

16

MAGHERAFELT

Stephen,  
For information  
23/6/06  
A

JAMcL/AJ

22 June 2006

23 JUN 2006

Dr A MacMurray  
Transportation Unit  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8GB

Dear Dr MacMurray

**DRAFT SUB-REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN (SRTP) 2015**

The Council welcomed the opportunity to consider the above plan at a recent Council meeting.

The Members were very supportive of all of the proposals which had been set out in the document. They were especially appreciative of the fact that the plan seeks to make society less dependent on individual cars as the prime mode of transport and also of the fact that the plan seeks to support a healthy lifestyle with the provision of more footways and cycle paths.


Notwithstanding the above the Council would ask you to address the following issues in the final plan:

- 1 *Car parking.* More car parking should be provided within the main towns. In the case of pay and display car parks it is essential that they be competitively priced against those private car parks linked to private shopping centres in order that the independent private retailer is not disadvantaged.
- 2 *Improved public transport links to main bus routes.* The provision of the 'Maiden City Flyer' bus service from Derry to Belfast has been an outstanding success. However, it would be an even greater success if individuals without their own private transport (who are after all the main users of this service) had a means of travelling to the Castledawson Roundabout or the Maghera "flyover". Thus the Council would urge that a small service be set up to transport individuals from Magherafelt and Maghera town centres to these two pick-up points. This service could be provided through, or in partnership with, the private sector.
- 3 *The improvement of the rural bus service remains a priority.* The rural bus service in this District is virtually non-existent. The Council remains confident that the high dependency on private cars and the prevalence of two and three car households will continue to increase until the issue of a much improved rural transport service is successfully addressed. The demand for such a service is presently being witnessed by the success of the Out and About Community Transport Scheme in the District which is already operating at maximum capacity and is unable to satisfy demand.
- 4 *The provision of a rail service for the area.* Again the Council feels that the issues raised in points 2 and 3 above helps to justify the provision of a rail service linking the area to Belfast. Coupled with the points raised above one should remember that recent Roads Service studies show that the growth in traffic through Magherafelt and on to Belfast is increasing annually at a rate in excess of 5%.

- 5 *The provision of a by-pass for Magherafelt.* The reasons for this request have been well documented in the past and we believe that the scheme is still on the Department's ten year plan. However due to the increasing growth in traffic and the lack of public transport services as outlined above the need and justification for such a by-pass continues to grow daily. Consequently the Council would ask that the scheme be now moved from the Department's ten year plan and placed on to its three year programme and that a firm starting date be announced.
- 6 *The provision of taxi ranks.* The Council recognises that there has been phenomenal growth in both the demand for, and the provision of, taxis over the past ten years. Given both the lack of a public transport service and the growing number of people coming into towns to socialise in the evenings, the Council is of the opinion that the number of taxis being made available to the public will continue to increase. For these reasons the Members are of the view that the matter of bespoke parking areas for taxis should be addressed immediately.
- 7 *Improved and safer walking routes and cycle routes.* The Council welcomes both the planned cycle routes and walkways within the strategy. However they note that many of these walkways and cycle routes come to a dead end. Given this, and the fact that the number of individuals both walking and cycling has increased exponentially over the past number of years the Members are of the view that the number of planned walkways and cycle routes should be increased and that they should also be circular in nature (rather than coming to a dead end).
- 8 *Upgrading of the rural roads.* Over the past number of decades the quality of the rural roads has continued to decline due to such reasons as lack of maintenance, ingress of ditches on to the edge of the carriageway and the ever increasing weight of the individual vehicles using these roads. As a result, many of these carriageways are collapsing and/or are too narrow for the type, size and number of vehicles using them. Furthermore, these types of roads are a disincentive for the provision of public transport. Consequently, the Council would ask for an improved programme for the upgrade of the rural roads in order that they are capable of meeting the present day demands placed on them.
- 9 *The lighting of awkward and or dangerous rural road junctions.* Paragraph 4.5.3 of your strategy states that "it is estimated that 59% of fatal and serious injury collisions occurred on rural networks". Based on anecdotal evidence the Councillors believe that the majority of these accidents occur in the evening at awkward or dangerous junctions. Consequently the Members feel that the case for the lighting of these junctions is self evident.

The Members trust that you will give these issues full and serious consideration and look forward to them being included in the final strategy.

Yours sincerely



**J A McLaughlin**  
Chief Executive