

# Review of Active Travel Pop-Up Cycle Lanes

*(Bankmore Street, Hardcastle Street, Marcus Ward Place, Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road)*



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## Executive Summary

With the beginning of the COVID-19 emergency, the Department for Infrastructure took measures to assist people to adapt to a new way of living. As part of that, we created a number of additional opportunities for active travel to make our roads safer for those who want to walk and cycle. For many of those key workers during this health emergency, this was and remains a preferred option for getting to and from work, so it was important that safe and effective options were in place.

Several pop-up cycle lanes were put in place during 2020 following the introduction of lockdown measures in March. This review focuses on cycle lanes on Dublin Road serving the City Hospital and Grosvenor Road serving the Royal Victoria Hospital. The trial was initially for three months. However, this was extended so that a fuller assessment of the lanes could be considered outside of the summer months.

The review has considered whether the cycle lanes achieved the objective of getting more people cycling and making the environment better for walking. It also considered whether changes might be required and lessons learned. As well as Departmental officials, three independent stakeholders sat on a working group to oversee the review.

An online survey carried out by the Department resulted in over 800 responses. There was also consultation with key stakeholders. As expected, the responses indicated that people walking, wheeling and cycling really benefited from the cycle lanes; and road users who lost road space thought they were not a good idea. On Dublin Road there was a particular issue for buses and emergency response vehicles.

There was good use of the cycle lanes by those travelling actively – in particular, on Dublin Road.

The working group set out the following recommendations

- *Dublin Road* – retain the cycle lane, reintroducing two running lanes of traffic making the left hand lane a bus lane and the right hand lane a general traffic lane. This would alleviate delays to public transport and emergency vehicles in the short-term. This would require a small reduction in the width of the cycle lane.
- *Grosvenor Road* – Maintain the pop-up cycle lane while developing a better design longer-term, which encourages more cycling usage for those who cycle on the road instead.
- *Other* – the Department for Infrastructure should develop policy which guides future pop-up active travel schemes and continue to introduce other pop-up schemes as experimental schemes with better consultation with stakeholders.

The introduction of a bus lane on Dublin Road, to provide further sustainable travel improvements, would be subject to public consultation and the normal legislative processes. Work to reintroduce a second lane could be undertaken immediately. This lane would be available to all traffic until the [statutory consultation and the legislative process on the proposed bus lane](#) was completed.

## Introduction

Minister for Infrastructure, Nichola Mallon, took up post in January 2020 and made a commitment to deliver sustainable infrastructure that would transform our communities and lives. When Northern Ireland went into lockdown not long after, this gave further impetus to her ambition to create more opportunities for active travel and to make our roads safer for those who want to walk, wheel and cycle. For many key workers during the health emergency, active travel has been a safe option for getting to and from work and this focus has continued throughout the pandemic.

This review looks at some of pop-up cycling infrastructure that was introduced as part of the Minister's desire to support those choosing to cycle.

## Background

In May 2020, Hill Street and Gordon Street, Belfast, were closed to through traffic to aid pedestrians to socially distance. Pay and Display parking spaces were also coned off in Belfast city centre to create more social distancing space on the streets and also to help queuing for essential services.

In June 2020, the Department installed pop-up cycle lanes on Dublin Road, Bankmore Street, Hardcastle Street and Marcus Ward Street (hereon known as Dublin Road) with an aim to continue on to Donegall Road to help those travelling to work by bicycle in Belfast City Hospital. The section on Donegall Road was delayed until later in the year because of work being done by Phoenix Gas.

A similar lane was also introduced on the Grosvenor Road between the Westlink junction and Royal Victoria Hospital which connected to the existing cycle provision from Westlink to Belfast city centre via Durham Street, College Square North and College Street. A mandatory cycle lane was also introduced on the Crumlin Road (with no delineators) to aid cycling journeys to Belfast Mater Hospital.

In Derry a pop-up cycle path was installed through Queen's Quay car park which created more space for pedestrians to social distance on the riverside path. This cycle lane is not included in this review.

Some of these were introduced as temporary measures under Road Closure legislation which the Department has monitored on an ongoing basis making adjustments as necessary. The lanes were formed by delineators which are designed to be collapsible – in an emergency they can be driven over. Shortly after installation, changes were made in consultation with the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) to improve bus boarding at bus stops on Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road.

Not all stakeholders directly affected by the proposals were initially notified by letter, but some were then later informed that should consideration be given to making this arrangement permanent, a formal consultation exercise would be carried out before any decision was taken. At that point stakeholders would have an opportunity to submit their comments.

It was initially planned to have the lanes in place for a period of three months, but it was quickly realised that a longer period of time was needed that would extend beyond the summer months. As a consequence the review commenced after six months of operation. The lanes remain in place during this review process.

To provide the cycle lane on Dublin Road a traffic lane and some available parking were removed. A traffic lane on Bruce Street was coned off to channel traffic down to one lane. Parking was also removed on Bankmore Street, Hardcastle Street and Marcus Ward Street.

The into town traffic lane on the north side of Grosvenor Road was reallocated to the cycle lane, which also removed the opportunity to park outside clearway hours.



