

**BELFAST CITY CENTRE
TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK
2017 - 2020**

1. BACKGROUND & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure in and providing access to Belfast City Centre covering the period to 2020. The framework has been prepared by the Department for Infrastructure (the Department) in consultation with Belfast City Council (the Council) as the planning authority.¹
- 1.2 The framework aims to ensure an integrated approach in the development of transport infrastructure and services supporting the regeneration of Belfast City Centre in line with wider strategic objectives as set out in the Programme for Government and supported by the Belfast Agenda. In this context, the framework presents a 'refresh' of the policies and schemes set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, published as a technical supplement to the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.
- 1.3 In that regard, the framework has been guided by and reflects the policy direction set out in the draft Programme for Government 2016 (PfG) and key supporting strategies including the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS), the New Approach to Regional Transportation and the Belfast Agenda. Collectively these highlight the key role of Belfast as the regional economic driver and the need to ensure the City's transport network has the connectivity and capacity to accommodate significant growth in the numbers of people living and working in the city, particularly in the city centre. The Framework also takes account of Belfast City Council's Draft Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan.

The role of the Framework

- 1.4 The Framework aims to ensure a joined-up approach between the Department as the transport authority and Belfast City Council as the planning authority in the development of Belfast City Centre. In particular it seeks to ensure clarity as to both the major transport priorities and the strategic focus of transport policy and investment. This recognises the important role of the Framework in facilitating Council's ambitions for the growth and development of the City centre, and the key role of the planning system in enabling the successful implementation of the priorities and objectives set out in this Framework.

¹ Including Transport NI and Translink

1.5 In particular, the integration of transport and land-use planning is fundamental to the Framework's implementation and the overall objective of furthering sustainable development as required by the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Therefore, the Framework should be read alongside the Regional Development Strategy and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and planning appeals in addition to be taken into account in the preparation of Local Development Plans.

The need for a Framework

1.6 Realising that ambition will require significant investment in the transport infrastructure to and within the Belfast city centre area. However, it is also critical that transport infrastructure supports and aligns with the Programme for Government Outcomes, particularly those on which the Department leads (highlighted in Figure 1) and the vision for Belfast as set out in the Belfast Agenda, that is:

Belfast will be a city re-imagined. A great place to live for everyone.
It will energise and drive a successful economy where everyone can reach their potential. Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a city shared and loved by its people and admired around the world. It will be a producer of and magnet for talent, investment, innovation and creativity - a compassionate place where people create value and are valued.

Figure 1: Programme for Government Outcomes Framework



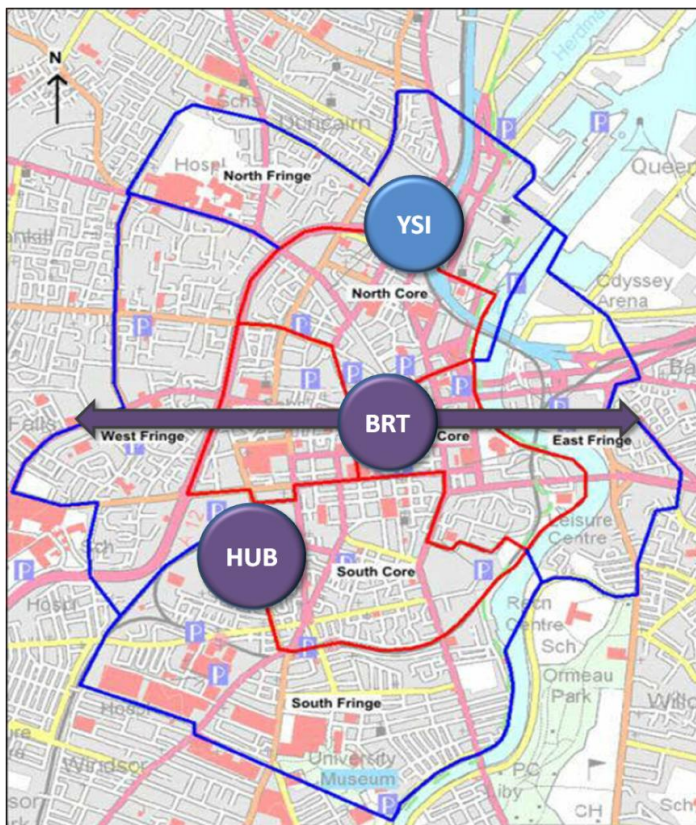
- 1.7 Furthermore, the PfG Outcomes and the vision for Belfast will increasingly require a different approach to how we plan and utilise our transport infrastructure. In particular it will require a clear focus on place building and on the integration of land use planning and transport planning. This points to the need for a joined-up strategic focus on the role of transport and how it can contribute to wider social, economic and environmental outcomes, reflecting the approach adopted in the draft Programme for Government 2016.
- 1.8 Previously transport investment in Belfast City Centre and the Belfast travel to work area was guided by the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. Published in 2004, this set out the full range of transport interventions to be delivered up to 2015. A significant number of the interventions set out in that plan have now been delivered. While these have helped transform the transport infrastructure in the Belfast area, it is clear that a new strategic framework is required to guide future investment. In this regard, work has now been initiated on new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP). The new BMTP will be advanced in close alignment with the Local Development Plan for Belfast, led by Belfast City Council and the Plans of the neighbouring councils which contribute considerable commuters to Belfast . It is anticipated that the new BMTP and the Local Development Plans will be finalised towards 2020.
- 1.9 In the interim, recognising the significant investment planned in the current period in transport and the wider development of the City Centre, this Framework has been developed.

Focus of the Belfast City Centre Transport Framework

- 1.10 The Framework has been developed in the context of significant regeneration and development proposals for the city, such as Titanic Quarter and the East Bank (Sirocco) and the work underway within the Department to advance a number of strategic transport projects which aim to enhance the connectivity and capacity of Belfast to accommodate residential and employment growth. As set out below and illustrated in Figure 2, the transport projects have a particular focus on the city centre area.

- **Belfast Rapid Transport (BRT)** – a high quality public transport system running east-west across the city and to the Titanic Quarter and an Executive Flagship project;
- **Belfast Transport Hub (HUB)** – a high capacity bus and rail interchange substantially upgrading the Europa / Great Victoria facility in the city centre and an Executive Flagship project; and
- **York Street Interchange (YSI)** – a high capacity road scheme effectively removing the traffic signals that currently constrain traffic movement between M1, M2 and Sydenham Bypass.

Figure 2: Belfast City Centre Strategic Transport Projects



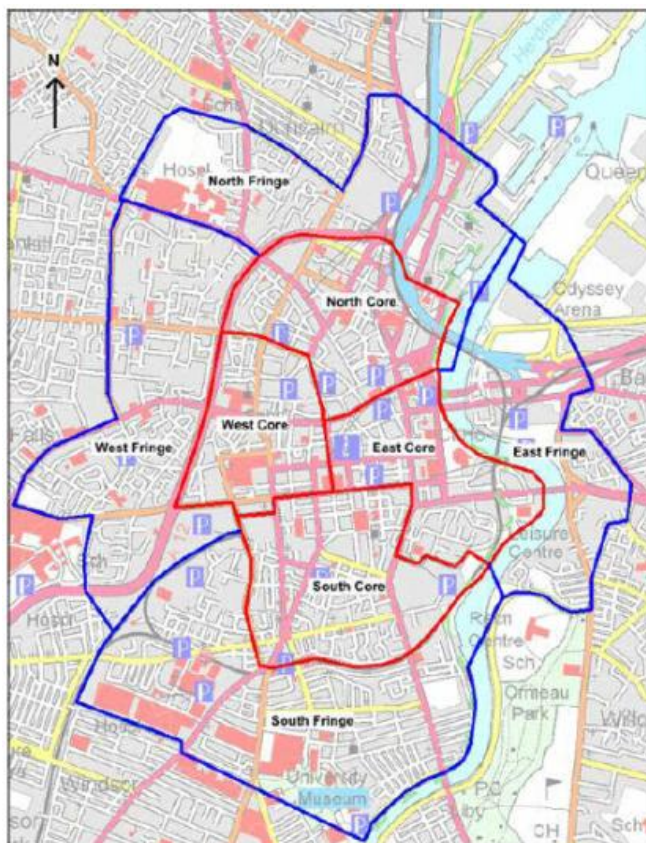
1.11 More generally, through the Belfast Agenda Belfast City Council have set out ambitious plans to increase the population of the city by 70,000 with an urban economy supporting 50,000 more jobs, with a particular focus on the city centre. While the strategic projects outlined above will play a key role in ensuring the transport infrastructure has the capacity to support those ambitions, these need to be delivered in a manner which is fully integrated with land-use development in the city, ensuring it remains an attractive place to live and work. Providing that integration and realising the

wider opportunities which investment in strategic transport initiatives offers is a key focus of this Framework.

1.12 As the planning authority, Belfast City Council will also need to deal with upcoming planning applications (with the exception of regionally important developments). In this context, there is a requirement for integrated transport planning guidance particularly for the Belfast City Centre, to enable a robust assessment of applications and their potential impact on wider strategic objectives and policy. This Framework therefore also sets out strategic guidance reflecting existing policy.

1.13 This framework is concerned with developments and transport infrastructure within Belfast City Centre as shown in Figure 3. However, in order to influence travel choices to the city centre, the framework also comments on the balance of commuter priorities on the major radial corridors to and from Belfast City Centre. The chosen Belfast City Centre boundary coincides with the boundary used for parking studies and the cordon used for travel demand surveys. The city centre is defined to cover an enlarged area compared to the BMAP city centre, see Annex One.

Figure 3: Belfast City Centre – Framework Area – (Blue Boundary)

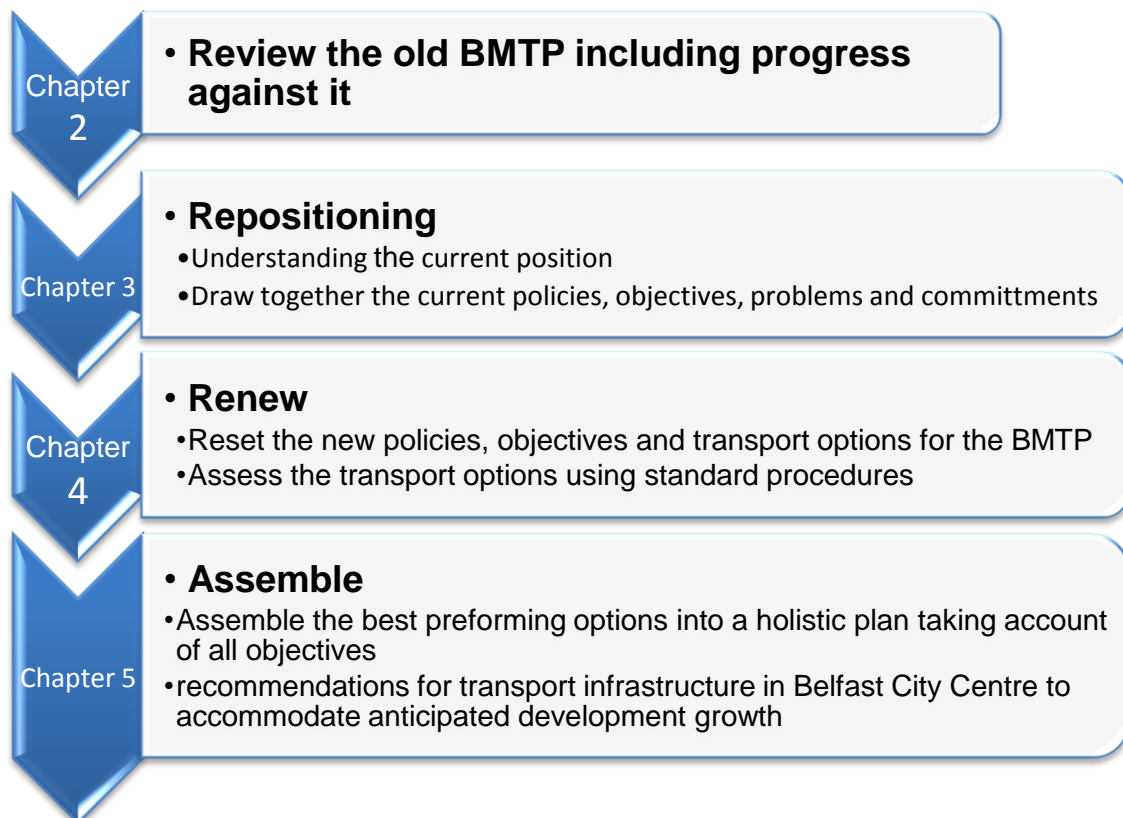


Methodology

1.14 In line with the factors and constraints set out above, this Framework has been prepared using the following parameters:

- The focus is on Belfast City Centre, the radial corridors which deliver commuters to the city centre, and on key strategic schemes largely deliverable by year 2020, but set within a longer strategic context;
- In addition to the key strategic schemes identified above, the Framework is concerned with assessing and prioritising feasible schemes (i.e. schemes already in planning or implementation programmes);
- The assessment of schemes uses existing data and information including relevant existing policies, strategies and plans.
- The Framework sets out the strategic direction for transport in Belfast City Centre drawing on the PfG, RDS, the New Approach to Regional Transportation and the Belfast Agenda.

