

A BOLDER VISION FOR BELFAST

Public Consultation

30th September - 23rd December 2021



Belfast
City Council



Department for
Infrastructure
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
Bonneagair



Department for
Communities
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JOINED UP VISION FOR BELFAST

Belfast City Centre is changing. A Bolder Vision is our approach for a progressive, re-imagined Belfast City Centre that is greener, walkable and connected. Improving connectivity is always important and this taken on a new relevance and urgency to collectively work to build a cleaner, stronger and more resilient city. At its heart, A Bolder Vision is creating a people-focused Belfast.

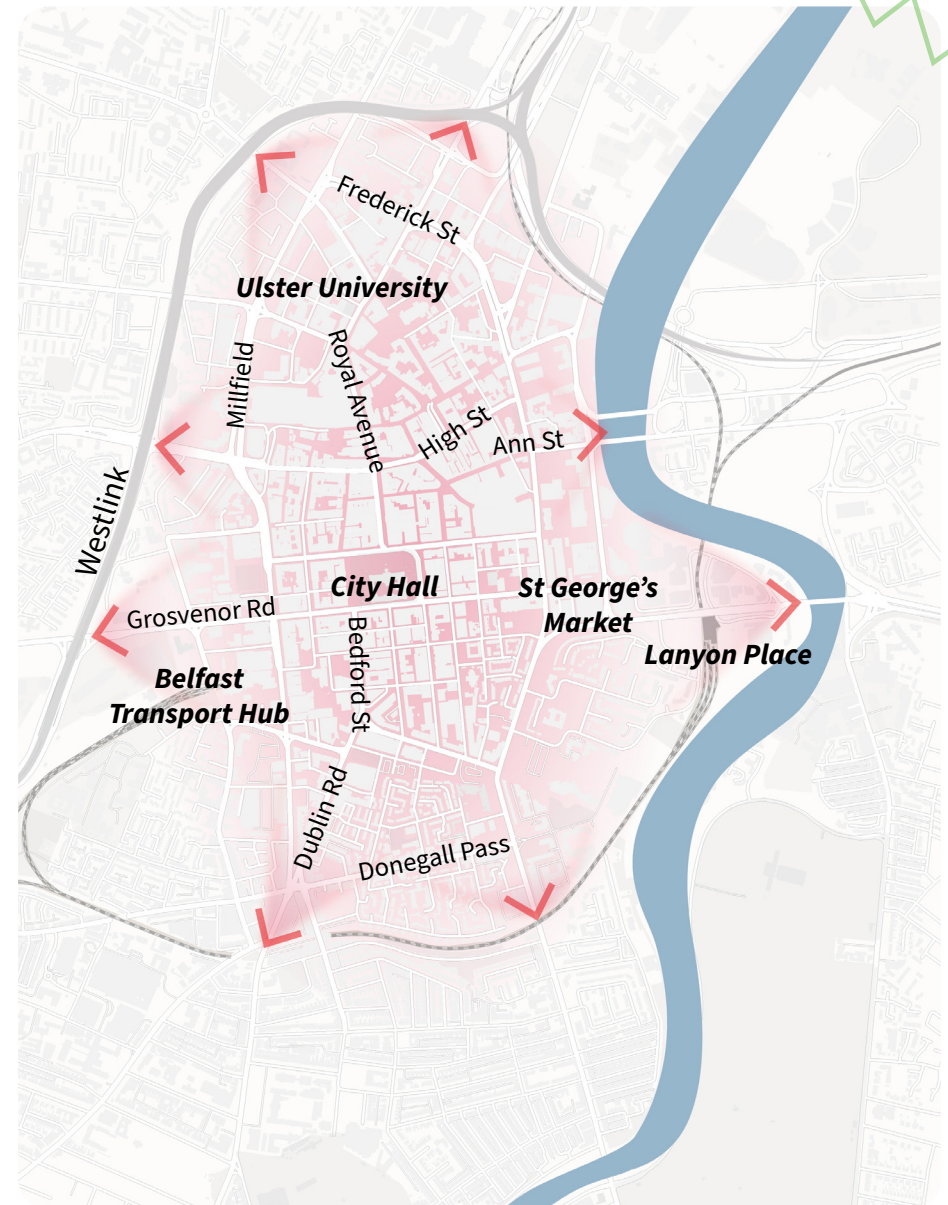
Ulster University is opening its new campus, there is growing demand for city centre living and increased leisure provision across the city centre. It is vital that we plan our infrastructure to shape the city for its future users. We must overcome historical issues including severance and barriers to movement that are still very prevalent today.

A number of strategically important projects will be delivered in the next few years, including vital public sector projects such as the Belfast Region City Deal with Innovation and SMART districts, Belfast Transport Hub, Belfast Streets Ahead 3 and 5, Belfast Rapid Transit 2, Cultural Strategy, Belfast Destination Hub and York Street Interchange.

It is important that Belfast captures these opportunities to ensure projects are fully integrated and support the needs of the city's changing user base. This will help create an accessible, inclusive city ready to address the challenges of climate change and other shocks or stresses.

In August 2019, Belfast City Council (BCC), the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department for Communities (DfC) completed '**A Bolder Vision (ABV) for Belfast**' for a shared vision of the city centre. This next step is to develop a strategy to inform and strengthen proposed projects and actions and set out new bold interventions across the city centre. Bolder Vision for Belfast will provide the mechanism for a more united approach across planning, transport and regeneration.

