



The Consumer Council

**Response to the Department for Regional
Development (DRD) on the Belfast Rapid
Transport Consultation**

**By the
General Consumer Council
for Northern Ireland**

February 2009

The General Consumer Council ('Consumer Council') welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department for Regional Development's consultation on Public Transport Reform.

The Consumer Council was established in 1985 with a statutory remit to protect and promote the interests of all passengers travelling to, from or within Northern Ireland. We aim to make the passenger voice heard and to make it count.

The Consumer Council supports the policy objectives of the Belfast Rapid Transit project and welcomes the engagement with DRD on the project to date.

In principle the Consumer Council is supportive of all the proposals as outlined in the questionnaire accompanying the consultation. The proposals will help to deliver Belfast Rapid Transit which will provide further sustainable travel options for passengers as part of an integrated public transport network.

Our research with both public transport passengers and non-users to date indicates they want Rapid Transit to reduce congestion and offer more options for public transport which are reliable and provide shorter journey times. If services are affordable, frequent and rapid then consumers will make the switch from their cars. It is vital that Belfast Rapid Transit integrates fully with all other forms of public transport in timetabling, ticketing and facilities.

The Consumer Council welcomes the opportunity to work with consumers and DRD as part of further public consultation on the exact operation of the Belfast Rapid Transit. Consulting with consumers on issues such as the alignment of routes, positioning and design of individual stops / halts, ticketing arrangements, security and accessibility will help to ensure the system is passenger focussed and meets their needs.