## Routes Map

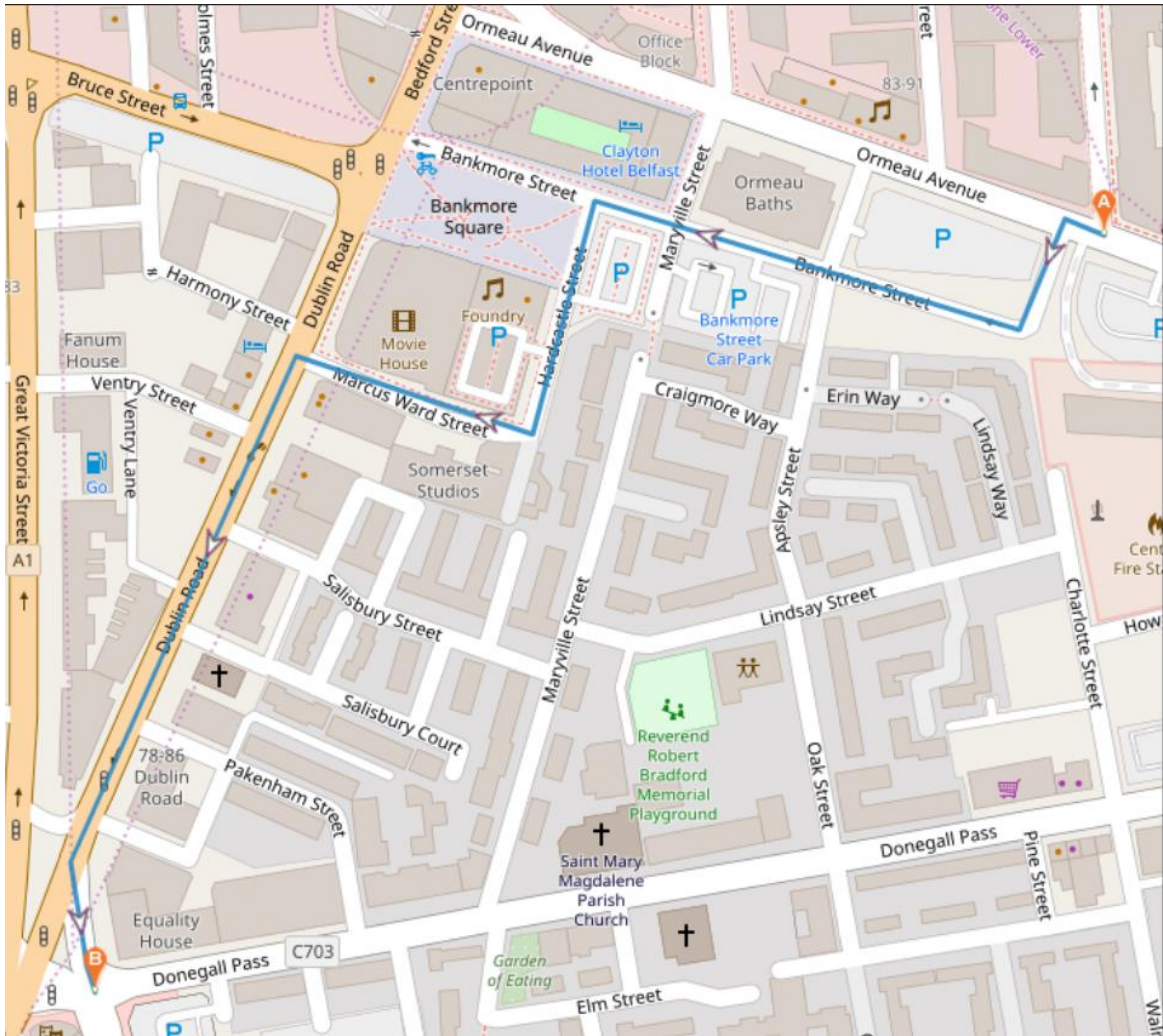


Figure 1: Ormeau Avenue - Shaftesbury Square

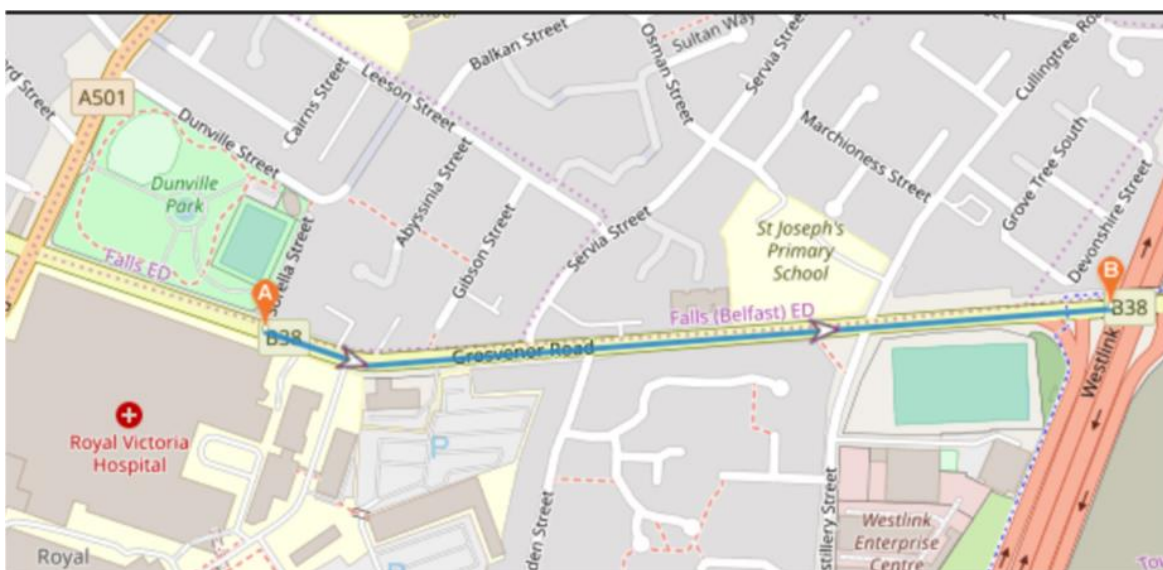


Figure 2: Grosvenor Road Sorella Street – Westlink

## Objectives

For decades transport infrastructure has been developed in such a way that it has suppressed walking, wheeling and cycling across all sectors of society<sup>1</sup> and not enough has been done to reverse this trend. Until recently, transport appraisal favoured motorised traffic by not considering the wider value of cycling which is now known to contribute to better health and communities, less congestion, and better quality of life, all of which yield an economic return<sup>2</sup>. In order to secure the substantial health and economic benefits of active travel, it is important that transport infrastructure is developed which both encourages and enables active travel to increase the proportion of all journeys made by walking, cycling and public transport.

Cities across the world are seeking to become more liveable cities. One of the key aspects of liveability is better places and greener spaces with accessibility for all the people of the city and where the city streets are not dominated by vehicles. A key element of greener cities is greener transport infrastructure and central to this is an effective active travel network – from walking, wheeling and cycling routes on city roads and streets to dedicated green corridors, linear parks, riverside paths – links to connect residential areas with jobs, services and leisure opportunities. This is particularly important in inner city areas where car ownership levels are low and accessible green space is currently limited.

The objective of the Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road cycle lanes was to introduce infrastructure that would provide safe space for cycling and thereby encourage more people to cycle. In addition, it was expected that this would also provide safer spaces for those walking and wheeling.

This review considers whether this objective has been met. It also considers the impact of the cycle lanes since their inception, lessons learnt from the process and options for the development of more of these cycle lanes in the future – as set out in *'Making Belfast an Active City – Belfast Cycling Network 2021'*. In line with this, it provides appropriate recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/18676139/Jason+Strelitz+Appendix+1.pdf/c16adba2-ba15-a21f-cce3-d7e5cceddda0#:~:text=3-Promote%20public%20health%3A%20take%20action%20on%20active%20travel,travel%20to%20walking%20and%20cycling>, page 2.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2011/regional-development/15411.pdf>, page 1

## Methodology

A Working Group was established to oversee the review, made up of representatives from Active Travel Branch (DfI), Roads Eastern Division (DfI), IMTAC, Sustrans and Cycling UK.

This Group looked at the Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road cycle lanes, but the review will form the basis upon which all future temporary active travel infrastructure will be developed.