A Bolder Vision is our blueprint for moving forward and will guide our future infrastructure investment decisions that are ambitious yet deliverable. This is a shared vision for BCC, DfC and DfI but it will require everyone to work together, make changes and collectively rise to the challenge. Together we can build a Belfast that addresses the climate emergency and builds sustainable places that supports the health and well-being of all our people now and in the future.

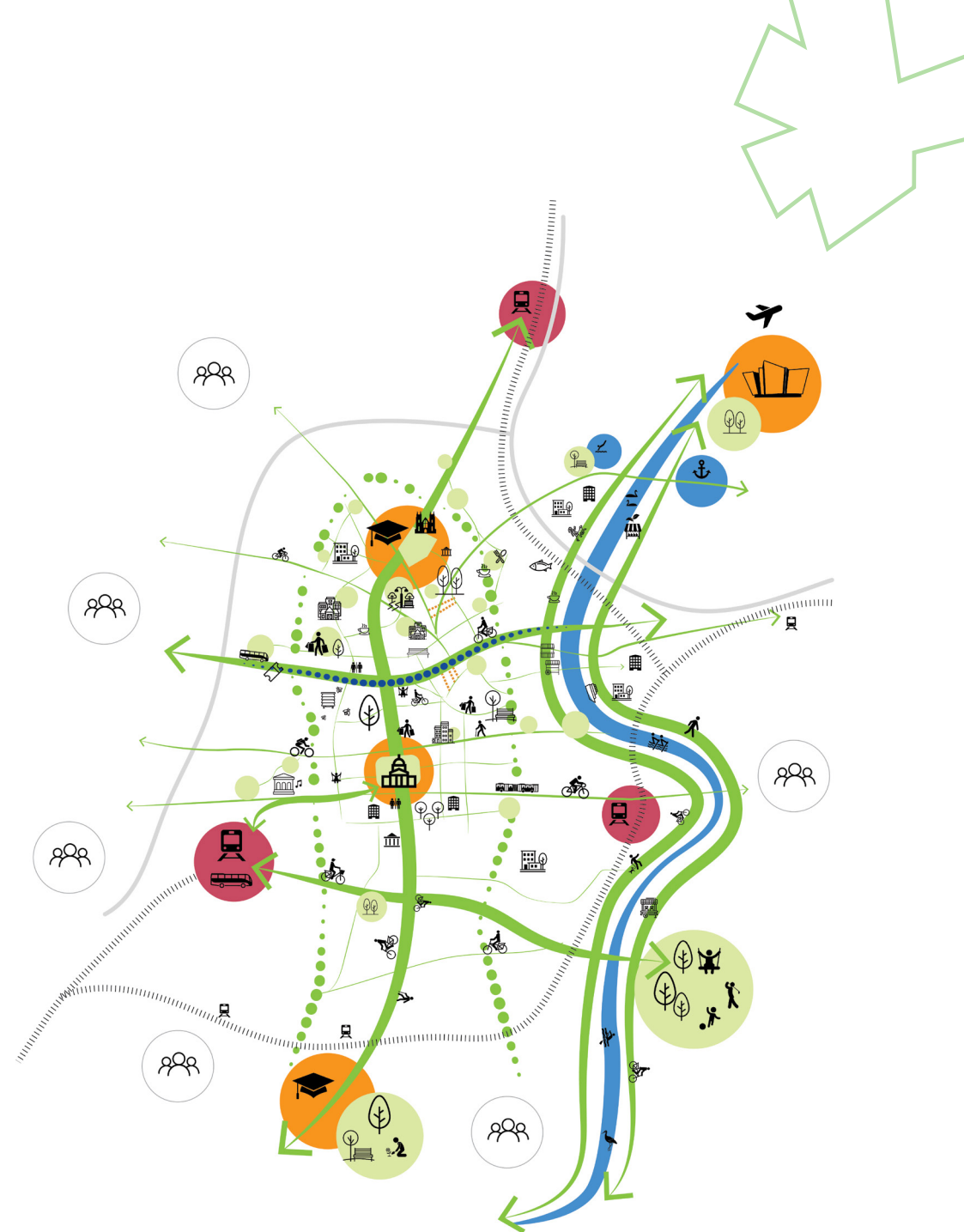


OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A Bolder Vision for Belfast reflects the overwhelming recognition that change needs to happen to ensure economic and environmental resilience is embedded within the liveability and mobility landscape of Belfast as a capital city of today and of the future. This Bolder Vision is the continuation of a journey for the city, initiated with the Belfast Agenda and strengthened by recent policies and strategies focusing on the centre of Belfast in 2035.

Bolder Vision is underpinned by eight Themes for Change that have led to the four Visioning Principles which will see Belfast city centre by 2035 as:

- 1 Creating a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment that promotes wellbeing for all, inclusive growth and innovation.**
- 2 Fundamentally changing the centre of Belfast to prioritise integrated walking, cycling and public transport and end the dominance of the car.**
- 3 Providing lively, safe and green streets linking inclusive shared spaces to promote resilience and enhance our built heritage.**
- 4 Removing severance and barriers to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities to improve access for all.**