1.15 This Framework has been prepared using a “Task and Finish” approach and has used a sequential staged approach that provides the structure of this report as set out below.



Actions

1.16 In line with that approach, this Framework sets out a number of actions concerning transport infrastructure in Belfast City Centre to accommodate planned development and growth over the period to 2020:

- A1:** The implementation of the BRT Phase 1, Transport Hub and York Street Interchange schemes should be prioritised and fully integrated. This should include staging of their delivery schedules to manage traffic congestion impacts.

- A2:** The future road layout options in the City Centre should be urgently reviewed to confirm the role, capacity and operation of the Inner Ring Road to support strategic objectives. This should incorporate the planning and design of BRT Phase 2 and the recent completion of scheme C3 (Cycle Lane on Durham Street and College Square North).

- A3:** Schemes which provide improved facilities for walking, cycling, taxi and tourist coach access should be implemented within attractive 'place-making' designs whilst maintaining appropriate access for public transport. The provision and location of taxi ranks should take full account of passenger needs.

- A4:** In line with Belfast City Council's Draft Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan, detailed plans should be brought forward to extend the current Controlled Parking Zone. In effect this would require the delivery of a number of Residents Parking Schemes and result in the reduction of commuter parking capacity within the City Centre. It is expected that additional parking will continue to be identified and delivered through Park & Ride schemes.

- A5:** The Metro bus network should be reviewed to include consideration of priority and infrastructure measures in line with the holistic approach applied on the BRT Phase 1 corridors, e.g. additional lengths of bus lane, with localised road widening where appropriate. A principal aim of the review should be to increase modal shift from private car to Metro bus, especially for commuters.

- A6:** Planning and delivery should be advanced on a number of complementary work areas that will be required to maximise the benefits of the Transport Hub, BRT Phase 1 or YSI once constructed, yet on their own offer substantial benefits in

addressing either current problems or future development of the City Centre. These work areas include: travel behaviour change (i.e. greater use of public transport and walking and cycling); enhanced bus lane enforcement; additional rail capacity; and increased Park and Ride.

- A7:** A benefits realisation strategy should be developed for each of the strategic projects. These should identify the wider socio-economic and development opportunities afforded by these projects and initial proposals as to how these should be taken forward.
- A8:** The role and capacity of the Traffic Information Control Centre should be reviewed with a specific focus on improving the resilience of the transport network to major incidents. The review should also consider the potential for additional use of Intelligent Transport Systems to enhance the efficiency of the transport network and support modal shift.
- A9:** The Department should review different types of charging and road pricing systems with a particular focus on their role in influencing travel behaviour, addressing congestion and air quality.
- A10:** There should be early and meaningful pre-application engagement on strategic development proposals within the region such as Eastside and Titanic Quarter which have the potential for significant impacts on the wider transport network serving the City Centre. This engagement should involve all relevant stakeholders along with the relevant Planning Authority and should allow the opportunity to discuss wider strategic implications of the development proposal, as well as more detailed operational issues.

1.17 In addition to the above actions, this Framework, drawing on strategic transport policy, also sets out guidance at Chapter 5 which aims to provide for an integrated approach to the three key areas of car parking, modal priorities and hierarchy and the integration of land-use and transport planning. Individually and collectively, these three areas have the potential if appropriately implemented to make a significant contribution to maximising the benefits associated with the major transport projects. More widely, they will play a key role in facilitating realisation of the vision for Belfast set out in the RDS and the Belfast Agenda, and the wider PfG Outcomes.

2. REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION OF BMTP 2015 & BMAP

Background

- 2.1 The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMTP) was launched by the then Minister for Regional Development on 30th November 2004. Drawing on the Regional Development Strategy 2025 and its daughter document the Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2015, it set out a range of initiatives across all modes. These aimed to address many years of under-investment to deliver a modern integrated transport system to support the wider sustainable development and urban renewal of the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA).
- 2.2 The development of the BMTP was at the time fully integrated and taken forward in parallel with the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP). As the development plan for Belfast, the BMAP set out the future land use for the BMA and as such was intended to provide a framework for guiding investment by public, private and community sectors.
- 2.3 The strategic vision for Belfast City, as set out in BMAP, paralleled that of the RDS 2025. Thus it sought to promote Belfast as the regional capital and centre for regional administration, commerce, specialised services, cultural amenities and employment opportunities. In line with the RDS, the BMAP sought to encourage the sustainable renaissance of the BMA and reverse a long-term decline in the population of the city. A key enabler in this regard was the development of a strong Belfast City Centre to underpin and strengthen public transport as a key element in an integrated and inclusive transport system.

Implementation of BMTP Proposals

- 2.4 The BMTP identified a wide range of interventions across all modes, including for Belfast City Centre. An assessment of progress in implementing these interventions is set out at Annex Two.
- 2.5 The assessment would indicate that across all modes there has been generally good progress in the implementation of schemes set out for the Belfast City Centre area. That progress, however, is largely attributable to delivery of Belfast on the Move and supporting measures in relation to frequency of Translink services. In contrast there has been much more limited progress within the city centre in relation to BMTP

proposals on cycling routes and taxi waiting provision. Similarly, progress on the implementation of proposals on the radial corridors has been generally mixed. With the exception of the comprehensive Connswater Community and Comber Greenways, in general walking and cycling schemes on the radial corridors have made limited progress.

- 2.6 It is important in this context to recognise that there has been significant work in providing dropped kerbs and resurfacing of footways. In addition the delivery of other initiatives such as Belfast Bikes not originally proposed in the BMTP have resulted in major improvements in the walking and cycling environment in Belfast, particularly in the City Centre and provide a strong basis on which to deliver the step change envisaged in BMTP.
- 2.7 In relation to public transport on the radial routes, the ongoing work on BRT and the successful delivery of the new trains and buses schemes has resulted in significant improvements in services. This has been further supported by strong progress in off-road measures such as bus stops and the provision of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI).
- 2.8 However, in general terms, it is notable that schemes that require a re-allocation of road-space between road-users or integrated planning, have made limited progress outside the city centre. It is particularly notable that progress has been mixed in relation to quality bus corridors on the radial corridors. It is anticipated though that the work undertaken on BRT to build public acceptance will assist in future efforts to enhance on-road bus priority on the radial corridors.
- 2.9 As set out in Annex Two, strong progress has been made on the implementation of Park & Ride elements of the BMTP. This can be directly attributed to the successful joint working between the Department and Translink on the Park & Ride Strategy and its implementation, including the incorporation of Park & Ride into the design and delivery of strategic road improvements.
- 2.10 In relation to highway measures, again through delivery of Belfast on the Move, significant progress has been made in the city centre. Delivery of highway schemes on the radial routes, however, has been more limited. The Westlink received a series of upgrades between 2006 and 2009, including grade separation of roundabouts and widening to three lanes at certain sections. This had the effect of attracting traffic from

the surrounding local road network, positively contributing to the ambitions of the BMTP.

2.11 Ultimately the facilities for walking, cycling and public transport proposed in the BMTP aimed to promote modal shift to more sustainable modes. To support that investment, the BMTP proposed a range of management measures under four broad headings as follows:

- Demand management measures
- Technology
- Education and awareness
- Enforcement

2.12 The demand management measures were primarily focused on parking restraint in the central Belfast area, reducing the amount of long stay parking while controlling short stay parking. As set out in Annex Two, progress has been made in reducing on-street parking in the city centre, though this is primarily as a result of Belfast on the Move and public realm works, whilst there has been a general inability to deliver Residents' Parking schemes. Overall, although considerable advances have been made in terms of enforcement in line with the 'decriminalisation' of parking offences, very limited progress has been made on delivering the ambitions of the BMTP in relation to wider parking strategy and restraint in the city centre and radial routes. This is particularly important given the central importance of long-stay commuter parking restraint in the BMTP as a means of supporting modal shift and uptake of Park and Ride.

2.13 In relation to technology measures, significant progress has been made on the four key areas highlighted in the BMTP: Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS); Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI); Integrated Ticketing; and travel information dissemination systems.

2.14 Beyond these, the BMTP while not proposing the introduction of congestion charging as a demand management measure did recognise that as evolving area it should be reviewed within the plan period drawing on experience from elsewhere in the UK. To date that review has not been undertaken, reflecting the slower pace of progress elsewhere introducing congestion charging outwith London. However, it is clear that this is an area which continues to evolve. In addition the Clean Air Framework published by the UK Government identified congestion charging as one of a number of measures local government in GB should consider to bring air pollution levels within

legal limits within the shortest possible time. In this context and given the need to address air quality in parts of Belfast there would be merit in reviewing the potential for congestion charging as a demand management measure.

2.15 The overall conclusion is that progress has been strong in those areas which do not limit choice and more limited on those areas which aim to restrict access or impact on established travel behaviours. It is also clear that much of the progress that has been made in the City Centre has been as a result on Belfast on the Move which itself was an integrated package of measures.

BMAP

2.16 In considering progress against the BMAP, it is important to acknowledge that while the Draft Plan was published in 2004, largely in its present form, it was not adopted until 2014. The contents of the BMAP must also be read in conjunction with the relevant contents of regional planning policy publications, supplementary planning guidance documents and policy publications of other Government Departments. It is equally important to recognise that the BMAP is not a blueprint, but rather gives some indication as to where future development might take place.

2.17 Notwithstanding the above, the City Centre Strategy contained within BMAP provides a useful reference point in assessing progress particularly insofar as it:

- Identifies 11 main entrance points or gateways to the City Centre;
- Designates a City Centre Boundary to balance the need for public administration, office, commercial, leisure and housing growth appropriate to a regional centre, see Annex One;
- Accommodates living within the City Centre through protection of existing housing areas and the zoning of several new areas specifically for housing (details attached);
- Identifies Belfast City Centre as the first choice location for major office development;
- Identifies a Primary Retail Core and Primary Retail frontage to ensure the continuation of a compact and convenient shopping environment;
- Zones five Development Opportunity Sites within Belfast City Centre, which present strategic opportunities for development:

- land to the North of Castlecourt
 - Cathedral Way/North Street/Donagall Street/Lower Garfield Street/Rosemary Street
 - Westlink/Grosvenor Road/Durham Street
 - Mays Meadow
 - Sirocco Works/Bridge End/Short Strand
-
- Designates 18 Arterial routes, 14 Commercial Nodes and 17 Shopping/Commercial Areas on most of these Arterial Routes, within which specific retail and office development policies will apply with the intention of promoting appropriate scale local facilities to service adjacent local communities.

2.18 More generally, the BMAP supporting documents highlighted the role of Belfast as the key economic driver for the Region with the City Centre considered to be the economic, social and cultural heart of the city. In that context they identify a number of broad/recurring themes which include:

- increasing the employment population;
- increasing the residential population;
- managing the retail offer;
- maximising the tourism opportunity; and
- connecting to the city and wider region.

2.19 A key principle of the BMAP in this regard was the focusing of development on transport corridors with high public transport connectivity.

2.20 The delayed adoption of BMAP and the transfer of planning responsibility to Belfast City Council have made the task of identifying land use changes since 2002 in the City Centre particularly difficult and potentially time-consuming. Notwithstanding that, the implementation of the BMAP can be summarised as follows:

- Over the period 2001 to 2011, the reduction in population experienced by Belfast during the period 1991 to 2001 was largely halted.
- The build-out and development of the Titanic Quarter over the period from 2001 has been generally slower than planned.

- The Cathedral Quarter in the north-east of the City Centre has developed reasonably successfully as an area with cultural attractions.
- The retail offer in the City Centre has changed with the opening of Victoria Square in the south-east whilst there are unoccupied units elsewhere.
- A number of office buildings have been constructed in the City Centre and currently remain unoccupied whilst Belfast Harbour have constructed and let Class A offices at City Quays to the north-east of the City Centre.
- The Ulster University development in the north of the city centre has triggered a number of new student accommodation projects in the City Centre. While none of these were planned specifically in BMAP, they do align with the wider objective of growing the population in the city centre.