The Working Group developed and agreed Terms of Reference (Appendix A) to agree the objectives and methodology for the review.

To ensure that the review takes account of the practical operation of the cycle lanes, the following sources of information were sought:

- Views from stakeholders<sup>3</sup> in relation to the operation of the routes through an online survey and letter drops to businesses on the routes; and
- Bicycle counts along the length of the routes.

The Working Group then considered the outcome from this information, gauging the benefits and dis-benefits for all road users but with a particular emphasis on walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. This was analysed, taking into account the Minister's ambition to support those wanting to travel sustainably and the need to increase the percentage of all journeys made by walking, cycling and public transport.

The review also took into account issues raised by those businesses along the route.

Recommendations were formulated based on the above considerations.

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<sup>3</sup>All users of the street – walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport, private car, commercial vehicles, taxis, businesses on the street



## Stakeholder Views

The review was announced on social media on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and the survey was open until 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Letters were delivered to the businesses and properties along the two routes and A4 boards including a QR code, linking to the online survey, were erected along the streets.

The details of the review were publicised on social media.

In total 805 responses were received to the online survey and 12 direct responses received by email. (details are provided at Appendix C).

Additional feedback was also provided by, the PSNI, Translink and some businesses on the routes and these were considered as part of the stakeholder views (Comments from these are included in Appendix D.)

Input was considered from those individuals who wrote to the Department about more general matters as well as the cycle lanes.

## Counts

Cycle counts were carried out on:

- Dublin Road, Bankmore Street, Marcus Ward Street and Hardcastle Street from 14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020; and
- Grosvenor Road from 12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

## Analysis

### Responses and Stakeholders Outcomes

There were over 800 responses to the consultation in total, and meetings with individual stakeholders. Details of all responses are recorded in Appendices C and D.

Looking at the types of users on the street, the outcome of the survey highlighted three key points.

1. 85% of those walking and cycling along the routes agreed that:  
*"The addition of the cycle lane has made walking and cycling more accessible."*
2. 90% of those cycling agreed that:  
*"The addition of the cycle lane makes my journey better."*
3. 84% of those using private car and 98% of those taxi drivers/users disagreed with that same statement.