OPPORTUNITY AREAS TO DELIVER TRANSFORMATION

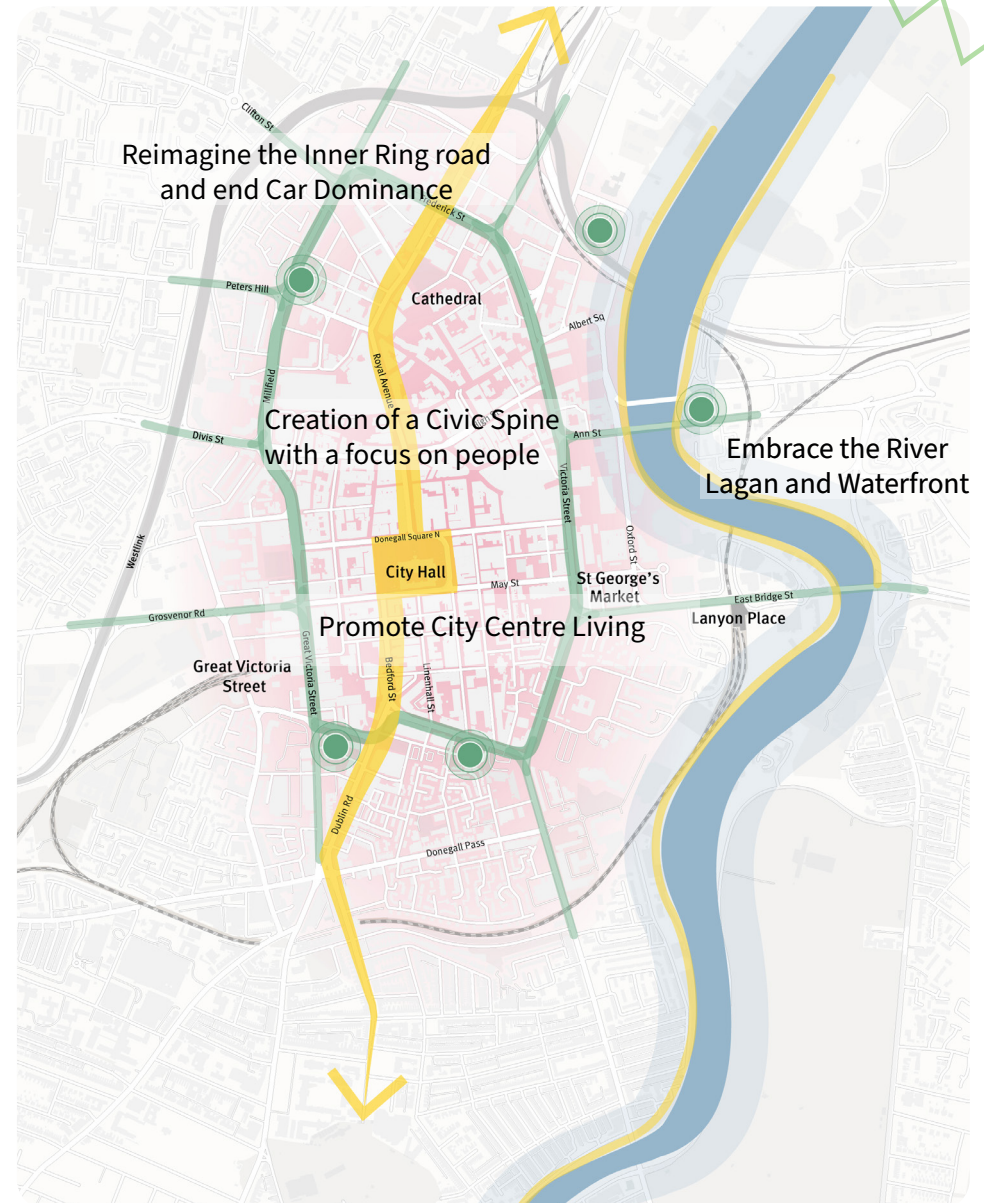
Bolder Vision has identified a number of ‘key moves’ to deliver transformational change. These key moves can help deliver the new interventions proposed whilst ensuring the right decisions are made for major capital investment schemes and other important projects. Each Key Move groups a number of interventions in critical parts of the city to create a green, people focused, connected city centre for current and future users.

The associated opportunity areas of each key move relate and interface with the major ongoing capital projects in the city. It is critical to understand what the potential of these areas is to inform the delivery of these schemes to safeguard a city centre for all in the future.

The Key Moves are:

- Creation of a Civic Spine with a Focus on People
- Reimagine the Inner Ring Road and End Car Dominance
- Promote City Centre Living
- Embrace the River Lagan and Waterfront

More detail on the Key Moves can be found on the following pages of this brochure.



WHAT IS THE CONSULTATION ABOUT?



Creation of a Civic Spine with a Focus on People

Establish a clearly defined and recognisable strategic north-south Civic Spine, connecting the Ulster University and York street Interchange through the heart of the city to Queens University via Botanic Avenue. The Civic Spine would be reconfigured to prioritise space for people and support effective access by public transport while enabling the introduction of green spaces for a diverse, inclusive, future-proofed and vibrant city centre.



Reimagine the Inner Ring Road and End Car Dominance

Transform the Inner Ring Road to reduce physical severance for surrounding communities and become a sustainable mobility corridor. To do this, the Inner Ring should be reconfigured to accommodate high priority public transport services (such as BRT2) as well as fully segregated and green infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling.



Promote City Centre Living

Encourage city centre living by providing greater quality, choice and affordability of accommodation, to create a shared and inclusive environment. Establish a city-wide network of people friendly routes, community focus streets, incorporating city parks and connections to opportunities for play, interaction, rest and leisure.



Embrace The River Lagan And Waterfront

Capitalise on one of the city's most defining, but underused assets, the River Lagan, by strengthening connections from the city centre to the east and its surrounding communities – enhancing connectivity across and around the River Lagan.



Creation of A Civic Spine With A Focus On People

Short term interventions /Catalyst Opportunities:



Redesign the Great Patrick Street junction with a people first approach, supporting improved safety, walking, wheeling and cycling.



Through schemes such as Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3 and 5, identify priority streets wherein standard on-street parking is removed and re-allocated for spaces for people, including linear pocket parks, public realm, retail and pop-up events.