Review BMTP problem statements and determine continuing relevance

2.21 The initiatives set out in the BMTP were informed by a comprehensive analysis of the then current and projected transport problems, issues and opportunities and the associated policy and objectives which aimed to address these.

2.22 The problem statements set out in the BMTP 2015 can be summarised as follows.

- Traffic levels on some roads in the BMA
- The impact of traffic on the environment and quality of life
- Road safety
- The deteriorating quality of public transport provision
- A public transport system that does not meet people's travel needs
- Limited integration between modes
- Limited provision for walking and cycling.

2.23 The implementation of a range of measures set out in the BMTP has allowed significant progress to be made against a number of these problem statements, particularly in relation to public transport.

2.24 Investment in new buses and trains, the introduction of Metro and improved integration between bus and rail timetables has allowed for a significant improvement in the quality of public transport services in Belfast and ensured these better reflect journey needs. This has resulted in all targets set out in the RTS for bus age, accessibility and reliability to be met in relation to Belfast.

2.25 Progress in this area has been further enhanced by the introduction of Belfast on the Move and associated work on Quality Bus Corridors (QBC) including priority schemes in preparation for the planned introduction of BRT services in 2018. The continued development of Park and Ride, passenger information and integrated ticketing offer opportunities to continue to enhance the quality and integration of public transport services.

2.26 In contrast, less progress has been made in addressing the underlying problems in relation to traffic levels or congestion, the environmental impact of transport and road safety – notwithstanding the successful introduction of 20mph zones in the City Centre. This is considered further in Chapter 3.

2.27 In line with this, the following problem statements set out in the BMTP 2015 remain relevant in their current form:

- Traffic levels on some roads in the BMA
- The impact of traffic on the environment and quality of life
- Road safety.

Review BMTP policy and objectives and determine continuing relevance

2.28 Informed by the problem statements, the BMTP identified a series of core objectives which guided the assessment of interventions. These objectives were aligned at that time with the RDS, BMAP, RTS and sought to support delivery of the Executive's Programme for Government.

2.29 While many of the core objectives set out in the BMTP 2015 remain largely relevant, the wider strategic framework has changed with the publication of the RDS 2035, the New Approach to Regional Transportation and the draft Programme for Government 2016. As such it will be necessary to revisit the framework of objectives to ensure these fully align with the current strategic policy framework while also reflecting changes to the operational environment arising from the Reform of Local Government and the new NICS Departmental structures. This is considered further in section 3 of this paper.

Conclusion

- 2.30 The review of the implementation of the BMTP has highlighted a number of important issues. While good progress has been made in a number of areas, there is significant variance between the city centre and the radial routes. Thus while strong progress has been made in relation to public transport and cycling infrastructure in particular within the city centre, much less progress has been made in implementing measures on the radial corridors. It is also noted that much of the progress made has been as a result of the implementation of Belfast on the Move. On the radial routes the most significant progress has been made in relation to measures such as bus passenger information and rail service frequencies which impact positively on one mode and have no negative impact on another. This will be further enhanced as a result of the significant reallocation of road space on radial routes currently being progressed as part of Belfast Rapid Transit.
- 2.31 Drawing on this point, a common feature of implementation of the BMTP is that outwith Belfast on the Move progress has been very limited in relation to those measures which restrict access or impact on established travel behaviours, i.e. choice of mode of transport.

3. REPOSITION: UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT POSITION

3.1 Belfast and the city centre in particular has seen significant change since the publication of the BMTP 2015. The wider strategic framework has also of course moved on during that period with the publication of the RDS 2035, the New Approach to Regional Transportation and the draft Programme for Government 2016.

3.2 This Chapter, therefore considers how the context has changed and the implications this has if we are to ensure that the objectives and priorities for future transport investment reflect wider ambitions for the city centre, while taking full account of the current transport problems. The key stages of the assessment are as follows:

- **Current strategic and transport objectives and policies** – what is government trying to achieve in the longer term?
- **Current transport demand and capacity** – how many people are travelling to, from and through the city centre, and how congested are the transport networks?
- **Current transport problems**—what are the operational problems on the networks?
- **Current land use / development proposals** – what new developments are expected in the city centre area?
- **Long-list of schemes** – what transport schemes is government considering to address the current problems and help meet the future objectives?

3.3 The key findings from each stage are set out below.

Current strategic and transport objectives and policies

3.4 The overarching direction for transport is set out in the Executive's draft Programme for Government 2016. This promotes an integrated approach based on the role of transport in supporting wider economic, social and environmental outcomes. As such it reflects the key role of transport and indeed infrastructure more generally in underpinning a strong economy and inclusive society while mitigating adverse environmental impacts.

3.5 That focus on outcomes has important implications in how we identify and implement objectives and priorities for future transport investment. These cannot be based solely on transport problems but must reflect wider ambitions for Belfast.

- 3.6 The role of Belfast as the regional economic driver and main employment and retail centre is recognised across the full range of Executive strategies including the draft Programme for Government, the Regional Development Strategy 2035 and the Economic Strategy. This reflects the role of vibrant well-connected urban areas, particularly in knowledge based economies in attracting growth.
- 3.7 While the economy of Belfast has grown significantly in recent years, the key regional strategies set out above highlight a number of immediate challenges which will need to be addressed if the City is to continue to grow and impact positively on regional growth. In particular, significant investment will be required in transport and wider infrastructure to ensure the capacity and connectivity is in place to accommodate growth and address key barriers to inclusion and regional impact. In addition, however, there is a need to reverse a long-term population decline, particularly in the City Centre, and begin to grow the population of Belfast, this can also help shift the balance towards greater use of public transport, walking and cycling.
- 3.8 This ambition is further reflected and developed in Belfast City Council's Community Plan, the Belfast Agenda. The community plan will be supported by the Local Development Plan which, when developed, will replace the BMAP. Created by a partnership of key city partners, residents and community organisations, the Belfast Agenda sets out a joint vision and long-term ambitions for Belfast's future as set out in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Belfast City Council – Belfast Agenda



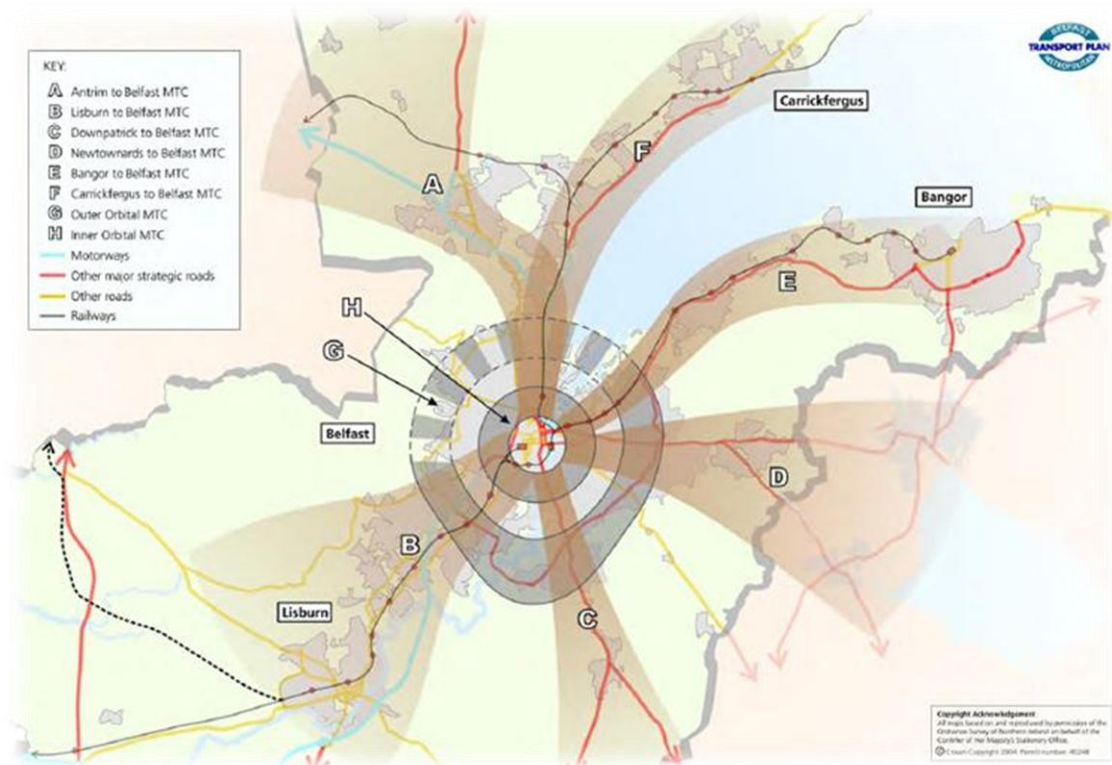
- 3.9 The vision and ambitions set out in the RDS 2035 and the Belfast Agenda have significant implications for transport, particularly in relation to the City Centre. The transport network serving and connecting the city centre must have the capacity to accommodate a significant increase in the number of people and goods movements. However, the manner in which this demand is formulated and met must contribute to a vibrant city centre which is an attractive place to live, work and visit. This requires a focus on reducing the length of new journeys to facilitate more journeys by walking and cycling and to lessen the adverse impacts of travel currently associated with high levels of car use and congestion.
- 3.10 For this reason, transport strategy as set out in the New Approach to Regional Transportation the draft PfG, and reflected in the Belfast Agenda, recognise that increased demand must be met through a greater focus on integrating land-use and transport infrastructure planning. This can naturally facilitate a switch to sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Current transport demand and capacity

• Overview of the Network

- 3.11 The current transport network in Belfast primarily consists of:
- an extensive road network, operated by Transport NI, which accommodates general traffic, bus services, on-road cycling and pedestrian footways;
 - Bus services operated by Translink comprising Metro urban routes, Ulsterbus stopping routes serving the outer areas such as Newtownards and Carryduff and Ulsterbus Goldline express routes from towns further afield;
 - Train services operated for Translink by NI Railways;
 - Other transport services used by the public including public and private hire taxis and door-to-door community transport throughout Belfast and 'taxibus' services on routes to the south west and north of the city.
- 3.12 The road network comprises of a strategic road network and a non-strategic network. The strategic network is formed by the motorway and 'A-road' links which provide 6 radial and 2 orbital Metropolitan Transport Corridors as set out in Figure 5. This also sets out the 5 lines on which NI Railways services to Belfast operate.

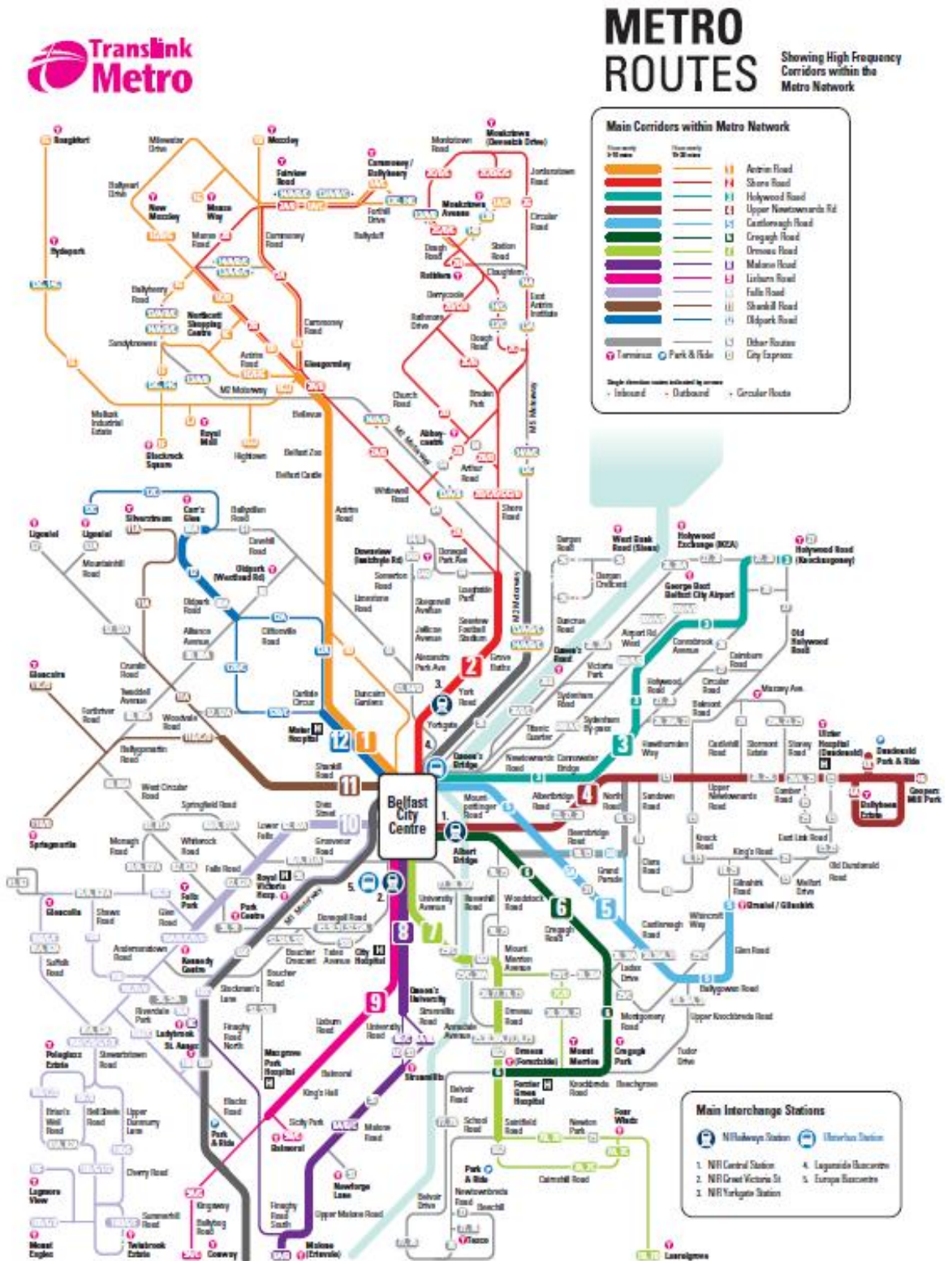
Figure 5: BMA Strategic Transport Corridors