Simply put, the survey confirmed what was to be expected: those who felt that they benefitted from the cycle lane considered it a good thing; and those who felt they did not benefit from it considered it not to be a good thing. In this sense, the survey adds nothing to the review.

Delving into the reasons why respondents agreed that the cycle lane made journeys better included:

- Feeling safer;
- Better Connectivity through the city;
- Cyclists no longer using footpath/traffic lane; and
- Improved health/activity.

Those that disagreed that the cycle lane made journeys worse included:

- Increased traffic congestion;
- Longer journeys times;
- Harder to access shops etc;
- Worse connectivity through the city; and
- Difficulty loading/unloading for business.

It is notable that the benefits for those cycling on Dublin Road include the benefit of greater feelings of safety – particularly important for more vulnerable road users who feature higher in the transport hierarchy – without a reduction in feelings of safety for other road users.

Other issues that were raised included:

- Emergency vehicles unable to progress due to traffic congestion; and
- Passengers boarding / alighting at bus stops unsure of right of way;

### Cycling Counts Outcomes

Cycling Counts on each route were as follows

2 way/24hrs	Wed 14 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Thu 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Fri 16 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Sat 17 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Sun 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Mon 19 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Tue 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Weekly Total
Bankmore Street	142	137	146	116	81	78	95	795

Hardcastle Street	110	110	133	95	65	64	78	655
Marcus Ward Street	107	102	122	90	59	62	75	617
Dublin Road	331	337	427	280	283	155	199	<b>2012</b>

*Table 1: Dublin Road Cycle Lane counts*

During the course of the seven-day survey, 2,012 cycle journeys were identified on the Dublin Road pop-up cycle lane compared to 182 using the adjacent road, resulting in a pop-up cycle lane usage of 91.7%.

By comparison, on the same seven day period for the Comber Greenway there were 2,655 cycling journeys.

2 way/24hrs	Dates							Weekly Total
Grosvenor Road	66	74	141	184	146	151	151	913

*Table 2: Grosvenor Road Cycle Lane counts*

During the seven-day survey period, 913 cycling journeys were identified on the pop-up cycle lane compared to 355 using the adjacent road, resulting in a pop-up cycle lane usage of 72.0%.

Looking at westbound only, during the seven days, 247 cyclists used the cycle lane and 330 used the road. This may be explained by the fact that the pop-up cycle lane was constructed on a lane of the eastbound carriage, and the Royal Victoria Hospital (a major local attractor) is situated on the westbound side of the carriageway.

### Traffic Issues

As part of restrictions in the Covid-19 pandemic, the first lockdown was introduced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. The lockdown closed many businesses for a period of months and workers were told to work from home where possible. This meant that traffic levels dropped in some places by up to 78%.

When restrictions eased and people began to move again, traffic levels began to climb and even with the repeated lockdowns traffic levels never dropped quite so low again. Currently traffic levels are approaching pre-Covid levels if not higher in certain locations.

With the conversion of a traffic lane on Dublin Road and the closure of a lane on Bruce Street, some traffic will have inevitably dissipated to other routes. However, it has illustrated again that the continuing high level of private car use in the city limits the resilience of the road network to cope with incidents or events on other nearby routes.

Translink has reported delays to southbound buses on Dublin Road and Bruce Street (at different times of the day). This can affect some of the 70,000<sup>4</sup> public transport users a week which travel this route.

PSNI has reported concerns in relation to responses to incidents, in particular at weekend nights / early mornings now that bars and restaurants have reopened. With taxis also seeking to load /

<sup>4</sup> Bus passenger numbers, provided by Translink on Metro corridors 7,8 & 9, for the week beginning 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

unload passengers at venues on the Dublin Road, it can be difficult at times for emergency services to respond to incidents using the one general traffic lane.

On Grosvenor Road, the traffic lane was occupied by parked cars outside of Urban Clearway hours (AM & PM). No specific issues in relation to traffic congestion has been reported during the consultation exercise.

### Business Operation

When the cycle lane was introduced, discussions took place with several stakeholders who contacted the Department. At the time, not all businesses were operating due to lockdown restrictions. Some businesses indicated that they would have difficulty for both loading and unloading goods and access for some customers who required accessibility parking.

This included essential retail, pharmacy and some people who attended church activities. Issues were also raised by the owners of a filling station on Great Victoria Street. Tankers making fuel deliveries to the station were using the narrow side street (Ventry Street) as a departure route rather than the considerably wider Great Victoria Street and this necessitated a right turn onto Dublin Road.

There was criticism of the Department in relation to lack of consultation. This was also partially due to the fact that some businesses were closed during lockdown, although retrospective consultation took place with specific businesses when they contacted the Department.

### Social Media and other sources

In May 2021 two online petitions were created. One sought the removal of the pop-up cycle lanes on Dublin Road and Donegall Road<sup>5</sup>. The other supported the conversion of Dublin Road pop-up cycle lane to a permanent installation<sup>6</sup>.

As of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021, there were 502 signatures for the petition to remove the lane and 579 signatures to make the cycle lane permanent. Polls conducted on social media are not based on a representative sample of the population so there is little that can be drawn from these online petitions other than the point that some people support the lanes and some people do not.

Sustrans made a video<sup>7</sup> about the Dublin Road route as part of the Bike Life project. It showed support for the cycle route from some local businesses and the Linen Quarter Business Improvement District. It recommended that the route be connected to other destinations.