Review location and provision of on-street parking for blue badge provision, coach parking and better streets and places for people



Develop Franklin Street to Amelia Street as a people focussed connection to a newly invigorated Blackstaff Square, with a focus on walking, wheeling and cycling, supporting the Belfast Cycling Network 2021 and reinforcing a strong desire line to Belfast Transport Hub.

Long term interventions:



Further develop the Civic Spine with a high-quality 'people first' space while still delivering efficient public transportation connections and city servicing requirements.



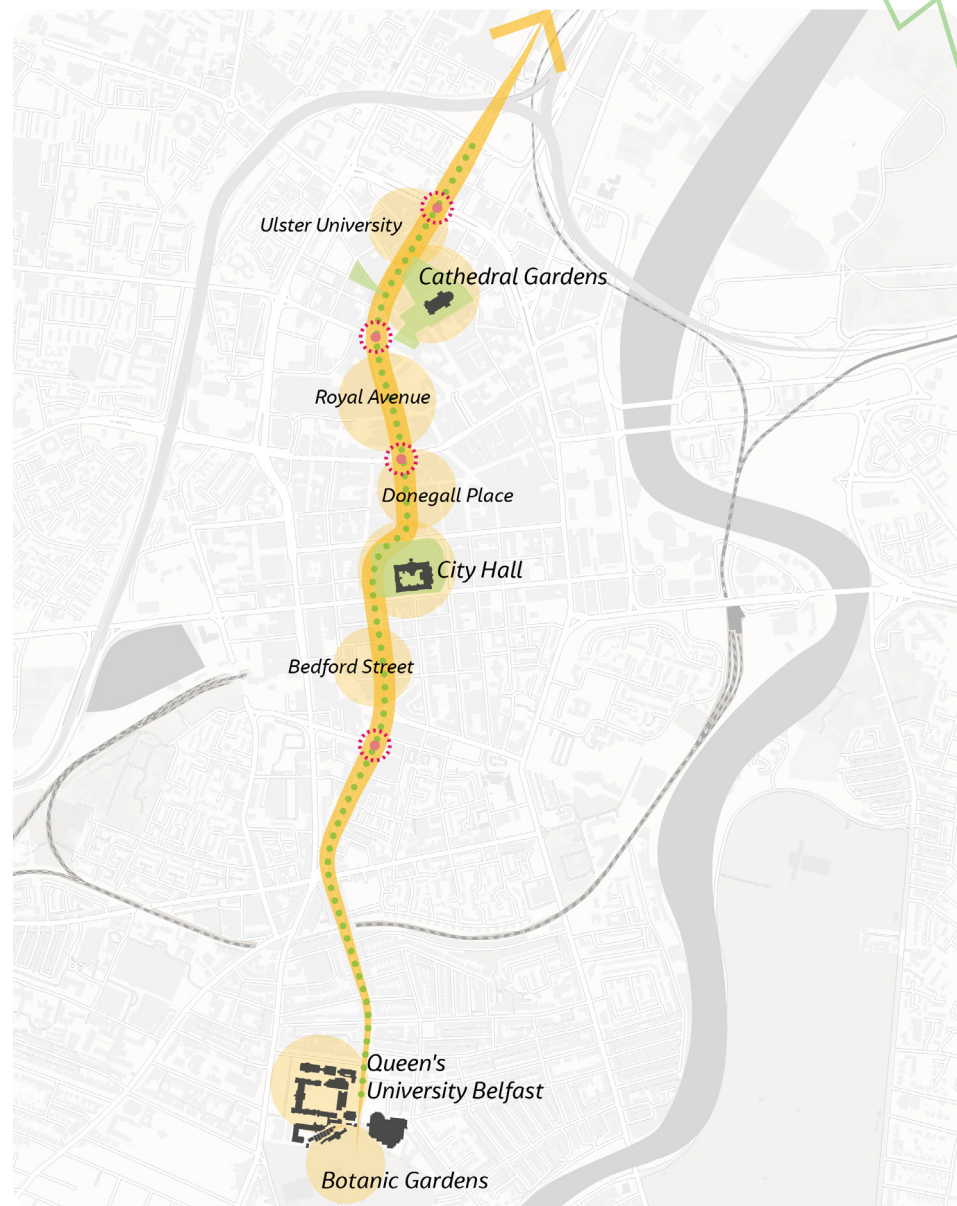
Integrating blue/green infrastructure, the Civic Spine should provide safe, accessible and legible movement in the heart of the city that will be delivered through the Belfast Streets Ahead 3 & 5 & BRT projects.

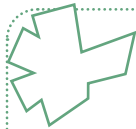


Transform the Linen Quarter to become a sustainable people focussed district, restricting levels of standard on-street parking and reallocating space for blue badge holders, public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling.

Strengthening existing projects:

- Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2
- Belfast Transport Hub
- York Street Interchange
- Five C's Project
- Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3 & 5
- Belfast Destination Hub





Reimagine the Inner Ring road and End Car Dominance

Short term interventions /Catalyst Opportunities:



Utilising the existing configuration, reallocate road space on the Inner Ring to facilitate the delivery of an orbital cycle urban greenway, accessible from all sides of the city with effective signage, artwork and wayfinding.



Redesign the Shankill Gateway and Clifton Gateway junctions with a people first approach, supporting improved safety, walking, wheeling and cycling.



Create green corridors along the Inner Ring, develop active travel hubs and city parks via temporary uses.

Long term interventions:



Reprioritise the Inner Ring to remove severance to communities with a focus on public transport, priority cycling routes and green infrastructure.



