



Subject:	Motion: York Street Interchange – Response from Minister for Infrastructure
Date:	10th November, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Carolyn Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider a response to a motion re York Street Interchange – Request to Share Independent Assurance Report which was passed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the response and take such action thereon as may be determined.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p data-bbox="272 226 432 255"><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p data-bbox="272 275 1492 356">The Council, at its meeting on 4th October, passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor O’Hara and seconded by Councillor McAllister:</p> <p data-bbox="368 427 1390 707">“This Council notes that it is currently corporately committed to supporting the York Street Interchange project. This decision was made before this Council declared a climate emergency; before the NI Assembly declared a climate emergency and before the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Report published in August 2021, which was a ‘Code Red’ warning for humanity.</p> <p data-bbox="368 779 1390 1059">Belfast City Council is a key stakeholder in the York Street Interchange Project and sits on the Strategic Advisory Group for the York Street Interchange. We call on the Minister for Infrastructure to immediately share the Independent Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange with Belfast City Council. This will allow us to make an informed decision on whether we as a Council continue with our corporate support for this project.”</p> <p data-bbox="165 1131 1492 1211">3.2 A response has been received from the Minister for Infrastructure, a copy of which is attached (Appendix 1).</p> <p data-bbox="165 1283 1492 1462">3.3 The Minister states the Independent Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange Scheme was carried out to provide the Minister with assurance on how the proposed scheme reflects her key Ministerial priorities and both Executive and Belfast City Council objectives, in particular</p> <ul data-bbox="331 1485 1422 1877" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="331 1485 1422 1619">• The Minister’s priorities around focus on wellbeing, sustainable travel, creating thriving liveable places and communities, responding to the climate emergency and connecting people and opportunities; <li data-bbox="331 1641 1422 1722">• The Executive’s priorities set out in New Decade: New Approach and the Outcomes Delivery Plan; and <li data-bbox="331 1744 1422 1877">• The scheme’s strategic fit alongside the emerging policy context, for example, the Belfast Agenda, the Belfast City Council Development Plan Strategy and the emerging Transport Plans <p data-bbox="165 1939 1492 2020">3.4 The Minister also made clear the need to engage with local key stakeholders as part of this review.</p>

3.5	The Minister explained that she is not able to publish the report in accordance with Department of Finance guidance contained within DAO 02/20 (Section 8).
3.6	She stated that reviews must include frank and open exchanges with all of the interviewees and it is likely that interviewees would be much more guarded with their comment and less willing to share and express their views and information with the review team, if there was the expectation that future reports were to be published. Consequently this might potentially undermine the value of such reviews.
3.7	The further work which is being carried out to address the recommendations from the Independent Assurance Review which includes a placemaking and active travel review, is now well advanced and due to be completed in the coming weeks. The Minister will consider the report before deciding on the next steps for the scheme.
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Document Attached
	Appendix 1: Response from Minister for Infrastructure