There has been a greater demand to provide better cycling provision in Northern Ireland and this is especially highlighted in the Belfast Bike Life report 2019<sup>8</sup>, where:

- 75% of Belfast residents think cycling safety needs to be improved;
- 77% want more cycle lanes physically separated from traffic – Page 4;
- 67% want more cycle tracks even if it means less room for other traffic – Page 4.

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<sup>5</sup> [Petition · The removal of both the Dublin Road cycle lane and the Donegall Road cycle lane Belfast. · Change.org](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Petition · Make the Dublin Road pop-up cycle lane permanent! · Change.org](#)

<sup>7</sup> <https://youtu.be/FVIRF5US4hg>

<sup>8</sup> [200228-bikelife19\\_belfast\\_v58\\_web.pdf \(sustrans.org.uk\)](#) - This is an independent survey of 1,100 Belfast residents included people whether or not they cycled.

The Department for Infrastructure recently published the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020: Annual Statistical Report 2021<sup>9</sup>, which reported that more than half of respondents (56%) felt unsafe when cycling due to heavy traffic, whilst 49% felt unsafe because of motorists driving without consideration of cyclists.

Swapping the car for walking, cycling and e-biking even just one day a week makes a significant impact on personal carbon emissions in cities. 'Active transport' – cycling, e-biking or walking – can help tackle the climate crisis according to a new study led by the University of Oxford's Transport Studies Unit<sup>10</sup>

'By following nearly 2,000 urban dwellers over time, we found that those who switch just one trip per day from car driving to cycling reduce their carbon footprint by about 0.5 tonnes over a year, representing a substantial share of average per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions', says the lead researcher, from Oxford University<sup>11</sup>. 'If just 10% of the population were to change travel behaviour, the emissions savings would be around 4% of lifecycle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from all car travel.'

It should also be noted that within Belfast City Council area, there is political support for cycling infrastructure across the city.

### Summary of issues

The information above highlights issues from stakeholder feedback and data analysis. The following table summarises these issues and the associated recommendations from the working group.

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<sup>9</sup> [Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020 Annual Statistical Report 2021 \(infrastructure-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.dfi.gov.uk/infrastructure-roadsafety-strategy-to-2020-annual-statistical-report-2021)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.tsu.ox.ac.uk/> <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/environmental-policy/>  
<https://pastaproject.eu/home/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.tsu.ox.ac.uk/people/cbrand.html>

	<b>Issues</b>	<b>Suggested Options</b>
A. Delays to public transport	<i>Dublin Road</i> – with no dedicated bus lane, buses become stuck in the traffic congestion due to persistent high volumes of private car traffic, causing delays to South Belfast bus services. <i>Grosvenor Road</i> – no significant delays reported	<i>Dublin Road</i> – increase road capacity for buses only with a dedicated bus lane. Legislation for a bus lane will require consultation and could take 6 to 9 months. Short term the temporary cycle lane could be amended to introduce one lane of traffic and a temporary bus lane while legislation is being progressed.
B. Congestion restricts movement on emergency vehicles	<i>Dublin Road</i> – with high volumes of motor traffic as highlighted in Issue A, there are times when it is difficult for emergency vehicles to progress on Dublin Road when there is congestion <i>Grosvenor Road</i> – no significant delays reported. Still two lanes in opposite direction which can be used by emergency vehicles.	<i>Dublin Road</i> – increase road capacity for buses only with a dedicated bus lane. Legislation for a bus lane will require consultation and could take 6 to 9 months. Short term the temporary cycle lane could be amended to introduce one lane of traffic and a temporary bus lane while legislation is being progressed. Engagement with stakeholders required
C. Loading / unloading for businesses	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – due to the removal of opportunities to park on the side of the street where the cycle lane is, businesses felt that they have limited opportunities to load / unload	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – provide additional loading bays/accessible bays on the side streets on the east side of the Dublin Road. This should be consulted on as part of the development of a permanent scheme.
D. Bus Stop conflicts	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – some users have reported issues with access the bus stops on the and uncertainty of who has priority as passengers board/alight the bus	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – work along with IMTAC and Translink to develop better bus stop solutions which work for all active and public transport users
E. Traffic delays due to less traffic lanes	<i>Dublin Road</i> – with high volumes of motor traffic as highlighted in Issues A and B, private car users complained of delays to their journeys. <i>Grosvenor Road</i> – no significant delays reported	<i>Dublin Road</i> – increase road capacity for buses only with a dedicated bus lane. Legislation for a bus lane will require consultation and could take 6 to 9 months. Short term the temporary cycle lane could be amended to introduce one lane of traffic and a temporary bus lane while legislation is being progressed.
F. Accessible parking	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – issues with accessibility to some retail, business and services such as churches for those using Blue Badge parking.	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – provide additional loading bays/accessible bays on the side streets on the east side of the Dublin Road. This should be consulted on as part of the development of a permanent scheme.
G. Doesn't connect to other places or destinations	<i>Dublin Road</i> – issues have been raised in relation to the connection of the cycle lane at Shaftesbury Square, where it stops and lacks onward connection to Botanic Avenue / Bradbury Place / Donegall Road. It is also difficult to join the cycle lane going northbound. The Bankmore Street end is intended to links to Alfred Street and the city centre but without a toucan crossing, it is disconnected. <i>Grosvenor Road</i> – more westbound cyclists use the road rather than the cycle lane.	<i>Dublin Road</i> – future development of other routes from Shaftesbury Square, starting with those identified as part of the Belfast Cycling Network. <i>Grosvenor Road</i> – consider and engage with users on a solution for the two way cycle lane, if it is on the right side of the road or if cycle lane on each side of the road would work better. Also look at other opportunities to develop further routes, starting with those identified as part of the Belfast Cycling Network
H. Visibility emerging/entering side streets	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – some users of the road said that visibility was difficult as they emerged from or entered the side streets. Some of those who are cycling felt that vehicles 'cut-across' them on occasions. This may have been an issue with visibility due to the wands.	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – Consider if the type of protection for the cycle lane taking into account, improved sightlines, e.g. kerbed space rather than wands, such as on Middlepath Street.
I. Lack of consultation	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – both schemes were introduces under 'Temporary Road Closure' Orders. Stakeholders directly affected by the proposals were initially notified by letter, but some were then later informed that should consideration be given to making this arrangement permanent a formal consultation exercise would be carried out before any decision was taken. This was also partially due to the fact that a lot of businesses were still closed during lockdown.	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – Future pop-up active travel schemes should be introduced as experimental Orders where notification is given to affect properties three weeks before installation. Policy to guide the development, stakeholder engagement and installation of pop-up active travel schemes should also be developed by the Department.
J. Signage	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – both those cycling and driving raised an issue about lack of signage to highlight the presence of the cycle lane, especially on side streets.	<i>Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road</i> – As part of any changes, signage and road markings should be reviewed, improved and updated as required.