Create a one-way gyratory system for traffic along Great Victoria Street and Durham Street, freeing up space on street frontages for walking, wheeling and cycling on both of these streets.



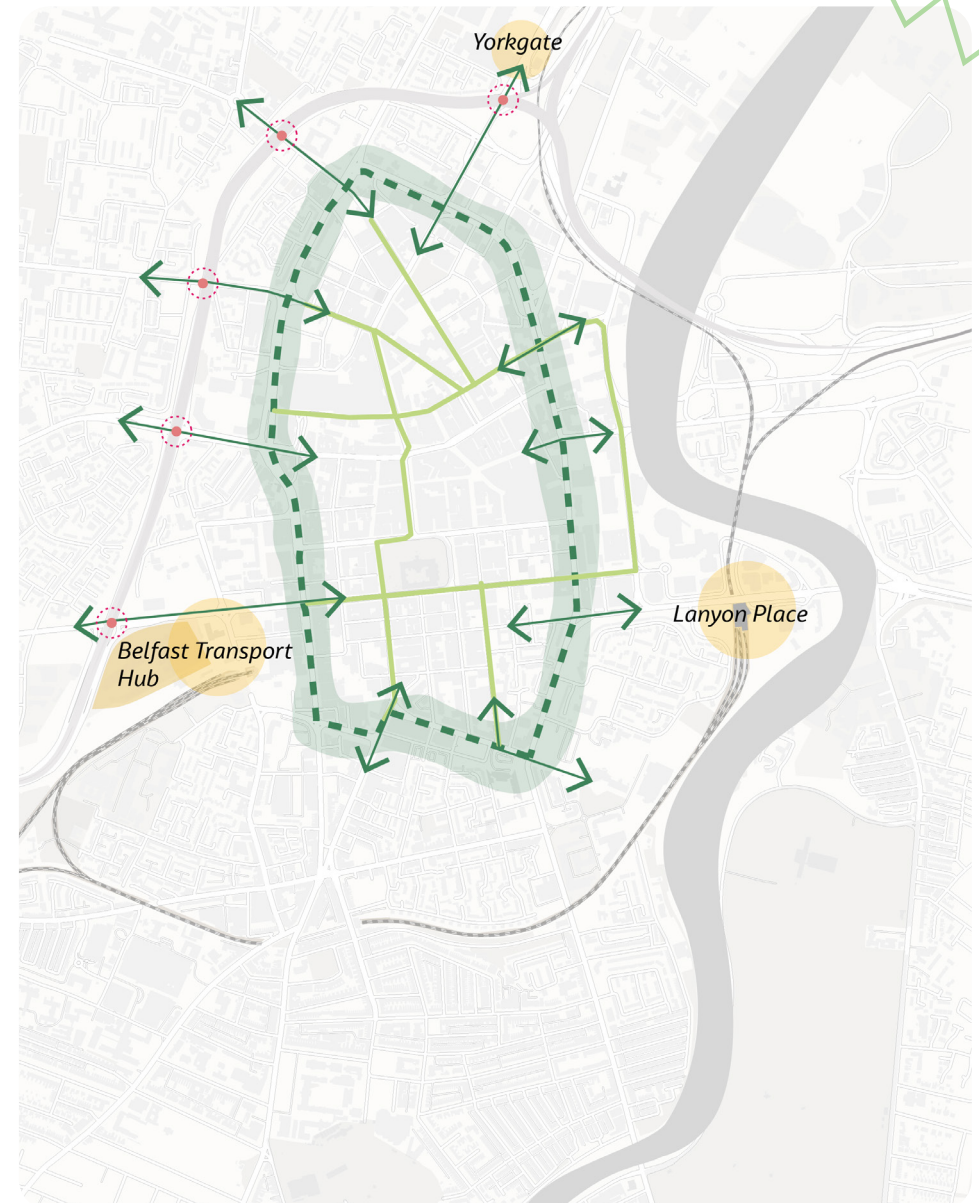
Integrate Belfast Rapid Transit directly with Belfast Transport Hub utilising Durham Street.



Enhance pedestrian and cycle movement over Westlink and under A12/M3 to improve city centre connectivity by introducing green landscaping together with wide and sufficiently lit footpaths.

Strengthening existing projects:

- Belfast Rapid Transit 2
- Belfast Transport Hub
- Belfast Cycling Strategy 2021
- Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5
- York Street Interchange
- One Million Trees commitment





Promote City Centre Living

Short term interventions /Catalyst Opportunities:



Ensure all capital projects, including private sector developments, are designed to support city centre living and building sustainable communities.



Remove traffic access from Verner Street, and utilise St George's market to activate the space for greening, parklets and retail.



Introduce a linear park in the derelict car park south of Bruce St during construction phase of Belfast Transport Hub. Explore opportunities additional city parks as temporary uses.



Increase cycle parking and Belfast Bike docking stations along the river, around the inner ring road of the city centre to support the development of the Belfast Cycling Network 2021 and linking with the Connswater Greenway to the East.



Supporting the urban forest/one million tree commitment which Belfast has signed up to with the introduction of temporary trees in movable containers. These could be used to test out the introduction of more permanent boulevard planting.

