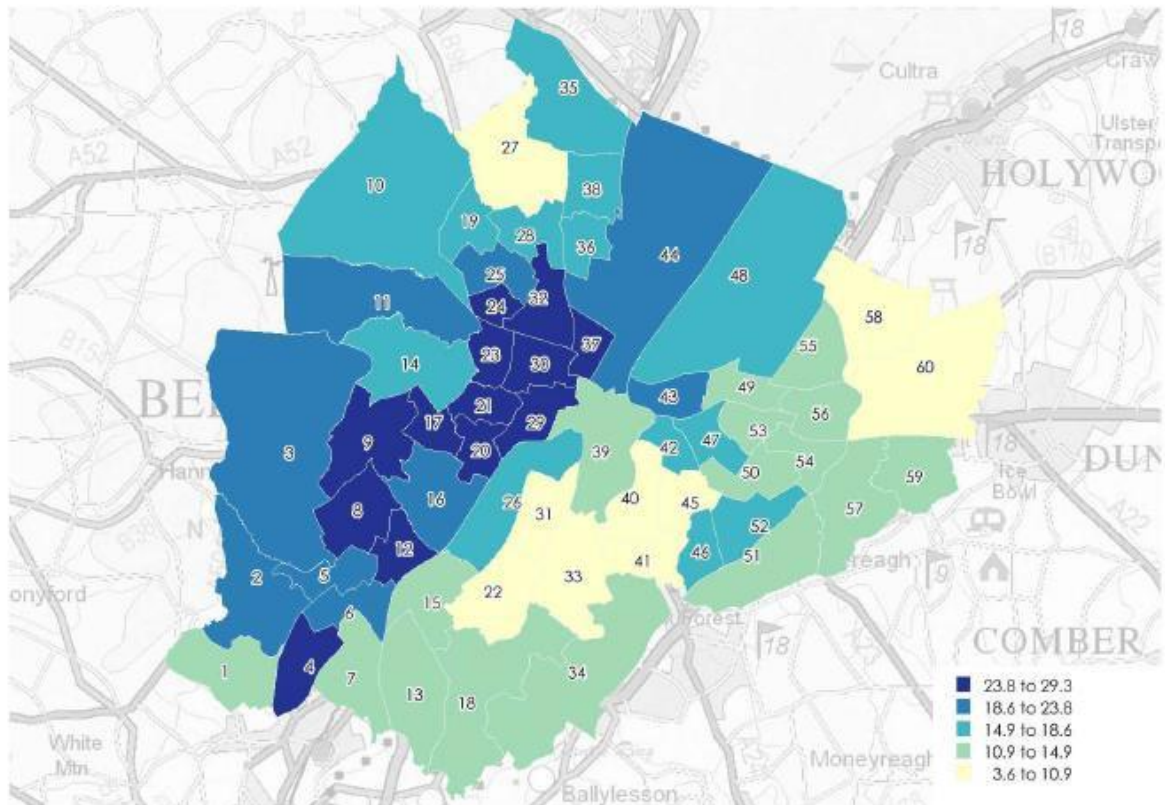
- 4.29 In February 2014, there were 55,480 people, or 16.6% of all residents, in receipt of at least one disability-related benefit in Belfast. Belfast had the second highest proportion of disability-related benefit recipients (Belfast Profile 2015).



¹⁰ PSNI Annual Bulletin "Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police", August 2015

Belfast's disability-related benefit claimant level is above the Northern Ireland average of 13.9%. The highest concentrations of disability related benefits claimants are located in areas of North and West Belfast. This is to be contrasted with some areas in the South and East, which have some of the lowest levels of disability related benefits in Northern Ireland (see map below).

Figure 18: Proportion of People in Receipt of at Least on Disability-related Benefit at Ward Level, February 2014



1	Lagmore	23	Woodvale	45	Ravenhill
2	Poleglass	24	Ardoyne	46	Cregagh
3	Collin Glen	25	Cliftonville	47	Beersbridge
4	Twinbrook	26	Blackstaff	48	Sydenham
5	Stewartstown	27	Cavehill	49	Connswater
6	Ladybrook	28	Chichester Park	50	Orangefield
7	Dunmurry	29	Falls	51	Hillfoot
8	Shaw's Road	30	Shankill	52	Merok
9	Turf Lodge	31	Windsor	53	Bloomfield
10	Legoniel	32	Water Works	54	Sandown
11	Forth River	33	Stranmillis	55	Belmont
12	Andersonstown	34	Belvoir	56	Knock
13	Finaghy	35	Bellevue	57	Shandon
14	Ballygomartin	36	Fortwilliam	58	Garnerville
15	Musgrave	37	New Lodge	59	Gilnahirk
16	Falls Park	38	Innisfayle	60	Stormont
17	Ballymurphy	39	Central		
18	Upper Malone	40	Ormeau		
19	Ballysillan	41	Rosetta		
20	Beechmount	42	Woodstock		
21	Clonard	43	Ballymacarrett		
22	Malone	44	Duncairn		