Table 3: Collation of Issues and Suggested Options



## Considerations

Dublin Road cycle route has proved popular for cycling. It has improved the environment for those on the footway as it is now further from live traffic. The numbers of users indicate that in a short period of months it has become almost as well used as more established traffic free routes. The numbers also show that the majority of users (92%) choose to cycle in the cycle lane rather than in the traffic lane.

The Working Group felt that the removal of the pop up lanes would be a retrograde step and should not be considered.

However, there are some issues for other road users, particularly for those who use public transport and for the emergency services. There were also some issues for businesses.

The Grosvenor Road cycle lane is less used. There are fewer traffic issues due to more usable road space. However, the cycle lane appears to be less used by people cycling westbound (which may be linked to their destination being the Royal Victoria Hospital site).

The Working Group considered several options:

- Remove pop-ups;
- Retain temporary pop-ups as they are for a further period of trial;
- Amend temporary pop-ups to resolve identified issues;
- Conduct a consultation on making the pop-ups permanent (with or without adjustments).

Based on the above, it is considered that both cycle lanes have been a success, but both require to be retained with amendments.

In relation to the process for installing the lanes, the first few months of the Covid-19 pandemic were unprecedented times and required decisions to be made that helped key workers travel in a safe space. However, lessons learnt from this process show that their introduction would work better as 'Experimental Order' schemes, which give opportunity for better consultation – a main issue with stakeholders.

## Recommendations

The Working Group has developed a number of recommendations based on the analysis of information and feedback given.

### Short Term (within 3 months)

*Dublin Road* – reintroduce two running lanes of traffic making the left hand lane a bus lane and the right hand lane a general traffic lane. This would alleviate delays to public transport and emergency vehicles in the short-term. This would require a small reduction in the width of the cycle lane, slightly below LTN 1/20, but full standard width could be restored with a permanent design for the entire street.

This would also alleviate the issue of right turning tankers from Ventry Street where road space currently restricts their swept path.

*Grosvenor Road* – Maintain the pop-up cycle lane while developing a better design longer-term (see medium-term)

*Other* – the Department for Infrastructure should develop policy which guides future pop-up active travel schemes.

### Medium Term (within 12 months)

*Dublin Road* – Develop and consult on a permanent scheme. This design should include:

- The introduction of a legislated bus lane;
- Reconfiguration of parking on side street to accommodate loading/accessible parking; and
- Improved separation which improves sightlines at side streets.

*Grosvenor Road* – Maintain the pop-up cycle lane but consider whether it should continue as a two-way cycle lane on the northern side; be relocated to the southern side; or provide a protected one-way cycle lane on each side of the road.

*Other* – Develop bus stop design guidance in conjunction with IMTAC, which will work for all active and public transport users.

### Long Term (beyond 12 months)

*Dublin Road* – in conjunction with this the Department is currently working with Queen's University and the Department for Communities on a project which reconsiders the street scape of Botanic Avenue/Queen's which will include a cycling route through to Queen's University. This could be part of the missing network connections.

There are other developments in the area including the Department for Communities Belfast Streets Ahead Phase V project. This encompasses Dublin Road and Shaftesbury Square. The other document that should be borne in mind is the Bolder Vision for Belfast which looks at re-imagining the city centre.

*Grosvenor Road* – currently this route connect with the existing section of Route 6 and the proposed Route 10, from 'Making Belfast an Active City – Belfast Cycling Network 2021'<sup>1</sup>. As this Network develops, a permanent scheme can be considered.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/belfast-cycling-network-2021final.pdf>

## Conclusions

The Pop-up cycle lanes have been in place for 16 months and have proved popular with those who want to travel actively. They were introduced during unprecedented times and their purpose was always as a 'test-bed' to see how we could change the city to reduce car dominance and improve air quality for a greener future.

