

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY STEERING GROUP
(RTSSG)
MINUTES OF THE 16TH MEETING
TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2006**

Present:

Mrs Doreen Brown	Deputy Secretary, Regional Planning and Transportation – Joint Chairperson
Dr Malcolm McKibbin	Chief Executive, Roads Service – Joint Chairperson
Mr Bob Cairns	Roads Service
Mr Jim Aiken	Director of Corporate Affairs, Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC)
Mr Keith Moffatt	Chief Executive, Translink
Mr Philip O’Neill	General Manager, Translink
Mr Mike Thompson	Director of Regional Planning and Transportation
Mr Brian White	Director of Ports and Public Transport
Mr Tom Clarke	Planning Service (DOE)
Dr Andrew Murray	Roads Service
Mr Tom McCourt	Roads Service

In Attendance:

Mr Brian Moreland	Roads Service
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Apologies:

Mr David Carson	Director of Ports and Public Transport
Mr John Irvine	Roads Service

ACTION

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the fifteenth RTSSG meeting of the 5 September 2006 were agreed.

2. Matters Arising not covered in Agenda

M2 Busway

Difficulties with the procurement of Variable Message Signage have been resolved. Mr

McCourt advised that bids for funding are being prepared by Roads Service.

Consideration of public transport input to strategic projects

Mr White advised that the recent announcement by the Minister on the future of public transport and the Review of Public Administration meant that further redrafting of the paper is required. This will be taken forward outside RTSSG

Brian White

Expanded SRI programme to 2015

Consultation has closed on the proposals. There has been widespread support for all schemes and also for additional ones.

3.

BMTP

i.

Public Transport Partnership Board Update
RTSSG16/01 paper was noted.

- **Quality Bus Corridor
Masterplan/Saintfield Road VISSIM
Modelling Project**

Mr McCourt said that QBC Modelling has proved to be very complex. A report had just been received addressing the issues. A range of measures are being considered for the corridor.

Mrs Brown asked about overall progress on QBCs. Mr O'Neill said that the QBC programme, covering all schemes, would be circulated to members after the meeting.

Philip O'Neill

There have been delays because of the modelling problems. The PTPB will continue to look at hotspots in the meantime. There is not necessarily a link between incremental progress on the implementation of initiatives on a corridor and increasing average bus speed. On many schemes there will be little or no benefit until all the corridor initiatives are implemented while other extraneous factors, such as the altered traffic flow due to the Westlink road works, may have a deleterious effect on bus speed.

- **City Centre**

Translink met with the Economic Development Committee of Belfast City Council and presented the preferred option for bus routing in the city centre which involves the displacement of traffic from around City Hall. The committee agreed to the scheme in principle

Mr White asked about the public transport costs of the preferred option. Mr O'Neill said that there were additional costs, but that these would be less than for other options and would be mitigated by the advantages of cross-city routes. Mr Moffatt said that the preferred option would provide good routes for buses and a good public realm but that its success was dependent on QBC measures. Mr Aiken said that there would be a need for improved signage for passengers on the routes.

It was agreed that the PTPB would consider financial requirements and Ports and Public Transport Division and Roads Service would submit a joint bid.

Mr Aiken asked about the public realm changes in front of the law courts. Mr O'Neill advised that limited number of buses would be able to use the space when travelling out of town.

Brian White
Tom McCourt

- **Parking**

Mr McCourt said that there were concerns about the number of ad hoc parking sites in Belfast and their effect on the Transport Plan. Mr Clarke said that Planning Service has limited resources available for enforcement of planning restrictions. It was agreed that Roads Service provide Planning Service with details of those sites causing most concern.

Tom McCourt
Tom Clarke

ii. **EWAY and Titanic / George Best Belfast City Airport rapid transit**

Eight tenders were received by the deadline. Atkins Ltd has been selected and the contract will start on 2 January. [DN – debrief will be complete before these draft minutes are circulated].

4. SRTP
RTSSG 16/02

On target for publication in March 2007, however Assembly elections in March may have an impact.

5. Other RTS Issues

i. • RTS Review

Mr Thompson reported that Alan Preston has been appointed to Regional Planning and Transportation Division and that he will head the RTS review. The exact scope of the review will be determined over the next 1-2 months and a submission subsequently made to the Minister seeking approval to proceed.

Mr Moffatt said that the RTS needed to be delivered rather than reviewed and that, apart from bus use which has improved, all of the trends were going the wrong way. The group agreed that the trends shown in the draft monitoring report were cause for concern. Dr McKibbin said that there may be timing issues with some of the apparent trends. The RTS does not contain interim targets and the benefits of many of the transport schemes will not be realised until all the relevant schemes are complete and that there may be negative impacts while the schemes are in progress.

Mrs Brown pointed out that the RTS contains a commitment to carry out a mid-term review and that work will not stop on delivering the RTS while the review takes place.

Mr Aiken said that the complexity of the review should not be underestimated. Any new targets need to be clear and the interrelationship of issues acknowledged.

Mr Thompson said that these issues would be considered when determining the scope of the review.

ii. • RTS Annual Monitoring Report 05/06
RTSSG16-03

The group agreed that significant baseline data issues remain. All will try to fill the gaps in the data, using reasonable proxies or estimates where actual figures are not available. All

Mrs Brown said that more narrative was required to explain the trends and measures being taken to address them.

The changes required meant that it was unlikely a report could be submitted to the Minister before February. It was agreed, therefore, that Regional Planning and Transportation Division would prepare a submission to the Minister asking permission not to produce a 2005/2006 Report but to prepare a Report on progress up to March 2007 by Summer 2007.

Mike Thompson.

iii • **TOG Highlight Report and TOG Terms of reference**
RTSSG16/04 and RTSSG16/05

Mr Moreland reported that TOG believed its Terms of Reference were out of date and that they should be redrafted by Transport and Engineering Policy Unit (TEPU) to give TOG a role in monitoring the implementation of the emerging SRTP. Mrs Brown asked that TEPU work closely with the RTS Review team who will be considering implementation mechanisms as part of the Review.

John Irvine

6. Any Other Business

None

8. Dates of Next Meeting

The next meetings will be held on:
Tuesday 13 March 2007;
Tuesday 12 June 2007;
Tuesday 11 September 2007;
Tuesday 11 December 2007; and
Tuesday 11 March 2008.

All meetings at 2.00 pm in 6.01c Clarence Court.

Gregor Kerr
Regional Planning and Transportation Division

December 2006