Long term interventions:



Create a series of destination parks and community focussed streets for the Inner North West areas



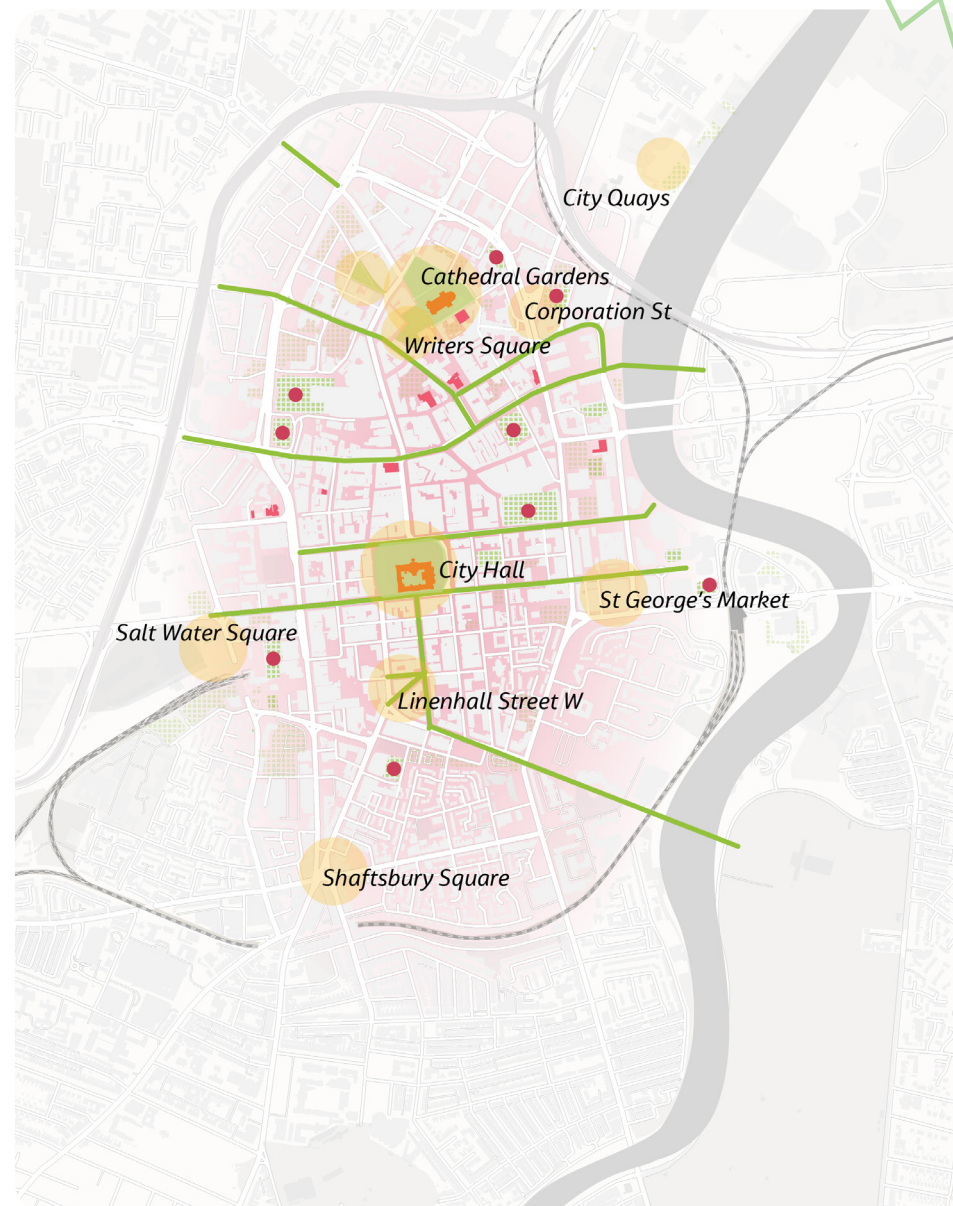
Create a series of vibrant public spaces, including Cathedral Gardens area, Saltwater Square and City Quays Garden linked to both existing and proposed people focussed routes

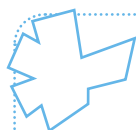


Establish a network of green streets to prioritise walking, wheeling and cycling, together with incorporating, street trees, pocket parks and different typologies of landscaping.

Strengthening existing projects:

- Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3
- Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5
- Five Cs project
- Belfast Transport Hub
- One Million Trees commitment
- Belfast Cycling Strategy 2021





Embrace the River Lagan and Waterfront

Short term interventions /Catalyst Opportunities:



Improve existing waterfront active travel networks by connecting to the emerging Urban Greenway on the Inner Ring, introducing appropriate signage and branding.



Activate the River Lagan by introducing pop-up 'green island' parks and swimming pontoons along its length, coupled with a network of public spaces between the harbour area to Ormeau Park.



Introduce new pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Titanic Quarter to City Quays

Long term interventions:



Enhance existing and create new riverside destinations to optimise the use of River Lagan. Strengthen connectivity to both the river and surrounding communities by promoting travel along the water and enhancing both existing and new crossings at strategic locations.



Introduce a new cycle and pedestrian bridge from Sailortown at the North of the City, connecting to the Titanic Quarter.