There have been learning points along the way, including the need for greater consultation with stakeholders. However, overall the Dublin Road and Grosvenor Road cycle lanes have achieved their objective as the start of more safe spaces for cycling journeys. It is considered that their use can only increase as onward network connections are developed in line with the delivery of the Belfast Cycling Network 2021.

## Appendices

## Appendix A – Terms of Reference for a Review of Active Travel Pop-up Infrastructure

1. This group is convened to initially review the pop-up cycle lanes along Bankmore Street/Hardcastle Street/Marcus Ward Street/Dublin Road and the Grosvenor Road.
2. The group should meet on three occasions:
  - The initial meeting to agree this document
  - A workshop to consider the data once collected by DfI and to consider the report; and
  - A review the initial draft review report.
3. Active Travel Branch will chair the meetings of the group and monitor actions that arise.
4. At present all meetings will be by video conference, although as easing of lockdowns occur, site visits may be required adhering to COVID-19 Regulations.
5. The group will decide on the nature of engagement with stakeholders taking into account COVID-19 Regulations.
6. Active Travel Branch will draft the report for agreement by the working group, having considered input from all stakeholders.
7. The report will meet the objective as previously stated including consideration of future pop-up cycle lanes.
8. The report will be presented to the Minister by DD-MM-2021 following review by the Walking and Cycling Advisory Group.

### Governance

A Working Group will be established to undertake the review. Membership of the Working Group will be made up of representatives of the Active Travel Branch (DfI), Roads Eastern Division (DfI), Sustrans, Cycling UK and IMTAC.

Views will be sought from Translink, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council and other stakeholders<sup>1</sup> including businesses on the route, and those requiring access for delivery vehicles and refuse collection.

Assessment of the pop-up infrastructure and any recommendations should be carried out in accordance with the Department for Transport Local Transport Note LTN 01/20 – Cycling Design Infrastructure<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Users of the street – walking, wheeling, cycling; Queen’s University and Ulster University; Emergency Services; DfI Traffic information Control Centre

<sup>2</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/951074/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951074/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf)

## Appendix B - Letter to stakeholders and residents (Dublin Road as example)

**Active Travel Branch**  
Room 3.09  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8GB

Owner / Occupier

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Being dealt with by: Claire Mulvenna

Direct Line: 02890 540592

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Sir / Madam

### **REVIEW OF DUBLIN ROAD POP-UP CYCLE LANE**

The Bankmore Street/Hardcastle Street/Marcus Ward Street/Dublin Road Pop-up Cycle Lane (now to be referred to as the Dublin Road cycle lane) was installed in June 2020 as the first of a number of schemes to link existing bicycle lanes through Belfast city centre to the main hospitals.

For many key workers during the health emergency, walking and cycling has been a safe option for getting to and from work and this focus has continued throughout the pandemic.

We are now carrying out a review to consider what improvements can be made to the Dublin Road cycle lane and what lessons can be learned. We are interested to hear of your experience of it, whether you cycle or not, and would welcome views on what improvements could be made.

We will be erecting signage with QR Codes along the route, which will take you to our survey or go to [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PopupCycle](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PopupCycle). Alternatively you can post your comments to the address above by Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

This is not a formal consultation but if requested the Department for Infrastructure may be obliged to release the details of any comments or submissions received. Details of this requirement are provided below<sup>1</sup>.

If the cycle lane is to be made permanent a formal consultation exercise will be carried out.

Yours faithfully

**CLAIRE MULVENNA**  
Active Travel Branch

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<sup>1</sup> *The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to recorded information held by a public authority, namely the Department in this case. This right of access includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department has the responsibility to decide whether any information provided in response to this consultation should be made public. This will not include information about your identity if you are responding in an individual, private capacity. If you do not wish any other information provided by you to be made public please include an explanation in your response.*



## Appendix C – Responses Received From Online Survey

In total there were 805 responses in total to the online survey. The full report can be viewed at  
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### Route Used

- Over two thirds (68%) of respondents used the Ormeau Avenue – Shaftesbury Square route and 32% used the Grosvenor Road (Sorella Street) – Westlink route.
- Six in ten (60%) respondents said they use the routes 5 or more days a week.

### Type of User

- When asked how they used the routes, 75% of respondents used the 'road', 34% used the 'cycle lane', 14% used the 'footpath' and 12% required 'business access' (respondents could select more than one).

### Main method travel

- Almost half (47%) of respondents said their main method of travel was 'taxi', almost a third (30%) of respondents said 'cycling' and 16% used a private car/van/motorcycle either as a driver, or passenger.
- Pedestrians (3%), public transport users (2%), commercial vehicle and others (both 1%) accounted for the remainder of the responses.

### Views of Walkers and Cyclists

- Of those respondents who indicated that they 'cycle' as their main method of travel, 58% said they 'cycle more since March 2020' and 30% said they 'cycle the same amount as before'.
- Of respondents who walk or cycle as their main method of travel, 85% agreed with the statement 'the addition of the cycle lane has made walking and cycling more accessible'.