3.13 In addition to rail, The Goldline express routes to Belfast provide high quality public transport links to Belfast. These services are focussed on the M2 and M1 motorways where they have added priority in buslanes and busways in the final approaches to the city centre.

3.14 A primary feature of the Belfast Metro bus services are their arrangement into 12 quality bus corridors (QBC), as illustrated below. These corridors provide a focus for bus priority, passenger information and high frequency services.

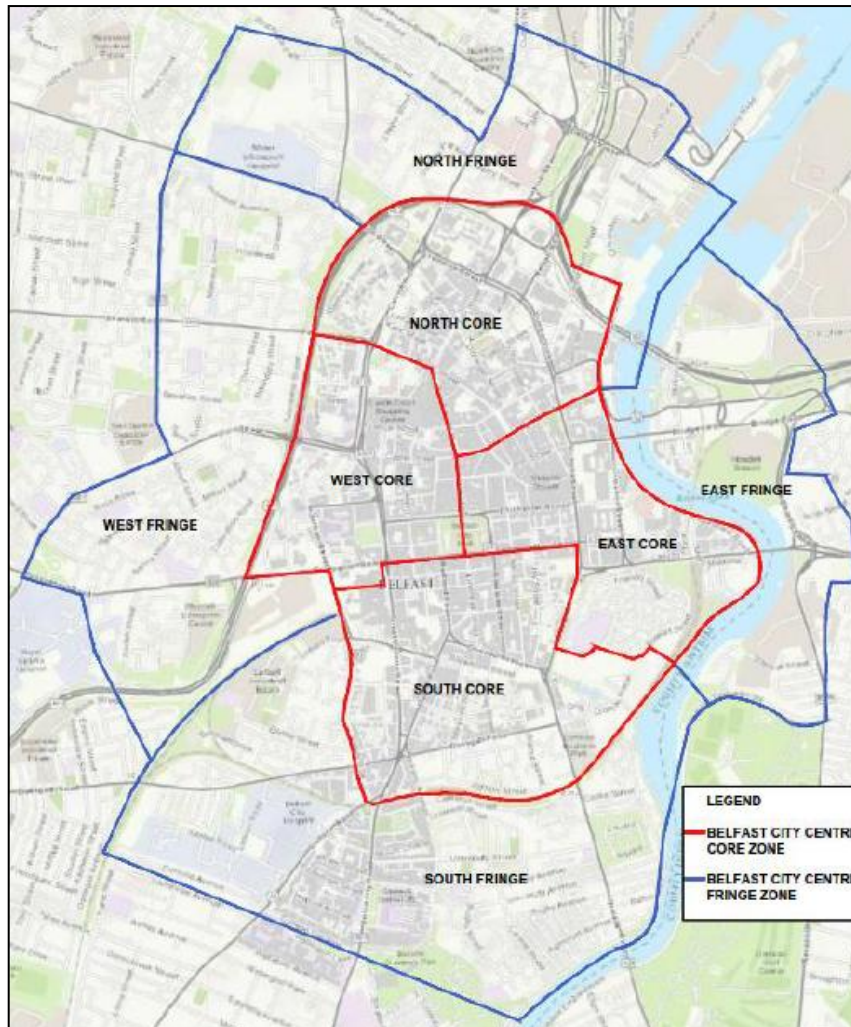
Figure 6: Translink Metro Routes



3.15 Within Belfast city centre’s controlled parking zone, which is divided into core and fringe sub zones (figure 7), there are approximately 28,300 publicly available parking

spaces, split as 45% on-street and 55% off street. Of the on-street parking only 14% are currently controlled i.e. have an enforced time or payment regime. These are predominantly within the core zone.² As such there are 9,100 uncontrolled spaces located in fringe areas such as the lower Shankill and Crumlin Roads as well as Donegal Road and Lower Ormeau Road.

Figure 7: Belfast City Centre Controlled Parking Zones



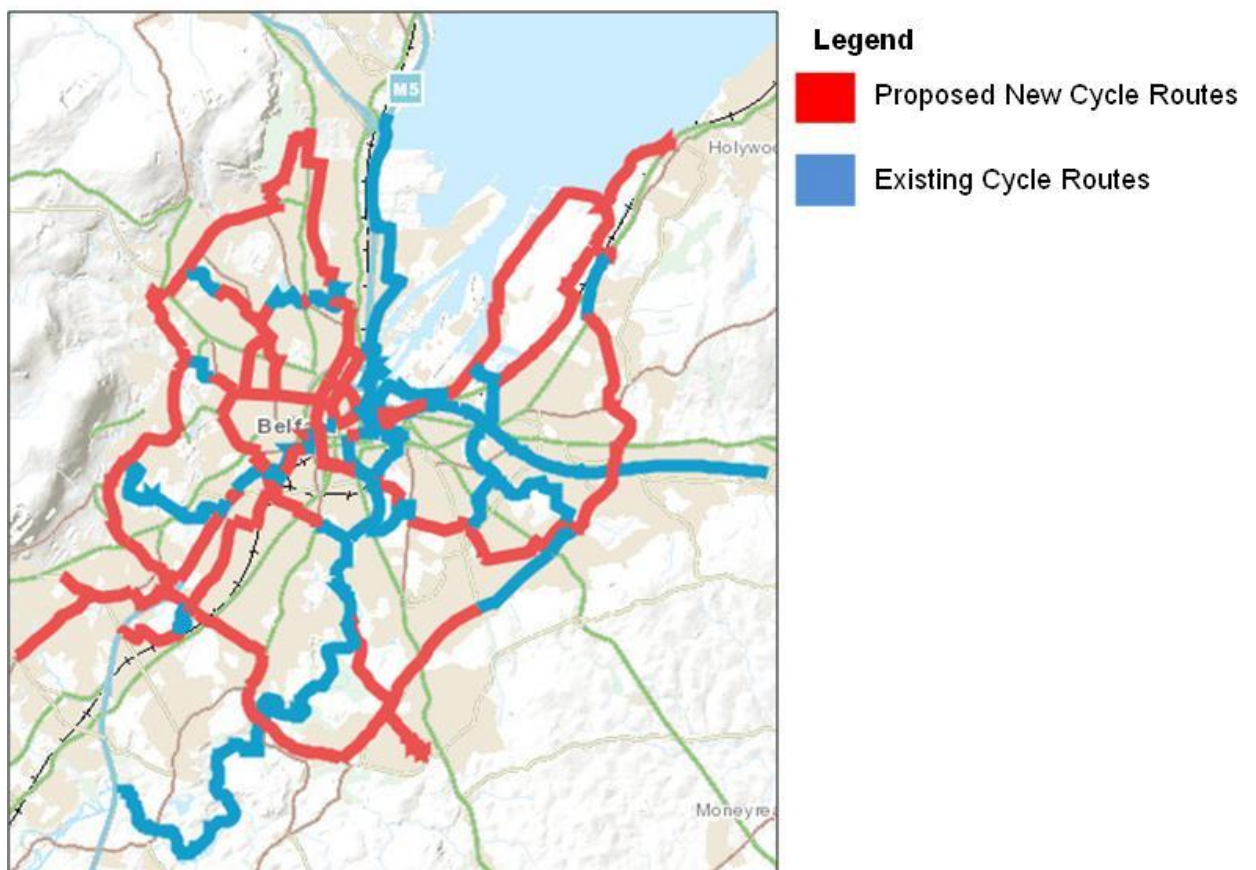
3.16 In addition there are also a substantial number of car park spaces that are not generally publicly available and often associated with businesses and offices. These are termed as 'Private Non Residential' (PNR) spaces. Within the controlled parking zone there are 10,400 PNR spaces split as around 6,700 within the core and 3,700 in the fringe. This gives a total of 38,681 spaces within the city centre and fringe.

² Figure 1 divides the city centre into two further areas – 'core' and 'fringe' and further quadrant subareas. The 'core' area relates closely to the BMAP city centre area and includes the major business and retail uses. The 'fringe' area surrounds the 'core' and is particularly relevant to transportation considerations as it includes commuter parking locations.

3.17 The delivery of Belfast On The Move, the Belfast Bike-Hire Scheme and a number of regeneration projects have enhanced the facilities for walking and cycling in the city centre, supported by the development of strategic cycle routes such as the Connswater Greenway. However, roadside footways excepted, in general there is limited dedicated infrastructure tailored to reflect the journey needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

3.18 To address this, the Department has published a Belfast Bicycle Network Strategy setting out proposals to deliver a comprehensive coherent cycling infrastructure, as illustrated below. Work is also due to be initiated on a walking strategy in line with the draft PfG.

Figure 8: Belfast Bicycle Network



- **How the Network is used**

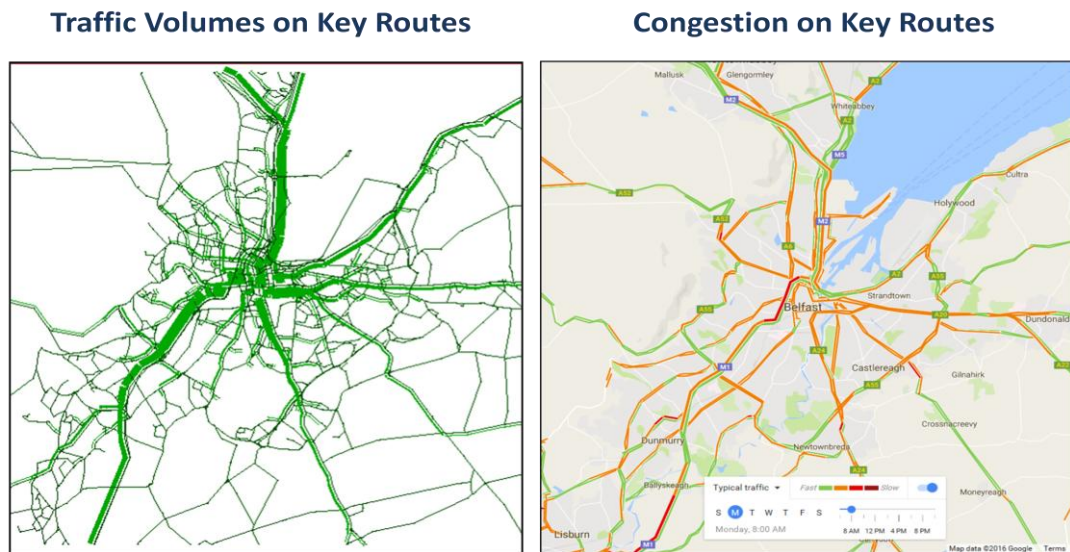
3.19 To ascertain the variation in transport modes used to travel into Belfast City Centre on a typical weekday, a number of surveys have been undertaken focusing on traffic crossing the City Centre Cordon as illustrated in the map below.