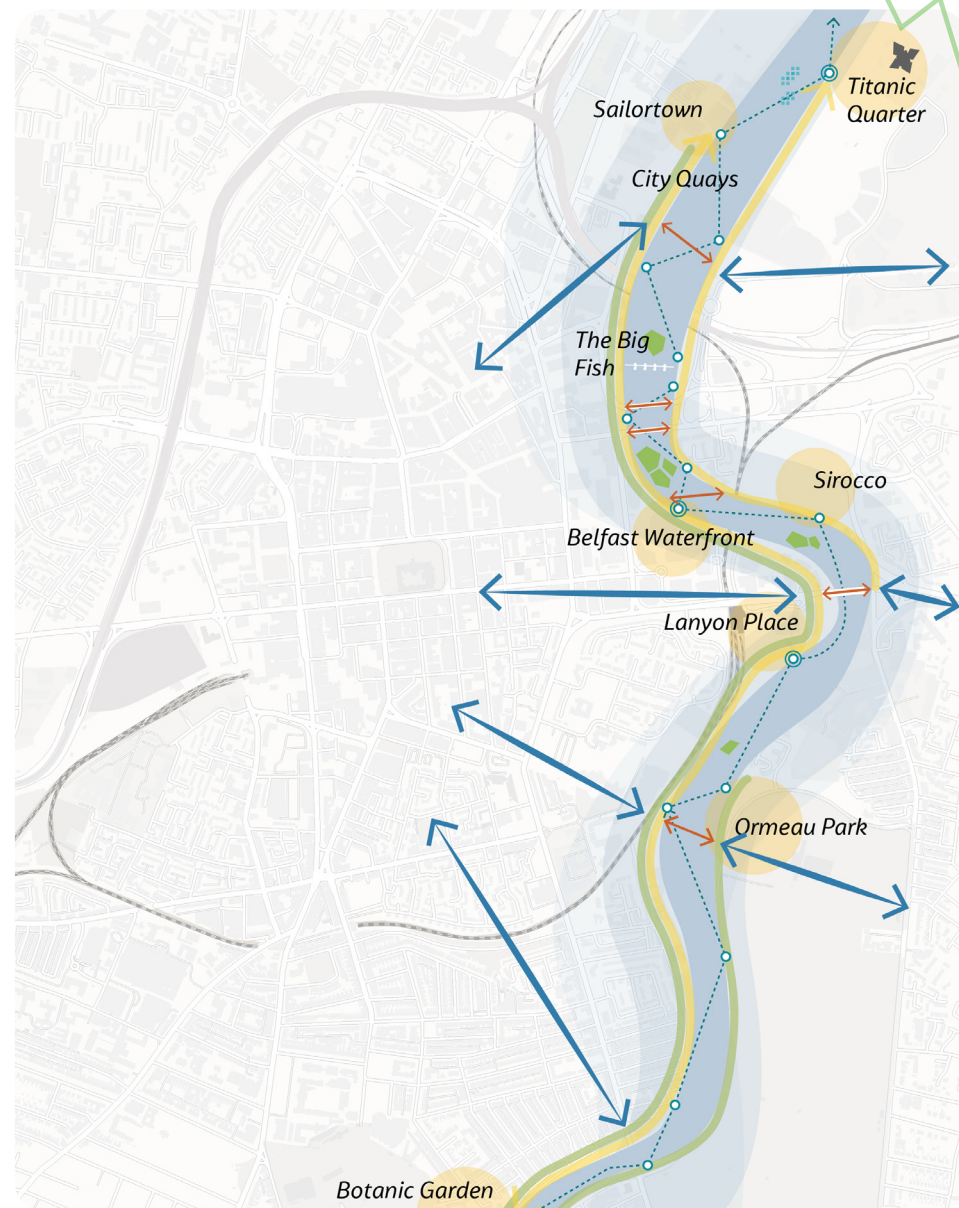
Support commuting, tourism and leisure by growing and developing the Belfast Maritime Mile.



Connecting to the river from the civic spine – extension of the existing linear green park along Chichester street to create green islands in the hard space outside Waterfront Hall. These could 'spill out' onto the river itself becoming floating green islands.

Strengthening existing projects:

- One Million Trees Commitment
- Belfast Cycling Network 2021
- Belfast's Maritime Mile
- Planned developments including Titanic Quarter, City Quays, Queens Quay and Waterside



PROJECT TIMELINE

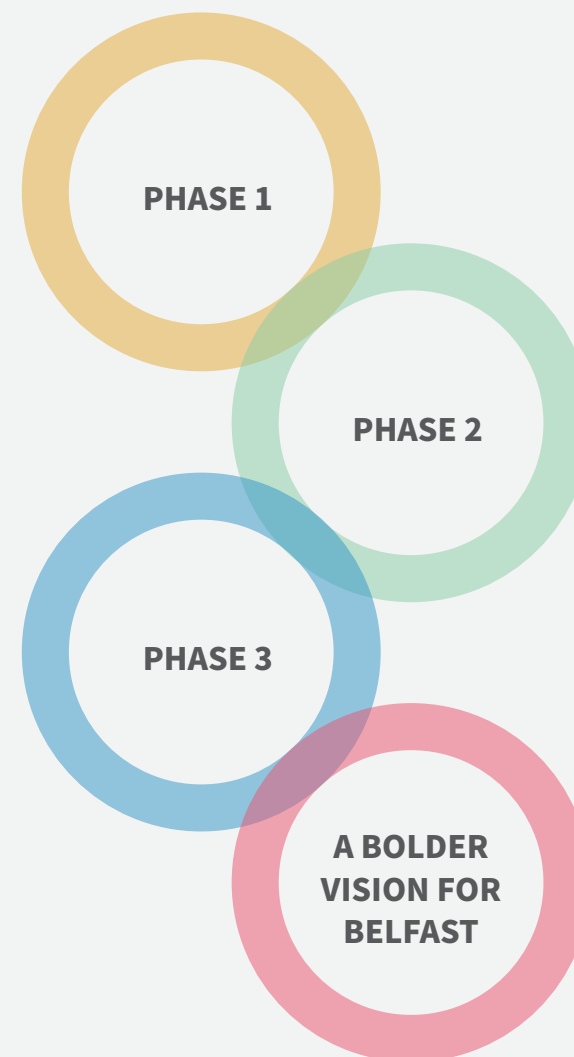
Phase 1 A Bolder Vision for Belfast, sets out how green, walkable, cyclable network of streets and places will improve health for all, revitalise the city's economy and restore a sense of collective pride in the centre of the city by the communities. This stage resulted in the Visioning Principles and Themes for Change.