### Views on the Cycling Lane

- When asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: 'the addition of the cycle lane makes my journey better', two-thirds (66%) of all respondents disagreed with this statement.
- However, if we consider responses by type of user:
  - 90% of cyclists agreed with this statement
  - 98% of taxi users disagreed with this statement
  - 84% of private car users disagreed with this statement
  - 83% of 'cyclists' say they feel more safe since the addition of the cycle lane and conversely, 70% of 'taxi' and 56% of 'private car' users say they feel less safe since the addition of the cycle lane
- More than two-thirds (67%) of respondents said they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the cycle lane while 28% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the cycle lane.
- Considering responses by the type of user:
  - 80% of cyclists were satisfied/very satisfied with the cycle lane
  - 96% of taxi users were unsatisfied/very unsatisfied with the cycling lane
  - 84% of private car users unsatisfied/very unsatisfied with the cycling lane

Almost all cyclists (95%) want the cycle lanes extended, however 98% of 'taxi' users, and 82% of 'private car' users do not want the cycle lanes extended.

## Appendix D – Other Stakeholder Input

### PSNI

*...the biggest concern for Police is their ability to respond to incidents. Saturday night into Sunday morning was particularly bad, with Officers dealing with a number of incidents. When Police crews were attending to assist other Officers the traffic congestion was so bad they were unable to get through. Officers had to park elsewhere and attend on foot which will significantly impact on Police response times. This also has implications for other emergency services not being able to attend this location. As lockdown eases further and more people start venturing out this situation is likely to worsen.*

### Translink

*...as traffic has started to return to normal, Translink services operating to/from the South and West of the city have experienced a considerable and disproportionate level of disruption. The cause of which, based on our review, is fully attributable to the reduced carriageway capacity....*

*....DFI have confirmed there are no adjustments to phasing, signalling or traffic measures that can alleviate these issues. As traffic increases further it is inevitable that performance will deteriorate further and likely result in network wide disruption.....*

### Businesses

Those business, service providers, places of worships and meeting places who front on to the Dublin Road and to a lesser extent the Grosvenor Road have commented on some of the issues that the cycle lanes have raised. Such as:

- difficulty servicing properties as various service vehicles had difficulty parking;
- problems servicing ATM machines as a result of limited parking;
- difficulty in receiving deliveries and requiring a loading bay in close proximity;
- some businesses felt that there is an impact on the business because of the lack of vehicle access as a result of the cycle lane;
- issues related to the size of vehicles required to service businesses and difficulties manoeuvring within the Dublin Road as the width has been reduced for motor vehicles.
- representations have been made from places of worship along the road again citing problems with access especially for disability access and parking at various times of the day.

## Appendix E – Walking and Cycling Advisory Group (WACAG) Input

1. Would the short term solution for Dublin Road cycle lane still be within LTN 1/20 standard? – *wording amended to clarify*
2. Does the review consider analysis of the carbon reduction made by cyclists? – *wording included*
3. Has the issue of tankers not being able to make right hand turns from Ventry Street been resolved? – *wording amended to clarify*
4. Has the criticism of the Department in relation to lack of consultation included any retrospective engagement? – *wording amended to clarify*
5. Include the political support for cycling infrastructure across the city – *wording amended*
6. Grosvenor Road cycle lane should be extended to Durham Street – *there is currently a shared cycle path between Grosvenor Road cycle lane and Durham Street.*
7. All changes need a comprehensive communications and advertising campaign for the public to encourage modal change. Messaging needs to be about ease, affordability, convenience etc. It needs to be as clear and frequent as the '5 a Day' campaign
8. Good to see timeframes and would like detail on how these changes will be reported and to whom
9. Consider how A Bolder Vision and BSA5 can support and enable this work – *wording amended*
10. The recommendation for better, timely consultation with stakeholders regarding future schemes is welcomed
11. Translink has a duty of care to passengers at bus stops and manages the infrastructure at them. It would be appropriate to include Translink in any design or review groups considering these – *wording amended*
12. The implementation of a (temporary) bus lane on Dublin Road, or other means of ensuring buses can flow more freely along the road, needs to progress as a matter of urgency
13. Given the scale of the issues that public transport users have faced since the reallocation of road space on Dublin Road, a review should have been instigated earlier. Policy relating to further initiatives should include a review within a few months of implementation, particularly when issues are highlighted by key stakeholders
14. It would be very helpful to have a plan of these lanes included in the report to illustrate their position in relation to existing routes and the future planned network, etc – *maps included.*
15. Shaftesbury Square is not mentioned. This is key to linking Botanic Avenue / Donegall Road. It is included within the Streets Ahead Phase 5 Public Realm Scheme, which also includes Dublin Road, Bedford Street, Great Victoria Street. Liaison with DfC and their consultants would be helpful at this early stage – *wording amended*
16. Pop-up cycle lanes were of their time as an opportunity presented by lockdown. There is no need to develop guidelines for further experimental routes. We need to get on with the Network and apply any relevant learnings to its implementation

17. There is a need for a specific advisory board for the Cycling Network that brings together business interests / consumers / PSNI / Translink / Imtac etc. An overall Project Leader is also required. This is a way of reducing very public debates on the merits or not of the Network and the specific proposal
18. The report should put this experience in the context of the Network Plan