Figure 9: Belfast Cordon Location Map



3.20 A total of 35,500 people cross the city centre cordon inbound on average per hour during the am peak period. This represents a combination of shorter journeys originating within the BMA and longer journeys travelling to the BMA, much of that focused on the motorway network serving Belfast. As illustrated below, a considerable volume of medium and long-distance traffic currently utilises the motorway network to travel to the City Centre. This mix of local and strategic traffic and the concentration on a relatively small number of routes results in congestion and significant air quality issues at key points in the transport network both within and to the City Centre. If unaddressed, poorer air quality as a result of increased traffic and congestion will limit the potential new residential and office development to get planning approval within the City Centre. In addition increased congestion creates significant challenges in the resilience of the network, with collisions or breakdowns, on the Westlink in particular regularly resulting in long delays which can affect a large part of the city centre network.

Figure 10: Traffic Volumes and Congestion on Key Routes



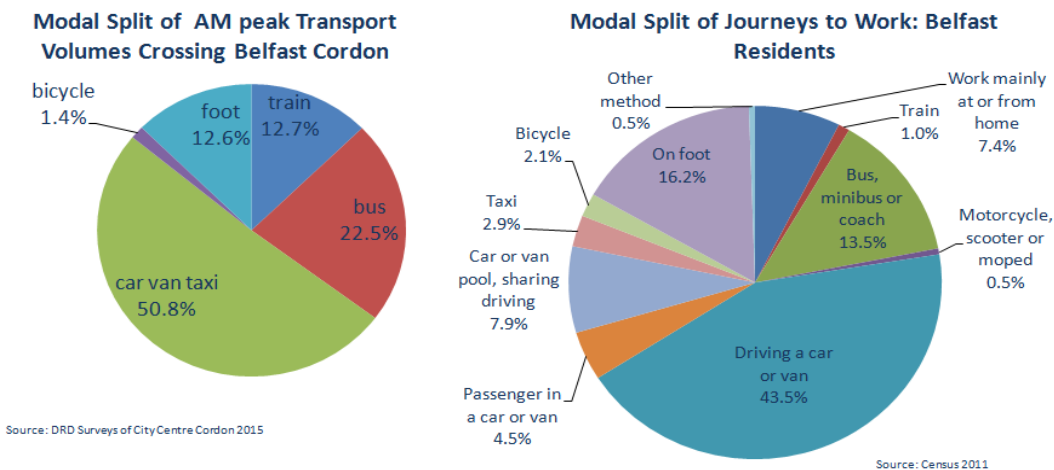
- 3.21 As illustrated above, the motorways and radial road links to the City Centre are operating at capacity during the peak period. Similarly the rail network serving Belfast City Centre is close to practical passenger capacity during the peak period. In contrast there is some spare capacity across the Metro and Ulsterbus fleet serving the City Centre during the peak period, though this varies by route, while there is in effect no physical capacity constraints to increasing numbers walking and cycling.
- 3.22 Current travel behaviours have important implications for the Executive's and Belfast City Council's ambitions to grow the population and economy of Belfast. If the growth occurs and travel behaviours are unchanged, then the transport network will simply not be able to cope. Rather significant changes in the capacity of the transport network and in travel behaviours are needed. to accommodate the ambitions for growth. Depending on the location of the new jobs and homes, much of that growth could be met through increased levels of walking and cycling and through greater use of existing capacity on the bus network. Additional capacity could also be accommodated on the rail network by means of relatively modest investment in rolling stock.
- 3.23 It is more difficult to accommodate significant increases in the volume of traffic on the road network. There is simply limited space to accommodate new roads or additional lanes for traffic both within the city centre and on the key arterial routes and motorways linking the city centre without impacting on the availability of land for business, retail or residential development. In addition, the provision of additional road space and associated increases in traffic has the clear potential to generate substantial adverse

impacts on air quality and on the attractiveness of the city centre as a location to live, work and visit.

3.24 In this context it is important to acknowledge that the existing capacity constraints and congestion on the road network is a consequence of current travel behaviours as much as it is a reflection of the current volume of people and goods moving on the network. As such, future changes to travel behaviour could provide a means to effectively increase the efficiency of the road network without adding road capacity.

3.25 Of the 35,500 people crossing the city centre cordon per hour during the peak period 18,000 are in motorised vehicles, 8,000 are in buses, 4,500 are in trains, whilst 4,500 walk and 500 cycle. The modal split is set out below in Figure 11. It should also be noted that 14,000 private cars cross the cordon during the morning peak hour.

Figure 11: Current Travel Patterns in Belfast City Centre



3.26 Both the survey of the city centre cordon and the analysis of census data on modal split of journeys to work for Belfast residents demonstrate a strong preference for travel by private vehicle as compared to other modes. However, the census data also highlights that a significant proportion of those travelling by car do so as a driver rather than as a passenger, 43.5% as compared to 4.5%. This would indicate that even when accounting for those travelling in carpools, approximately three quarters of the vehicles on the city's roads during the peak period are single occupant. This is a highly inefficient utilisation of the road capacity and directly contributes to the high levels of congestion on key corridors during the peak period.

3.27 Established travel behaviours and the high level of car dependency may be in part be influenced by the over-supply of parking spaces in Belfast. Day to day demand for off-street parking spaces typically uses up 50-60% of capacity at any one time. On-street spaces typically have higher occupancies at between 70-80% on average, rising to around 90% in the core.

Current Transport Problems

3.28 Reflecting the nature and utilisation of the network set out above, the transport network in and serving the city centre is facing a number of problems. These reflect both how the network is currently utilised and the need to ensure future development aligns with the wider vision and objectives for Belfast and the city centre in particular as summarised below.

- **Traffic levels and congestion** – much of the road network to and within the city centre is operating at capacity during the peak period. A considerable volume of strategic and local traffic utilises the motorway network to access the city centre. This interaction and concentration on a relatively small number of routes results in congestion and air quality issues at key points and impacts on the resilience of the road network.
- **Parking supply** – There is an over-supply of public parking, particularly long-stay parking in the city centre. However, the geographic distribution of spaces, relative attractiveness of sites and lack of real-time occupancy information leads to localised overloading/congestion as drivers search for spaces during the peak period. A substantial number of commuters park in relatively conveniently located uncontrolled streets and walk to their destinations in the city centre.
- **Public Transport** - Limited priority particularly on the radial routes to the city centre causes delays which are unattractive to users, particularly when contrasted with the perceived ease and cost of driving/parking in the city centre. The need for city centre layover results in buses dominating key central places including Donegall Square East and West.
- **Limited provision for walking and cycling** – vehicle dominance in the city centre reduces the quality of place making and the attractiveness of accessing the city centre by walking and cycling. Overall there remains a lack of priority over road traffic both for pedestrians and cyclists and the lack of joined-up coherent routes discourages walking and cycling.

Current land use / development proposals

3.29 Drawing on details of major developments and extant planning applications provided by Belfast City Council, the Department undertook an analysis of developments totals by land-use and estimated trip generation.

3.30 As a result of this exercise, best estimates of current development proposals in Belfast City Centre total almost 200,000 sqm of offices, 70,000 sqm of non-food retail, 1,700 hotel bedrooms, 7,500 apartments and the new Ulster University building. If delivered, as set out in Table 1, it is estimated that this would result in an additional 10,000 trips crossing the city centre cordon inbound in the weekday AM peak hour, and over 300,000 trips in and out over a 24 hour period.

Table 1: Estimate of Current Development Proposals in Belfast City Centre and Resulting Trip Generation

Use-Type	Offices	Retail	Hotels	Apartments	Ulster University	Total
Intensity	195,000 sqm	68,000 sqm	1,700 bedrooms	7,500 units	11,300 students	
AM Trips In	4,700	2,200	300	2,000	1,300	10,500
AM Trips Out	400	1,900	500	2,000	200	5,000
24 Hour Trips In+Out	47,900	208,000	10,900	52,000	12,900	331,700

3.31 It is noteworthy that if these additional 10,000 trips were made in line with current mode split (see Figure 9) then approximately 5,000 additional private cars would attempt to cross the cordon in the AM peak hour. This would represent a one-third increase and clearly could not be accommodated without further congestion, reduced network resilience and further elongation of the peak period. Clearly whilst small increments in traffic arising from individual developments may be tolerated in the short-term the 'solution' in the medium term must be a decrease in the proportion of journeys made by private car and increased use of public transport, walking and cycling.

3.32 In this context there are a number of major strategic developments proposed in the Belfast Metropolitan Area which have the potential to generate significant impacts on the wider transport network, such as Eastside and Titanic Quarter. Managing these

impacts will require a different approach to other developments. In particular there is a key need to ensure there is early and meaningful pre-application engagement. This engagement should involve all relevant stakeholders along with the relevant Planning Authority and should allow the opportunity to discuss wider strategic implications of the development proposal, as well as more detailed operational issues. It is important that the DFI Transport input to and involvement in such discussions properly reflects the Department's strategic transport policies and objectives as well as the more operational aspects.

Long-list of transport schemes

3.33 In developing this Framework, there was no facility to devise completely new schemes. Rather a long-list of schemes was generated by collating schemes known to project partners and whose feasibility was already proven. These can be summarised as:

- The York Street Interchange, Belfast Rapid Transit and the Transport Hub are central schemes.
- Additional highway schemes in the city centre to complete the Inner Relief Road whilst facilitating place-making improvements.
- Schemes which focus on improving bus operations such as improved bus priority on the Quality Bus Corridors.
- A cross-city network of high quality (largely segregated) cycle routes.
- Additional list of major road schemes elsewhere in Belfast, primarily adding capacity to the radial routes.

3.34 The full list of long-list schemes considered is shown in Table 2 and Figures 12 and 13 below, classified by:

- **W** – walking / pedestrian or place-making
- **C** – cycling
- **PT** – public transport, bus or rail or integrated facilities
- **H** – highways or traffic management including parking.

These are considered further in Chapter 4.