Phase 2 will provide a tangible vision that creates a green, people focused, connected city centre for current and future users in line with the Visioning Principles set out in Phase 1. This phase follows a collaborative process between the three public agencies (DfI, DfC and BCC) and multiple stakeholder engagement via focus groups, interviews and numerous workshops. This helps collating a number of potential interventions that will shape the future city centre and will influence the way the capital schemes are delivered.

This stage is happening now and the current public consultation will form part of this phase.

Phase 3 Following the consultation period, we will collate and analyse the stakeholder feedback. A consultation report will be produced which will outline all engagement undertaken with stakeholders and the local community before and during the public consultation. We will review the outcomes of engagement and consultation and where appropriate, accommodate requested changes or alterations to the preferred Strategy.

A Bolder Vision for Belfast - The outcome of Phases 1-3 will be the production of the Bolder Vision Strategy which will include the range of interventions for the city. The interventions are organised in short term and long term interventions that ensure a step change for the city centre of Belfast.



HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

This public consultation is 12 weeks long between the 30th September to the 23rd December and we are inviting you to fill in the feedback form.

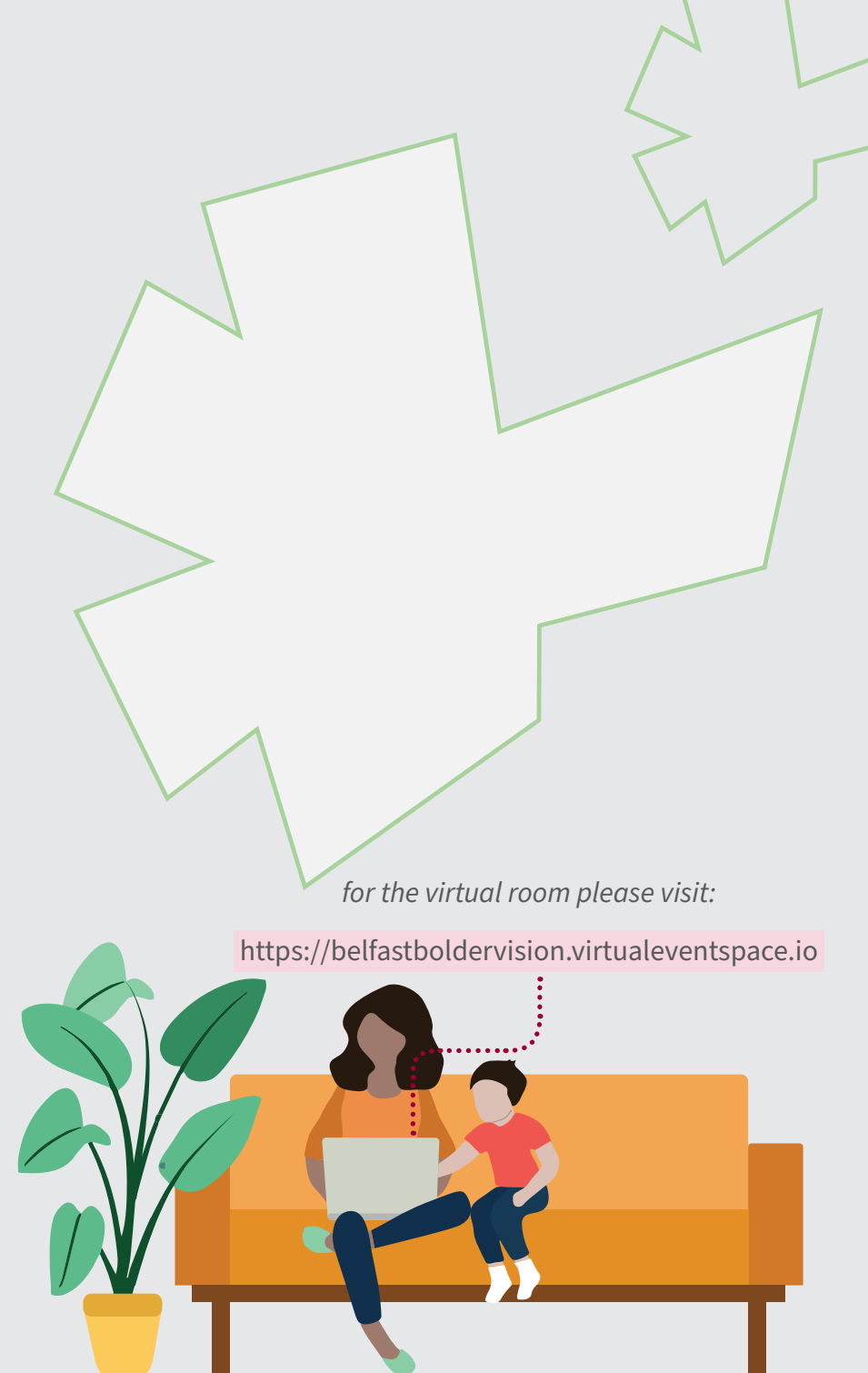
In response to Covid-19 restrictions around holding public events, this online public consultation experience has been developed. This online public consultation experience allows stakeholders and members of the public to view information and to express their opinions in a safe and accessible environment.



Email: belfasti@BelfastCity.gov.uk



Website: <https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/bolder-vision>



for the virtual room please visit:

<https://belfastbolder-vision.virtualeventspace.io>