

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY STEERING GROUP
(RTSSG)
MINUTES OF THE 12th MEETING
TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2005, 2.00PM- Room 605, Clarence Court.**

Present:

Mrs Doreen Brown	Deputy Secretary, Regional Planning and Transportation – Joint Chairperson
Dr Malcolm McKibbin	Chief Executive, Roads Service – Joint Chairperson
Mr Jim Aiken	Director of Corporate Affairs, Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC)
Mr David Orr	Director of Network Services, Roads Service
Mr Keith Moffatt	Chief Executive, Translink
Mr Philip O’Neill	General Manager, Translink
Mr Mike Thompson	Director of Regional Planning & Transportation
Mr Brian White	Director of Ports and Public Transport
Mr David Carson	Director of Ports and Public Transport
Mr Tom Clarke	Planning Service
Miss Mary Carnaghan	Regional Planning & Transportation - Secretary

In attendance:

Dr Andrew Murray	Chairman, Transportation Operations Group
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Apologies:

Mr Geoff Allister	Director of Engineering, Roads Service
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ACTION

1. Mrs Brown welcomed members, including two new members, Mr David Carson [Ports and Public Transport Division] and Dr Andrew Murray [Roads Service], to the 12th meeting of RTSSG.

2. Dr McKibbin and Mrs Brown gave a short overview of the expected impact of the Review of Public Administration [RPA] on Roads Service and Public Transport. The group noted that the structure of Roads Service would change significantly with about 90% of Roads Service staff expected to move to local government. The RPA also states that the planning of local bus services will move to local councils but there is a need to clarify what this actually means.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
 - i. The minutes of the eleventh RTSSG meeting of 12 September were agreed with one amendment as follows:

Brian White

Page 4, second sentence of last bullet point to read –

“This was intended to be consistent with BMTP and public realm objectives, and will significantly reduce bus intrusion in the city centre through the introduction of comprehensive cross city routes linked to the implementation of QBCs.”

4. Matters Arising

i. Translink – Communications Programme (Hearts and Minds)

Mr Moffatt advised that the communications programme to promote the case for better transport is still being formulated and should be finalised in the new year.

Mr Moffatt will keep RTSSG advised on progress.

Keith Moffatt

5. BMTP

i. Quality Bus Corridors [QBCs]

Mr Orr advised that the Public Transport Partnership Board [PTPB] has agreed the QBC Implementation Programme and associated toolkit for the BMA. The PTPB settled on the use of the terms ‘high intensity measures’ in respect of super QBCs and ‘low intensity measures’ for enhanced QBCs.

Mr Moffatt asked about progress on the VISSIM model for the Saintfield Road corridor. Mr Orr advised that there had been difficulties in finalising the methodology with the consultant and it is important to get this right so that there is a robust model on which to perform what-if scenarios. Accordingly the completion date for the project has been revised to June 2006. Mr Moffatt advised that Translink’s commission with Faber Maunsell remains on schedule for completion in February 2006.

Mr Moffatt referred to bus lanes that have been implemented recently that do not appear to be needed (Upper Newtownards Road) and that Translink was not consulted about it. Mr Orr advised that Translink is normally consulted in advance of any bus lane being implemented. Mr Orr undertook to investigate and reply direct to Mr Moffatt.

David Orr

ii. Progress in the delivery of road-based public transport infrastructure

RTSSG 12/01 paper was noted. Group acknowledged that there is clearly a lot of activity happening.

Mr O’Neill advised that PTPB have set up speed monitoring so that as measures are put in place progress

can be noted and reported to RTSSG.

iii. City Centre Change Working Group

At the previous meeting Mr Orr referred to the BMTP intention to provide high levels of pedestrian priority within the Belfast Cross by introducing further restrictions on vehicles, including buses. He explained that these provisions had been introduced mainly at the request of DOE's urban planners and clearly DSD who is keen to process investment in the Public Realm in this area have an interest as well. Mr Orr confirmed that the views of DOE and DSD would be taken into account in the considerations of the City Centre Change Working Group.

Mr O'Neill stated that there are a number of divergent views in relation to the city centre change that ultimately will require compromise.

Mr Thompson is to advise Mr O'Neill about the dates of the Belfast Strategy Group meetings.

Mike Thompson

iv. Park & Ride on M1 Corridor

It had been suggested at the previous meeting that the owners of existing (retail) car parks at Sprucefield should be approached to see if they would permit their use for Park and Ride purposes. Mr Orr advised that this had been done, but the owners/occupiers declined. However, Roads Service has been in contact with an adjacent landowner who has agreed to lease land for 3 years – initially 280 spaces but capable of expansion. A planning application is imminent and the site could be operational by April 2006. Translink have agreed to provide a morning and evening dedicated bus service subject to the extension of the M1 hard shoulder bus lane **between the Park and ride location and Belfast.**

Publication of draft orders in relation to the bus lanes is scheduled for January 2006 and if successful these would provide for a bus lane from the Saintfield Road junction to Blacks Road. The PTPB will discuss the issue of an inter-peak service.