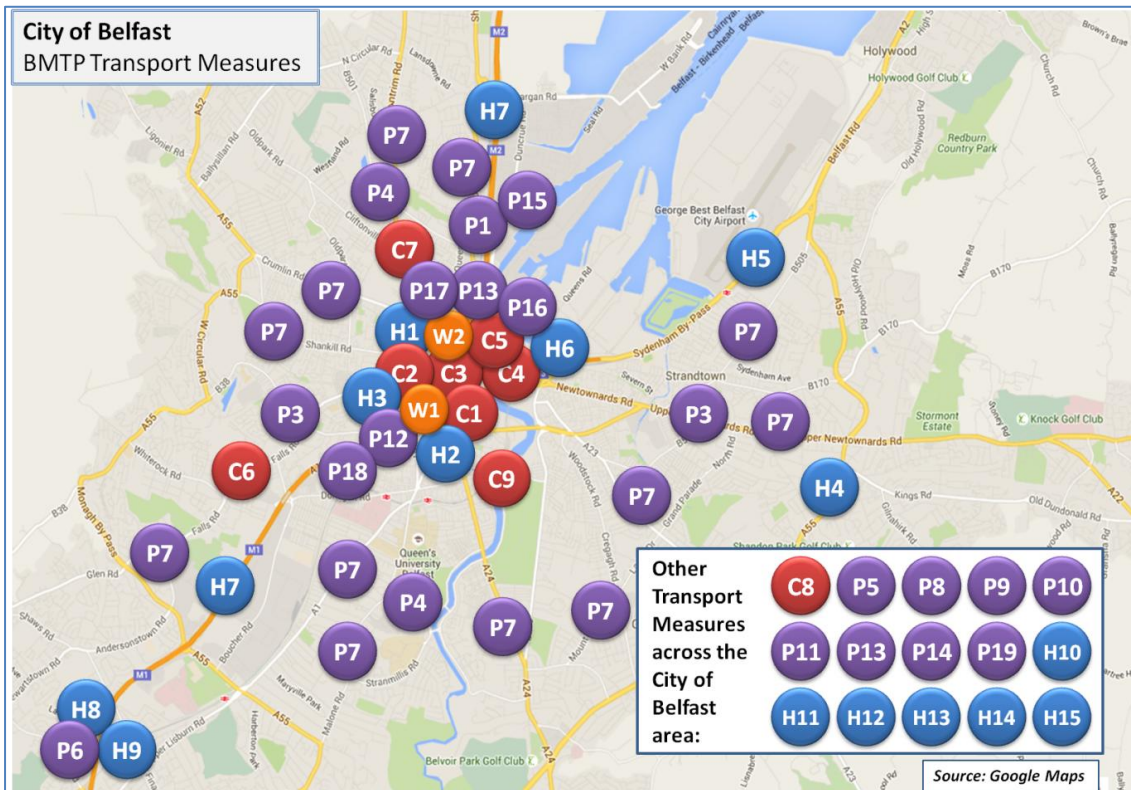
Table 2 Long-list of Schemes

REF	SCHEME	AREA
	Walking	
W1	Linen Quarter Public Realm Scheme	City Centre
W2	Castle Place to York St Public Realm Scheme	City Centre
	Cycling	
C1	Alfred Street: 500m cycle lane, Gasworks to City Centre	City Centre
C2	Westlink – College Ave: 500m cycle lane, Grosvenor Rd to City Centre	City Centre
C3	College Ave – Castle Junction: 200m cycle route, College St to Castle St	City Centre
C4	Castle Junction – Queen Elizabeth Bridge: 550m quiet street along	City Centre
C5	Queen Elizabeth Bridge – Titanic Quarter Station: 750m cycle lane,	City Centre
C6	Westlink/Bog Meadows/Falls Pk/Whiterock: 3km cycle track,	Corridor
C7	North Queen St: 1.5km cycle lanes/quiet streets, N.Belfast to inner ring	Corridor
C8	Belfast Bicycle Network Plan: Inc. 8 radial and 3 orbital routes around	Network
C9	Lagan Footbridge (Ormeau Pk – Gasworks): cycle/footbridge	Corridor
	Public Transport	
PT1	M1 & M2 Hard Shoulder Bus Lane	Corridor
PT2	New Railway Stations: suburban stations inc. P&R and/ or improved	Corridor
PT3	Belfast Rapid Transit (Ph. 1): Routes serving E. Belfast, W. Belfast and	Corridor
PT4	Belfast Rapid Transit (Ph.2): Routes serving N. Belfast & S. Belfast	Corridor
PT5	Bus Rapid Transit: Development of BRT in MTCs not served by rail	Corridor
PT6	Park & Ride: Enlarged site at Sprucefield; extension to Black's Rd	Corridor
PT7	QBCs: Whole route improvements on all QBCs	Corridor
PT8	Bus Lane Enforcement: raising public awareness to ensure bus lanes	Network
PT9	Behaviour Change: Change travel behaviour through planning	Network
PT10	Fuel Duty Rebate: The consequences of the unforeseen removal of	Network
PT11	Bustrack: expanding real-time information services for Metro users	Corridor
PT12	Transport HUB: New bus & rail transport hub at Gt. Victoria St	City Centre
PT13	Additional Train capacity: 3x new additional Class 4000 train sets	Network
PT14	Integrated Ticketing: modern, seamless ticketing system across	Network
PT15	Duncrue St Garage Redevelopment: new bus garage facility	Network-wide
PT16	Yorkgate to Donegall Quay Track Dualling – Phase 1: strengthening	Corridor
PT17	Yorkgate to Donegall Quay Track Dualling – Phase 2: track dualling &	Corridor
PT18	Adelaide Halt to Belfast Hub – 3 rd Track: resilience & reliability	Corridor
PT19	Metro Bus Replacement Programme: maintaining fleet age &	Network-wide
	Highways & Traffic Management	
H1	York Street Interchange: Linkage between Westlink & M2, M3 &	Corridor
H2	Shaftsbury Link: Cromac St to Boyne Bridge along Bankmore side of	City Centre
H3	City Centre Ring reimaging: Redesign to improve facilities for	City Centre
H4	A55 Widening at Knock Road: Complete widening of A55 to 2-lane	Corridor
H5	A2 Sydenham Bypass: Widen a 2.5km stretch of from 2-lane dual to a	Corridor
H6	A2 Titanic Quarter Junction	Corridor
H7	Smart Motorways: Sections of M1/M2 hard shoulder for all traffic use	Corridor
H8	Blacks Rd Junction: Improvement of the M1/ Blacks Rd/ Old Golf	Corridor
H9	M1 Slip Roads – Blacks Rd: southern slip road for full grade separation	Corridor
H10	Facilities for Taxi Services: Provision of facilities e.g. taxi ranks and	City Centre
H11	Traffic Management Technology (ITS)	Corridor
H12	Parking Scheme: Extended controlled parking zone (within Inner Ring)	City Centre
H13	Residents' Parking Scheme: City Centre residential areas	City Centre
H14	Coach Parking Facilities: layover/ set down	City Centre
H15	Real-Time Parking Information: signage/ VMS	City Centre

Figure 12: Location of Long-list Schemes in Belfast City Centre



Figure 13: Location of Long-list Schemes throughout Belfast



4. RENEW: POLICY OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

- 4.1 As set out in Chapter 3, both the current travel behaviours/patterns and the need to accommodate significant growth in the movement of people and goods going forward raises a number of challenges and issues. There are common themes in this regard and the issues can be broadly distilled into five problem statements as set out below.

Table 3: Transport Problem Statements

<p>1: Traffic Congestion in the City Centre</p> <p>The Belfast City Centre road network is congested at peak times. This causes problems for transport users and businesses. Additionally, at peak times the network has little resilience to 'incidents' (such as collisions leading to temporary lane blockages or road closures) resulting in excessive delays.</p>
<p>2: Conflict between transport modes in the City Centre</p> <p>High volumes of vehicles and competition for road space between pedestrians, cyclists, buses, servicing vehicles and general traffic in the city centre gives rise to problems including driver frustration, road safety and pedestrian severance.</p>
<p>3: Accessibility of the City Centre</p> <p>The City Centre is perceived as not easy to get to and from by a range of modes. The specific requirements of people with disabilities, goods servicing vehicles, tourists, and those working, shopping and living in the city centre are perceived to be not adequately met.</p>
<p>4: Insufficient or ineffective provision for cyclists</p> <p>Cycle provision in the city centre is disjointed, substandard or absent. The current provision is not sufficient to encourage a step change cycling to, from and within the city centre.</p>
<p>5: Limited attractiveness of bus services</p> <p>Bus services operating along the principal radial routes accessing the city centre are not universally attractive. This relates to both the absence of continuous bus priority, and operational issues such as frequency, lack of cross city services, ticketing arrangements and fare levels.</p>

Updated Objectives

- 4.2 To address these problem statements in line with wider strategic policy, four key objectives have been identified to inform the assessment of potential interventions and the identification of transport priorities. These are set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4 : Updated Objectives

Objective 1: Improve Accessibility to/from and within Belfast City Centre

To make it easier to travel to the city centre from all parts of Belfast and the rest of the North by sustainable modes.

Rationale:

Belfast City Centre remains the prime economic centre providing benefits for all of the North. It must strive toward the best transport connectivity and demonstrate current sustainable transport principles.

Objective 2: Positive place making

To contribute to positive place making within Belfast City Centre, making the city centre an attractive place in which to live, socialise, work and invest.

Rationale:

The delivery of positive place-making often requires integrated transport planning and traffic management measures.

Objective 3: Actively manage travel

To actively manage travel demand and modal choices to and within Belfast City Centre by planning, design, operation and maintenance to ensure greater use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Rationale:

A continuation of private car-based commuting patterns cannot be accommodated physically in the city centre and is not sustainable from an environmental, economic or social perspective.

Objective 4: Integrated Land-use and transport planning

To ensure land-use developments and transport infrastructure and services are mutually supportive to progressively improve the City Centre.

Rationale:

Integrated planning can reduce the need for travel and ensure that infrastructure for sustainable modes is provided as part of new developments.

Scoring and ranking systems

4.3 Initially each of the schemes set out in Chapter 3 was assessed for their potential to be delivered by 2020 or for their planning to be advanced over the period 2017 – 2020 to ensure delivery would not be unduly delayed. The following schemes were consequently removed:

- PT5 – BRT Development along non-rail Metropolitan Transport Corridors
- PT17 – Yorkgate to Donegall Quay Dualling Phase 2
- PT18 – Adelaide to Belfast Hub 3rd Track
- H5 – A2 Sydenham Bypass Widening
- H6 – A2 Titanic Quarter Junction
- H7 – Smart Motorways on M1/M2
- H9 – M1 Slip roads at Blacks Rd.

Additionally the following schemes were removed as they were already in operation:

- PT8 – Bus Lane Enforcement
- PT11 – Bustrack real-time information for Metro.

4.4 The remaining schemes were then assessed against the transport problems and objectives set out above. Each scheme received a score reflecting their agreed impact on the problems and objectives. Schemes were subsequently assessed against WebTAG3 sub-objectives examining the potential economic, environmental and social impacts of the proposed schemes. Finally, the schemes were assessed against the draft PfG, firstly against the 14 main strategic outcomes (coarse scoring) and secondly against the 201 achievement indicators (fine scoring).

4.5 The scoring highlighted a number of general observations as follows:

- All the larger schemes score well against Problems – this is due to their relatively narrow focus on current capacity issues;
- Highway schemes score less well against Objectives – this is due to the objectives wider spectrum of issues relating to place-making and demand management;
- Schemes which generate modal switch score best against WebTAG and PfG objectives/outcomes;

³ WebTAG is the Department for Transport's Web-based Transport Analysis Guidance. The sub-objectives are arranged under environmental, economy, social and public accounts headings.

- The differential impacts of individual schemes are highlighted by the need to consider performance against the separate problems, objectives and WebTAG sub-objectives; and
- The highlighted differential impacts allow groups of schemes with complementary impacts to be identified.

4.6 While beneficial in identifying the impacts and alignment with wider objectives, due to the variation in the size of schemes across modes, the scoring and ranking systems set out above cannot be used to assign a precise ranking or as the sole means of deciding which schemes should be prioritised.

4.7 Recognising this, attention subsequently turned to the task of identifying schemes which complemented each of the three major projects, namely:

- Belfast Transport Hub
- BRT Phase 1
- York Street Interchange (YSI).

4.8 The assessment process against each of the three major projects is set out at table 5 below. However, in general the findings can be summarised as follows:

- The schemes considered complementary to the Transport Hub were those which encouraged public transport use to the city centre including parking management.
- The schemes considered complementary to BRT Phase 1 were those which encouraged public transport use in the BRT corridors and in the city centre.
- The schemes considered complementary to York Street Junction were those which encouraged park and ride use on M1, M2 or Sydenham Bypass corridors.

4.9 It is notable that there are a number of complementary schemes common across the major projects and which could significantly enhance the positive impacts of both. These schemes are of relatively low cost and could be delivered by 2020. These include:

- H 10 Facilities for taxi services – including waiting areas
- PT10 Fuel Duty Rebate – including financial support for bus services
- H13 Residents Parking Schemes – in areas where commuter parking

causes problems

- PT9 Travel Behaviour Change – including personal travel planning
- H12 Parking Scheme: Extended Controlled Parking – actively managing parking demand
- PT4 Planning BRT Phase 2 – exploring north-south routes
- PT8 Enhanced Bus Lane Enforcement. – including clamping and towing of illegally parked vehicles.
- PT6 Park & Ride: Enlarged facilities at Sprucefield and Black's Road
- PT1 M1 & M2 Hard Shoulder Bus Lane – providing bus priority for longer distance services.

4.10 While the implementation of these schemes are likely to be required to maximise the benefits of the Belfast Transport Hub and BRT projects, on their own they also offer substantial benefits in addressing either the current problems and future development of the city centre while aligning with wider PfG Outcomes.

4.11 While noting the relatively low cost of the complementary schemes set out above they do require action to address parking and enforcement. As set out in Chapter 2, limited progress has been made in delivering the parking restraint measures set and indeed the wider demand management measures set out originally in the BMTP 2015. If progress is to be made in these areas going forward, further work will be required to engage key sectors and stakeholders to build awareness and support for such measures.

