

Foreword

During my time as the Minister for Regional Development I have taken a close interest in the development of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan for the period up to 2015. The BMTP proposals are based upon extensive consultation throughout the community, rigorous analysis and a robust methodology. It clearly demonstrates the desire of the Department for Regional Development to plan and develop a transport infrastructure that will truly benefit users.

The Plan builds on the Regional Development Strategy and the Regional Transportation Strategy, both of which have already been accepted by the Northern Ireland Assembly. It has also been developed to integrate with the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. As such, it begins to show the outworking of the Regional Development Strategy vision:

“to have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy, and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone’s quality of life”.

Within the Plan I am particularly encouraged by the high priority given to public transport, walking and cycling, as large urban areas like the Belfast Metropolitan Area offer the best opportunities to reduce reliance on the private car. Measures to improve rail frequencies and bus services, proposals for demand responsive transport, better walking and cycling networks and options for rapid transit should all help in this regard.

I wish to express my thanks to all those who contributed their talent, energy and ideas in the formulation of this Plan. I am also grateful to all those who have been involved in consultation on the Plan through their participation in the Working Conference, reference groups, focus groups and in particular the Key Stakeholders Group.

Publication of the Plan is not the end of the process. The challenge for all those involved in transportation within the BMA is now to develop and implement the proposals on a measure by measure basis, subject of course to detailed economic appraisals, relevant statutory processes and the availability of funding.

Accordingly, it gives me great pleasure to adopt the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015.

Rt Hon John Spellar MP
Minister for Regional Development