Mr Orr also advised that Roads Service has submitted a planning application for a 250 space Park and ride site on land that it owns at Blacks Road. Translink has agreed to provide a dedicated bus service for a 6 month trial period.

v. EWAY

The Partnerships UK report to inform consideration of the options for Light Rapid Transit in Belfast has been

circulated to the group for information.

Mr Thompson reported that, at the Adjournment Debate on Proposed Rapid Transit in Northern Ireland on 13 October 2005, the Minister suggested that Peter Robinson chair an all-party group to explore how to take Rapid Transit forward. Ongoing discussion with Peter Robinson will determine whether a committee is set up and the way forward. Mr Moffatt confirmed Translink is preparing a position paper at the request of the Minister, including phasing options. That paper would be referred to the all-Party group to consider in the course of producing its report for the Minister.

At this stage it is not known where EWAY will sit in the context of RPA.

vi. BMTP Surveys

Mike Thompson advised that issues have been resolved about data collection for public transport use as part of the BMTP cordon survey. The surveys took place at the end of November.

vii. Consideration of public transport input to strategic projects

Mr Moffatt stated that he felt that public transport is not always considered adequately in strategic projects and there needs to be a more consistent approach. Mrs Brown stated that the position will differ from project to project but agreed that there has to be early and appropriate input from Translink. A paper is already underway to look at all the major projects on the ground and seek to define Translink involvement. **Mrs Brown**

6. SRTP

i. Progress

RTSSG paper 12/02 was noted. Dr Murray highlighted:

- ❖ the project is still on target for preparation of a Draft SRTP by March 2006. However, slippage in delivery of consultants' Local Transport Studies has put pressure on tasks initially programmed for the period September 2005 – January 2006.
- ❖ The emerging SRTP draft blueprints would not now be made available to Councils in November in view of the impact of the Draft Budget and the impending announcement on the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland [ISNI]. These have the potential

to substantially alter the financial frameworks within which the SRTP is formulated. It would therefore be premature and potentially misleading to pre-consult with the Councils at this time. Roads Service will review plans for pre-consultation with Councils when the position on ISNI and the Draft Budget becomes clear.

- ❖ Stephen Wood [Project Manager, SRTP] is liaising with Translink about the programme of work and timetable for Ulsterbus Strategic Network Review.

ii. Urban Bus and Rural DRT Studies/Accessibility

The need for PPTD to commission consultants will delay the public transport costing but not affect the delivery of the public transport elements of the Draft SRTP by end December 2005.

7. Accessible Transport Strategy

Mr Thompson advised that 'Travel Safe' [a guide for people with learning disabilities] was launched on 21 November 2005.

8. Other RTS Issues

i. RTS Review

Mr Thompson advised that a paper setting out the proposed scope of the mid term review will be circulated to the group for consideration at the next meeting in March 2006.

Mike Thompson

ii. Integrated Transportation Stakeholder Steering Group [ITSG]

An ITSG meeting was held on 29 November 2005. The agenda covered presentations on the implications of the Draft Priorities and Budget 2006-08 currently out for consultation and presentations from Keith Moffatt and Ciaran Rogan [Translink] and Elaine Rossraig [Stagecoach UK] on raising public awareness of public transport.

iii. Promoting Sustainable Modes [PSMs]

RTSSG paper 12/03 was noted and the recommendation to undertake a scoping exercise with potential PSM partners to explore the potential for joint working arrangements was agreed by RTSSG. The outcome of the scoping exercise will be reported back to RTSSG at the March meeting.

Dr Andrew Murray

iv. A New Start for Public Transport
Mr White advised that a meeting was held with stakeholders on 22 September. A further meeting is scheduled for 8 December to pursue issues still to be agreed. It is hoped to put material to the Minister soon after this meeting.

Brian White

v. DPE and Moving Traffic Offences legislation
Dr McKibbin advised that at the request of PSNI, Roads Service has agreed an implementation date of September/October 2006 for DPE. He will arrange for an update on Moving Traffic Offences to be forwarded to Mr Moffatt.

**Malcolm
Mckibbin**

vi. TOG Minutes and Highlight Report
RTSSG papers 12/04 and 12/05 were noted. RTSSG agreed that a joint RS/PPTD board should be set up to oversee Cairnshill Park and Ride project.

**David Orr
Brian White**

9. AOB
None.

10. Dates for 2006 meetings
The meetings in 2006 will be held on:

Tuesday 7 March at 2.00pm
Tuesday 6 June at 2.00pm
Tuesday 5 September at 2.00pm
Tuesday 5 December at 2.00pm

**Mary Carnaghan
Secretary RTSSG
Regional Planning and Transportation Division
February 2006**

cc. Joe Drew, Co-Chair PTPB