

## First Transport Plan For Metropolitan Area

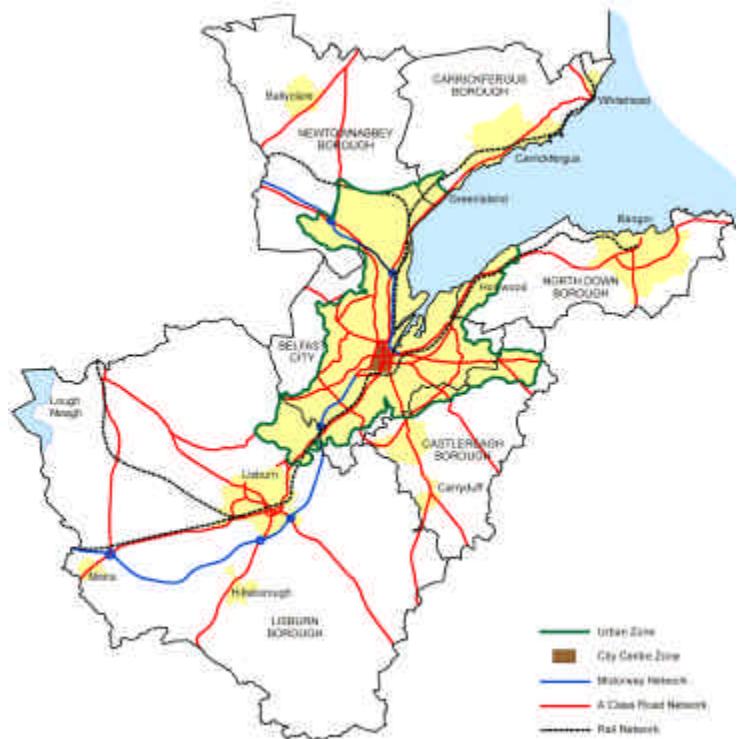


The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) is currently being prepared by the Department for Regional Development and their consultants WS Atkins. The Project's Steering Group which plays a key role in the management of the study includes representatives of the District Councils, Translink and other Government Departments

The BMTP will cover the six Council Areas of Belfast, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down and will deliver a phased and costed implementation programme of transport schemes and measures up to 2015.

In the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA), traffic has been growing at up to 5% each year while public transport usage continues to decline. The potential detrimental impact of high volumes of traffic on the environment, the economy and on our quality of life is not acceptable.

Transport planning, carried out with a sense of vision and with a long term guiding strategy that is focused on improving the quality of life for all, has a major contribution to make to shaping the future of the Belfast Metropolitan Area



Belfast Metropolitan Area

### The BMTP has two key aims:

- To co-ordinate the implementation of local transport. The BMTP is due for completion by the end of 2002 and will outline, plan and prioritise an integrated programme of transport schemes and measures which people can expect to see on the ground up to 2015.
- To reflect and inform the development of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP). BMAP is due for publication in draft form by the end of 2002 and will provide a Planning Framework to guide and control future development up to the year 2015. For further information visit the BMAP web-site [www.doeni.gov.uk/planning](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/planning) or Telephone 028 90 540540

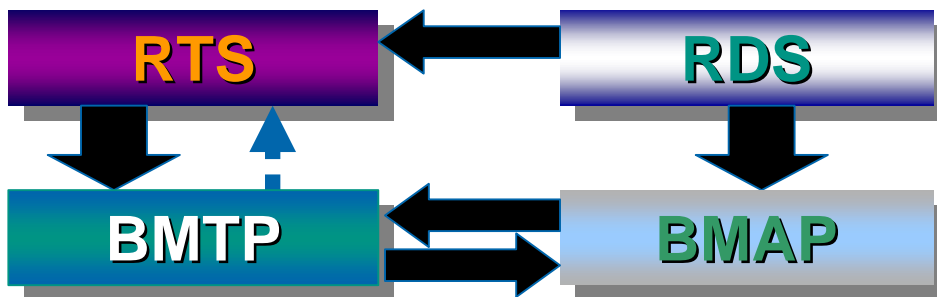
# Policy Context

The development of the BMTP will be guided from the outset by the relevant policies, strategies and plans. These cover transport and other policy areas such as land use, environment, social exclusion, economy, health and education.

In particular, the study will build upon the guidance set out in the recently published **Regional Development Strategy (RDS)** and the proposed **Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS)** which is due to be published shortly.



Together these strategies provide guidance on future development throughout Northern Ireland, the likely transport schemes envisaged to accommodate future growth and the potential funding levels that will be available. The BMTP is also being developed in parallel with the **Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP)**. The BMTP will work closely with the Department of the Environment team preparing the BMAP, in particular during the public consultation exercise.