Table 5: Major Projects and Linked Schemes

Transport HUB	
PT 12	Transport HUB: New bus & rail transport hub at Gt. Victoria St
PT3	Belfast Rapid Transit (Ph. 1): E. Belfast to W. Belfast
W1	Streets Ahead 2 - North City Centre
H1	York Street Interchange
W2	Streets Ahead 3 - South City Centre
PT6	Park & Ride: Enlarged sites at Sprucefield & Black's Rd
PT7	QBCs: Whole route improvements on all QBCs
C9	Lagan Cycle/Footbridge (Ormeau Pk – Gasworks)
C6	Westlink/Bog Meadows/Falls Pk/Whiterock Cycle Lane
C7	North Queen St Cycle Lane
C1	Alfred Street Cycle Lane
H10	Facilities for Taxi Services: taxi ranks and feeder spaces
PT10	Fuel Duty Rebate
C2	Westlink – College Ave Cycle Lane
H3	City Centre Ring reimagining
PT2	New Railway Stations inc. P&R and improved road access
H13	Residents' Parking Scheme: City Centre residential areas
C3	College Ave – Castle Junction Cycle Lane
H11	Traffic Management Technology (ITS)
PT1	M2 Hard Shoulder Bus Lane Running: Fortwilliam/York St
C4	Castle Junction – Queen Elizabeth Bridge Cycle Lane
C5	Queen Elizabeth Bridge – Titanic Quarter Station Cycle Lane
PT9	Travel Behaviour Change: via planning conditions
H14	Coach Parking Facilities: layover/ set down
H12	Parking Scheme: Extended controlled parking zone
PT14	Integrated Ticketing: seamless system for Translink services
H15	Real-Time Parking Information: signage/ VMS
PT19	Metro Bus Replacement Programme
H4	A55 Widening at Knock Road
PT15	Duncrue St Garage Redevelopment: new bus garage facility
H8	Blacks Rd Junction Improvement
PT4	Planning: Belfast Rapid Transit (Ph.2): N. Belfast to S. Belfast
C8	Planning: Belfast Bicycle Network Plan
PT8	Enhanced Bus Lane Enforcement

BRT Phase 1	
PT 12	Transport HUB: New bus & rail transport hub at Gt. Victoria St
PT3	Belfast Rapid Transit (Ph. 1): E. Belfast to W. Belfast
W1	Streets Ahead 2 - North City Centre
H1	York Street Interchange
W2	Streets Ahead 3 - South City Centre
PT6	Park & Ride: Enlarged sites at Sprucefield & Black's Rd
PT7	QBCs: Whole route improvements on all QBCs
C9	Lagan Cycle/Footbridge (Ormeau Pk – Gasworks)
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C8	Planning: Belfast Bicycle Network Plan
PT8	Enhanced Bus Lane Enforcement

York Street Interchange	
PT 12	Transport HUB: New bus & rail transport hub at Gt. Victoria St
PT3	Belfast Rapid Transit (Ph. 1): E. Belfast to W. Belfast
W1	Streets Ahead 2 - North City Centre
H1	York Street Interchange
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PT4	Planning: Belfast Rapid Transit (Ph.2): N. Belfast to S. Belfast
C8	Planning: Belfast Bicycle Network Plan
PT8	Enhanced Bus Lane Enforcement

Key:
Major Scheme
Scheme Linked to Major Scheme
Scheme complete, in progress or committed

5. Actions and Policy Guidance

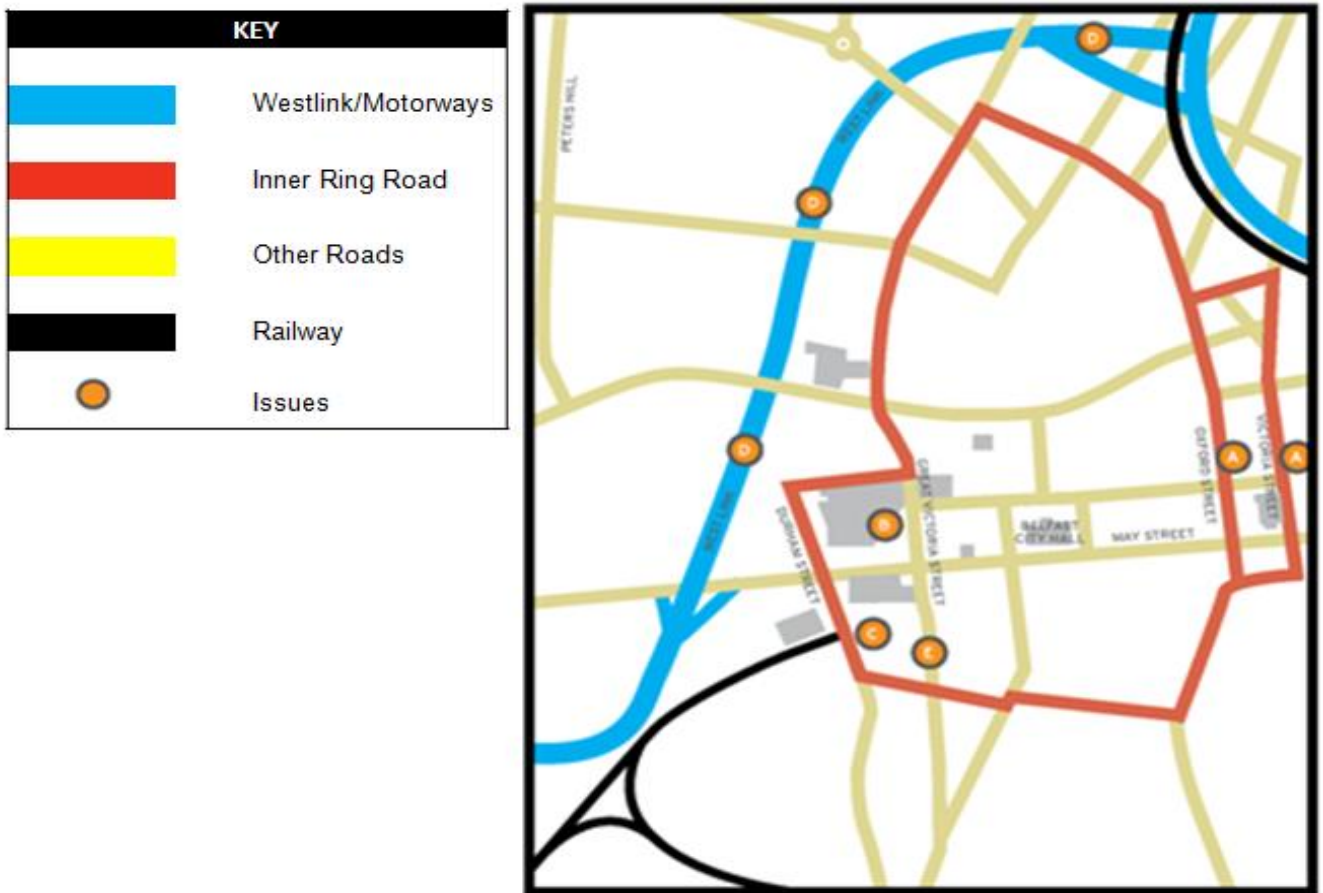
5.1 Reflecting on the analysis undertaken in previous sections, a number of actions are set out below concerning transport infrastructure in Belfast city centre. These will be taken forward to address the transport problems currently evident in the city centre, while accommodating the future growth and development of Belfast and contributing to wider PfG Outcomes. In so doing, it is important to recognise that in order to maintain as well as build a high quality transport network, there needs to be significant ongoing investment in structural maintenance.

5.2 The actions have a particular focus on the joined-up delivery of the three major projects - BRT, Belfast Transport Hub and York Street Interchange and the need for a fully integrated approach to transport and land-use planning. This is particularly so in relation to the need for a more strategic approach to major strategic developments such as Eastside and Titanic Quarter.

5.3 In addition, the actions acknowledge the key **role and function of the Inner City Ring Road is key to each of the major projects**, as set out below and illustrated in Figure 14.

- **BRT Phase 1** includes dedicated bus lanes on sections of the Inner City Ring Road including Oxford St / Victoria St (A) whilst also requiring a dedicated lane on College Square East (B). In addition BRT Phase 2 includes a preferred route along Great Victoria Street which would reduce traffic capacity (E).
- **Belfast Transport Hub** currently assumes the removal of Boyne Bridge on Durham Street and high capacity pedestrian facilities across Durham Street (C).
- **York Street Interchange** whilst the current design does not include any proposed changes on the Inner City Ring Road other than in the vicinity of Great Patrick Street, the scheme has the potential to alter the use of the Inner City Ring Road (D).

Figure 14: Major transport projects in Belfast City Centre



Actions:

- A1:** The implementation of the BRT Phase 1, Transport Hub and York Street Interchange schemes should be prioritised and fully integrated. This should include staging of their delivery schedules to manage traffic congestion impacts.
- A2:** The future road layout options in the City Centre should be urgently reviewed to confirm the role, capacity and operation of the Inner Ring Road to support strategic objectives. This should incorporate the planning and design of BRT Phase 2 and the recent completion of scheme C3 (Cycle Lane on Durham Street and College Square North).
- A3:** Schemes which provide improved facilities for walking, cycling, taxi and tourist coach access should be implemented within attractive 'place-making' designs

whilst maintaining appropriate access for public transport. The provision and location of taxi ranks should take full account of passenger needs.

- A4:** In line with Belfast City Council's Draft Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan, detailed plans should be brought forward to extend the current Controlled Parking Zone. In effect this would require the delivery of a number of Residents Parking Schemes and result in the reduction of commuter parking capacity within the City Centre. It is expected that additional parking will continue to be identified and delivered through Park & Ride schemes.
- A5:** The Metro bus network should be reviewed to include consideration of priority and infrastructure measures in line with the holistic approach applied on the BRT Phase 1 corridors, e.g. additional lengths of bus lane, with localised road widening where appropriate. A principal aim of the review should be to increase modal shift from private car to Metro bus, especially for commuters.
- A6:** Planning and delivery should be advanced on a number of complementary work areas that will be required to maximise the benefits of the Transport Hub, BRT Phase 1 or YSI once constructed, yet on their own offer substantial benefits in addressing either current problems or future development of the City Centre. These work areas include: travel behaviour change (i.e. greater use of public transport and walking and cycling); enhanced bus lane enforcement; additional rail capacity; and increased Park and Ride.
- A7:** A benefits realisation strategy should be developed for each of the strategic projects. These should identify the wider socio-economic and development opportunities afforded by these projects and initial proposals as to how these should be taken forward.
- A8:** The role and capacity of the Traffic Information Control Centre should be reviewed with a specific focus on improving the resilience of the transport network to major incidents. The review should also consider the potential for additional use of Intelligent Transport Systems to enhance the efficiency of the transport network and support modal shift.

- A9:** The Department should review different types of charging and road pricing systems with a particular focus on their role in influencing travel behaviour, addressing congestion and air quality.
- A10:** There should be early and meaningful pre-application engagement on strategic development proposals within the region such as Eastside and Titanic Quarter which have the potential for significant impacts on the wider transport network serving the City Centre. This engagement should involve all relevant stakeholders along with the relevant Planning Authority and should allow the opportunity to discuss wider strategic implications of the development proposal, as well as more detailed operational issues.

Policy Guidance

- 5.4 In addition to the high level recommendations, this Framework document, drawing on current strategic and transport policy, also sets out guidance below which aims to provide for an integrated approach to the three key areas of car parking, modal hierarchy and the integration of land-use and transport planning. Individually and collectively, these three areas have the potential if appropriately implemented to make a significant contribution to maximising the benefits associated with the major transport projects. More widely, they will play a key role in facilitating realisation of the vision for Belfast set out in the RDS and the Belfast Agenda, and the wider PfG Outcomes.

Car Parking

- 5.5 An efficient parking system can play a key role in sustaining a vibrant and connected urban centre. However, car parking can also have a negative impacts and plays a key role in influencing travel behaviour. In that regard while an under supply of parking can result in increased congestion and decreased accessibility, an oversupply can undermine efforts to promote modal shift and adversely impact on the quality and vibrancy of the urban environment.
- 5.6 In line with this the Belfast City Council Car Parking Strategy sets out the following vision for parking:

“Belfast is a city offering sufficient, high quality and appropriately located parking which supports economic development and

regeneration within the city by balancing the requirements of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors.”

5.7 As set out previously, there continues to be an over-supply of commuter parking spaces in the city centre. This has the potential to undermine wider efforts to promote modal shift while impacting on the realisation of PfG Outcomes and the shared vision for Belfast. To address this the following guidance, reflecting strategic transport policy, should be reflected in the future development of Belfast City Centre, with a particular focus on planning control and enforcement.

- Discourage commuter parking whilst ensuring adequate parking provision for short term shopping, business and leisure uses to ensure the accessibility of the city centre.
- Control the supply and price of parking in the city centre to support sustainable transportation policy objectives including the PfG modal split indicator.
- Set maximum parking standards for new developments in the city centre which take account of the good accessibility by public transport and support its use.
- Progressively increase the size of the controlled parking zone in the city centre in conjunction with Residential Parking Schemes to ensure consistent and logical parking controls. The controlled parking zone would be subdivided into core and fringe sub-zones.
- Support the migration of off-street surface parking spaces to new multi-storey car parks located with convenient access from the Inner ring Road.

Hierarchy of Modes

5.8 It is recognised that the transport network in the city centre must be designed and managed in order to ensure continued accessibility by all modes of transport whilst safeguarding the quality of the environment and sense of place.

5.9 The public realm schemes, “Belfast Streets Ahead”, led by the Department for Communities and the multi-modal transport master plan , “Belfast on the Move”, led by

the Department for Infrastructure provide good examples of the integrated design and management needed.

- 5.10 As the city centre and its radial corridors are further developed similar approaches will be needed to ensure designs which emphasise the hierarchy of users, with pedestrians and cyclists at the top, through buses and servicing goods vehicles, to single occupancy private vehicles at the bottom. These designs will therefore support the PfG Outcomes to increase the use of public transport and active travel modes whilst being in line with “Living Places” the urban stewardship and design guide. Designs must also be sympathetic to the particular circumstances and movement priorities on a case by case basis and should build in flexibility to allow ongoing changes and fine-tuning.
- 5.11 This hierarchy should also be adopted for major developments in the city centre, whether commercial or residential. With priority attached to access by means of walking, cycling and public transport.

Integration of Land Use and Transport Planning

- 5.12 In seeking to accommodate further development in Belfast, it is of prime importance that new development is located such that journey lengths are minimised and that the use of active travel modes and public transport are maximised. This requires that as far as practical, employment is located in the city centre, close to the focus of public transport routes, whilst housing is located centrally and/or in close to public transport routes.
- 5.13 The use of Accessibility Maps can inform this process and takes account of the radial pattern of the Translink public transport network including interchange opportunities. Figure 15 shows travel times to the city centre (City Hall) and illustrates that almost the whole population of Belfast could get there within 20 minutes, using Metro buses, whilst 30 minutes extends the reach to outer areas adjacent to Ulsterbus routes and NI Railways services. By contrast, in Figure 16 travel times to Forestside on a Metro corridor are increased substantially as it requires interchange and the use of an onward bus service. For that reason, where employment is located out with the city centre, it will be important to consider how public transport accessibility may be most appropriately enhanced.

Figure 15: Public Transport Times to Belfast City Hall

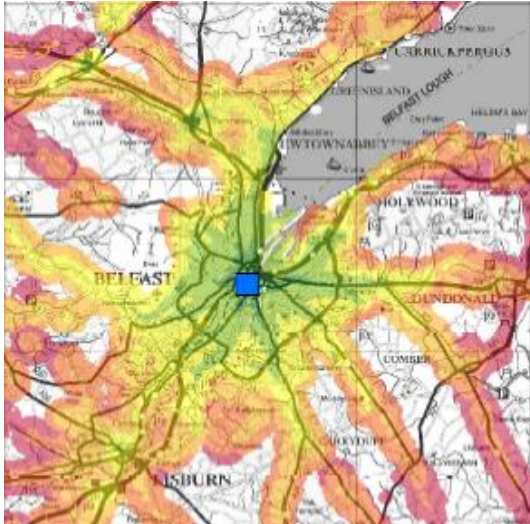
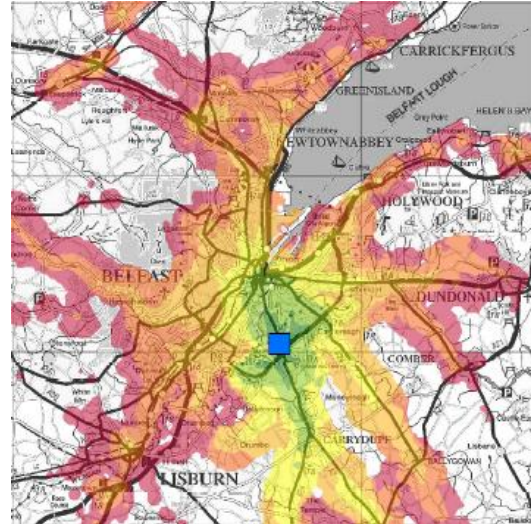
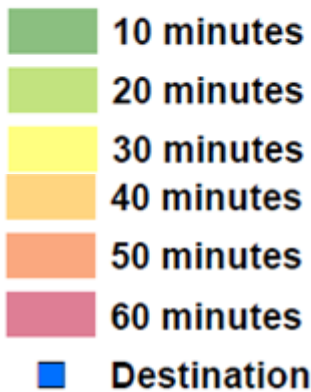


Figure 16: Public Transport Times to Belfast City Hall



Isochrones (Time Bands)



Developer Contributions Secured via the Planning System

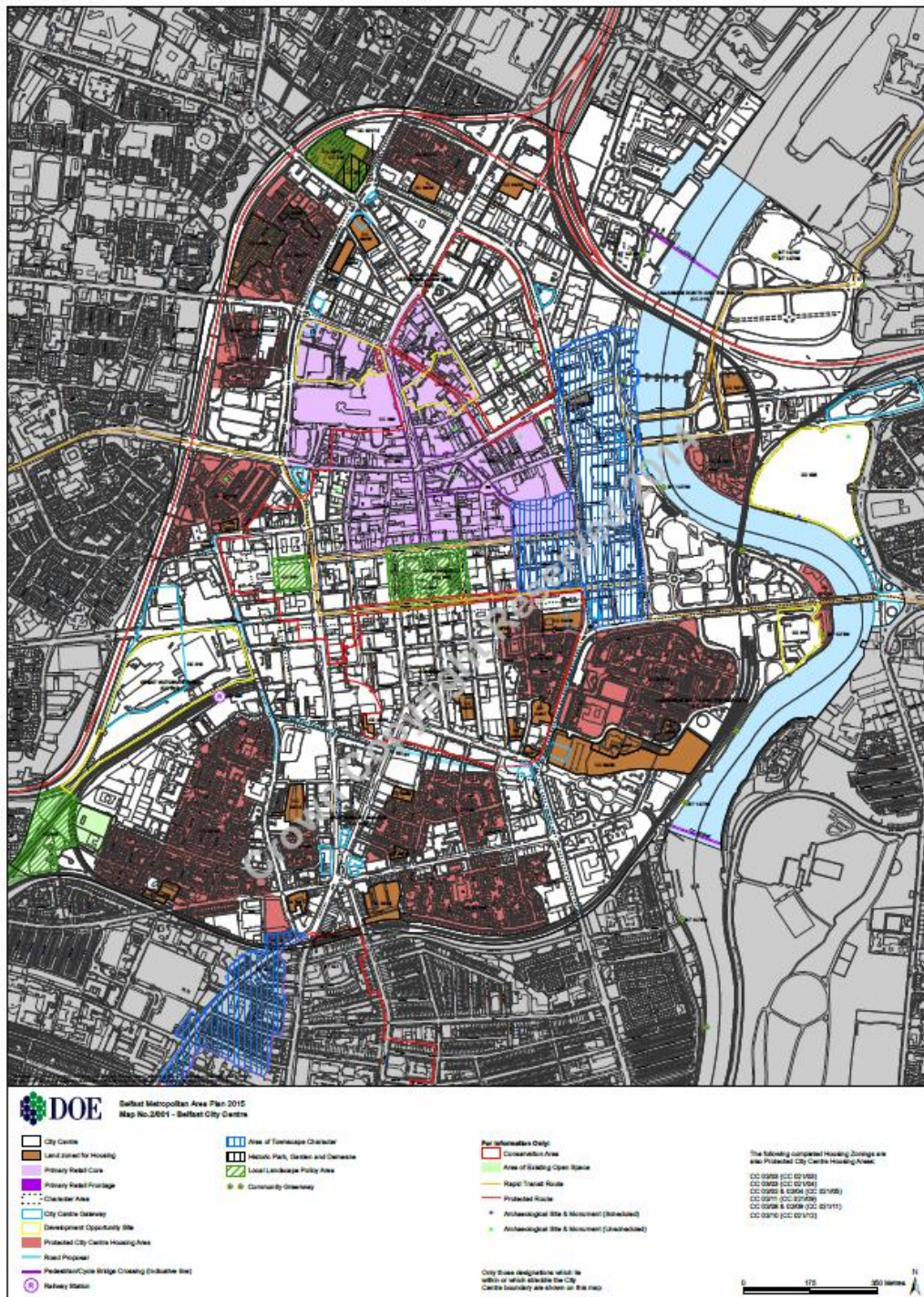
5.14 The planning system also provides an opportunity to secure contributions from developers where they are necessary to overcome a legislative or policy bar to the grant of planning permission. In order to mitigate the potential site specific impact of a development proposal, an infrastructure or service provider may engage with the planning authority considering the application for planning permission and investigate what contribution, if any, a developer might make to the provision of relevant infrastructure or service.

5.15 In January 2017 the Department published Planning Advice Note 21 on Section 76 Planning Agreements which is available on the NI Planning Portal.⁴

5.16 It should be remembered that any form of contribution is intended to supplement rather than replace the funding provided by statutory undertakers. Such contributions are dependent upon future development proposals and therefore do not represent a confirmed or predictable level of additional funding. However, such contributions offer a new and potentially valuable funding stream to support infrastructure and service delivery.

⁴ https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/advice/practice-notes/development_managementpractice_note_21_section_76_planning_agreements_26_01.2017-6.pdf

Belfast City Centre as Defined by BMAP



Source:

https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/development_plans/devplans_az/bmap_2015/bmap_library/belfast_map/bmap_2015_vol2_map_no_2_001_belfast_city_centre.pdf

Annex Two

Task and Finish Group

Assessment of BMTP 2015 Implementation by Mode & Measure

The BMTP 2015 set out a range of interventions across modes. To assess progress in implementing these measures, a workshop was held to review progress and allocate a score against each of the key modes using a six point scoring framework. Both the framework and findings are attached are set out below.

Score	% complete
0	0
1	01 – 20
2	21 – 40
3	41 – 60
4	61 – 80
5	81 – 100

Mode	Measure	City Centre Score	Radial Corridor Score
Walking and Cycling	Walking network	Score: 4 Belfast on the move and public realm works have significantly enhanced the pedestrian environment	Score: 1 Very limited improvements
	Cycling network	Score: 2 Belfast On The Move has provided significant improvement in the City Centre. However, score reflects that there has been no dedicated space allocation	Score: 1 Some progress has been made with shared footways and bus lanes and advanced stop lines
Public Transport	Quality Bus Corridors	Score: 5 Belfast On The Move provides priority as generally planned in city centre	Score: 3 Mixed level of priority by corridor ranging from very limited to fair. Score reflects more positive progress on service frequency, provision of RTPI ⁵ at bus stops and 100% low floor buses
	Orbital Bus Routes	Score: 1 Centrelink ⁶ introduced and withdrawn due to low patronage	Score: 1 Outer orbital routes trialled and withdrawn due to low patronage
	Long Distance Bus/Coach	N/A	Score: 4 Substantial increases in Goldline frequencies and new accessible fleet
	Urban Community Transport	Score: 4 Funding provided for door-to-door services	Score: 4 Funding provided for door-to-door services
	Bus priority on strategic roads	N/A	Score: 2 Very limited – fair new provision
	Provision for Taxis	Score: 2 Limited new provision for waiting in City Centre	Score: 2 Priority for public hire taxis in bus lanes
	BRT	Score: 3 EWAY/ WWAY/ CITI routes planned to be operational by 2018	Score: 3 EWAY/ WWAY/ CITI routes planned to be operational by 2018
	New or re-located train stations	N/A	Score: 1 Very limited progress but DDA provision complete
	Rail service frequencies	N/A	Score: 5 Significant enhancement through new trains and timetables

⁵ (RTPI) Real Time Passenger Information – Electronic screens at stops show bus arrival times

⁶ Centrelink – Bus service following central orbital route serving short journeys in and around the retail core

Belfast City Centre Transport Framework 2017 - 2020

Mode	Measure	City Centre Score	Radial Corridor Score
	Rail based Park & Ride	N/A	Score: 3 Substantial progress at some sites and additional parking at existing stations
	Bus or rapid transit based Park & Ride	N/A	Score: 3 Number of new sites delivered, however, changes to proposals following 2009 review
Highway	Strategic highway capacity	N/A	Score: 3 Mixed progress, two schemes in preparation pool; 3 schemes delivered
	Non-strategic highway network	N/A	Score: 1 Generally very limited progress, but North Lisburn Feeder delivered
	Route management strategies	N/A	Score: 2 Limited provision delivered
	Traffic management	Score: 5 Belfast on the Move provided substantially as planned	Score: 2 Limited provision delivered
Management	Technology	N/A	Score: 4 Substantial delivery across number of modes and schemes
	Parking controls	Score: 3 Significant interventions delivered	
	Park & Share	N/A	Score: 5 Large number of popular schemes delivered
	Review of congestion charging	Score: 3 Internal study undertaken	Score: 3 Internal study undertaken
	Education & Awareness	Score: 3 Mixed success in mainstreaming	Score: 3 Mixed success in mainstreaming
	Enforcement	Score: 5 Rigorous enforcement of City Centre with static cameras	Score: 3 Enforcement cameras mounted on 2 cars