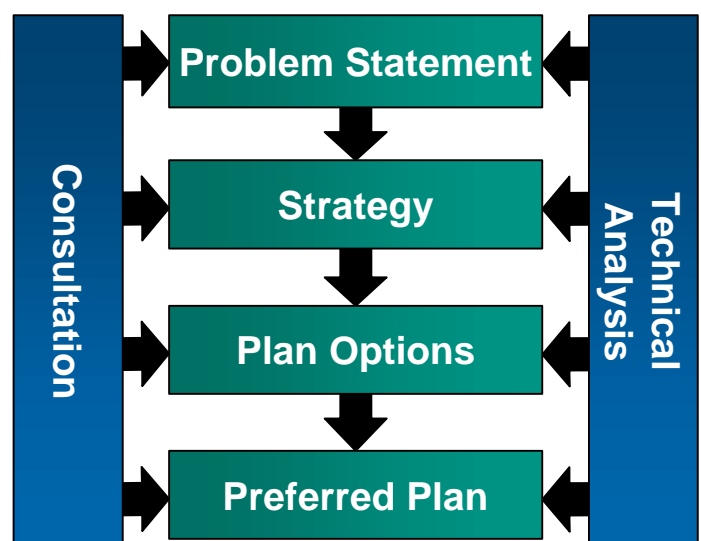
BMTP Study Linkages

# The Study Approach

The methodology used to develop the BMTP will follow the UK Government's 'Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies' (GOMMMS). This structured approach to plan development will lead from problem analysis through to the identification and assessment of integrated solutions and the production of a detailed preferred plan.

The process will consist of a number of key phases or milestones. The central elements of the plan will be supported by extensive modelling and technical analysis and a thorough consultation process.

The first significant milestone, the Problem Statement has been completed and the 'Summary of Transport Problems, Issues and Opportunities' can be viewed on the BMTP web-site.



The BMTP Approach

# Consultation

## - The Key to Understanding Transport Problems

Development of both the Regional Development Strategy and the Proposed Regional Transportation Strategy has involved extensive consultation exercises. Involvement of interested parties and the general public is critical to understanding the key issues. The preparation of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan will involve a statutory consultation process that includes transport issues, as well as other broader planning issues such as housing, greenbelt and the countryside, employment creation, and recreation and open space. A series of meetings across the 6 Council areas have been arranged during January, February and March 2002 where members of the public will have the opportunity to put forward their views on the BMAP issues, including transport. The *'Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 Issues Paper'* was published in December 2001 to inform this consultation. (see: [www.doeni.gov.uk/planning/bmap.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/planning/bmap.htm))

In addition to the BMAP consultation process, specific consultation mechanisms will form an intrinsic part of the BMTP study. This will involve the overall management of the study and will include special interest groups and members of the general public. This consultation will take the form of Focus Groups, a Key Stakeholder Group, Reference Groups and a Transport Forum. There has been consultation with Councils which is ongoing either separately or as part of the BMAP process

As part of the preparation of the BMTP Problem Statement, the first series of Reference Groups were convened in Autumn 2001. Whilst there were clear concerns about issues such as traffic congestion, highway maintenance and public transport services, there was a general consensus that transport problems in the BMA were not yet as bad as in other UK cities.



### Focus Groups

These are a means of consulting directly with BMA residents who may not have been represented in the Reference Groups. They will be used to fill in the gaps in responses from the Reference Groups and in particular help address the low response from community representatives.

### Key Stakeholder Group

This is composed of nominated representatives from each of the Reference Groups. The Key Stakeholder Group will be engaged to promote discussion on particular options and to aid the decision making process.

### Reference Groups

There are approximately 20 Reference Groups organised to bring together the expertise and local knowledge of specialist interest groups. They will provide valuable feedback to the study team at key stages in the process.

### Transport Forum

A one day conference will be held towards the final stages of the Plan development. It will bring together representatives from all Consultation Groups, Councils and Government agencies.

1	Lisburn	8	West Belfast	15	Land / Economy
2	Carrickfergus	9	South Belfast	16	Health / Education
3	Castlereagh	10	North Belfast	17	Road
4	North Down	11	Transport / Environment	18	Air / Sea
5	N'abbey	12	Equality	19	Cycle
6	Belfast City	13	Main Employers	20	Walk
7	East Belfast	14	Youth / Women	21	Tourism

Reference Group Topics

# Reference Groups - Feedback so Far

**Highway Network** – consensus that widespread road building was not the solution to improve traffic conditions. A better use of road space and co-ordination of highway road works was suggested.

**Public Transport** – recognition that public transport could make a contribution to a reduction in traffic congestion. Current perceptions of bus and rail services were poor, e.g. low frequencies; a lack of Sunday services; a need for orbital routes; and a lack of public transport integration.

**Environmental issues** - recognition of the importance of transport on the quality of the environment. There was a consensus for specifying targets for air quality to guide transport policy.

**Pedestrian / Cycling Facilities** – recognition of recent improvements. Suggestions for further enhancement included a reduction in route severance caused by wide roads, improved signage and improved promotion and marketing.



**Parking Provision** – need to balance short and long stay car parking. This may be achieved by providing park and ride facilities and controlling the cost and supply of town centre spaces.

**Land-use / Development** - identified as having significant impact on travel demand. There was a consensus for better co-ordination between transport and planning policies and a need for developer contributions to fund infrastructure improvements.

**Safety** – recognised as an important issue. It was suggested that safety could be enhanced by a greater enforcement of traffic law and enhanced traffic calming to reduce rat running.

Over the next number of months the proposed consultation schedule is as follows

Study Phase	Reference Groups	Key Stakeholder Groups	Focus Groups	Transport Forum
2. Problem Statement	October 2001			
5. Strategy Development		January 2002		
6. Plan Development		April 2002	April 2002	
7. Plan Appraisal	July 2002	July 2002	July 2002	
8. Preferred Plan	September 2002	September 2002		September 2002

BMTP Consultation Timetable

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